

Annual Report

July 2014 to August 2015

1. Introduction to the Stoke-on-Trent foodbank

The Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank (linked with the Trussell Trust) is a Christian organization, motivated by Jesus' teaching on poverty and injustice. Our values are of compassion, honesty, integrity and care of all people, regardless of backgrounds or beliefs. We believe in turning faith into practical action, as Jesus told in a story (from the Bible in the book of Matthew Chapter 25 verse 35- 40)

*"I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me...."*



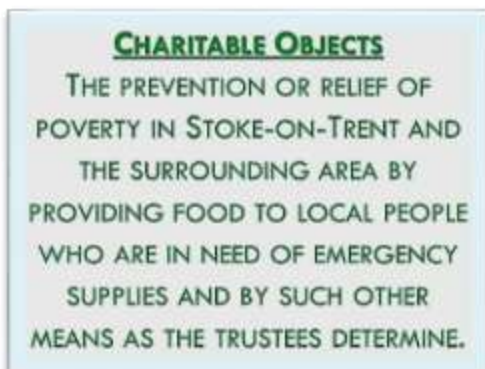
Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me - you did it to me."

We serve people of all faith groups and beliefs. We believe that everyone has the right to have food, dignity, skills, a chance to work and hope for the future. We invite Volunteers from all walks of life to be part of our team of volunteers and to be involved in all parts of what we do.

2. Summary

The last year has seen an expansion of the SOT foodbank, both in terms of staff, premises and the activities that we are engaged in mainly as a result of 2 successful funding grants. These grants have enabled us to engage with additional partners resulting in an increase in the activities that the Foodbank is now able to get involved in, the aim of which is to reduce return visits by foodbank Guests, and to directly link Guests into opportunities and services that might help to improve the situation that led them to foodbank. This report will provide more information about: the funding and related expansion, Food distribution and Warehouse activity. The report will also include information about our wonderful Volunteers, our Distribution Centres and Staff teams, changes to our premises and share our Vision for the future too.

3. Aims, Objectives and Figures



Stoke-on-Trent foodbank provides three days emergency food for those who are in crisis, either due to sudden loss of employment, bereavement, domestic violence, poverty or other crises within their household. Stoke-on-Trent foodbank works with people who are identified and referred by other agencies such as schools, social care, health and voluntary sector organisations in providing three days of emergency food for those in crisis. Guests receive a warm welcome at our centres and are signposted to further support to ensure they are best supported out of their poverty / crisis situation.

Food Delivered, Distributed and Donated 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015

- 10,372 people have been fed, of which 3,973 were children
- 4,477 vouchers have been redeemed
- 88,486.5 kg of food have been donated and 87,876.3 kg distributed

At Stoke-on-Trent foodbank, the top three reasons for foodbank referral were benefit delay 32%; low income 23%; benefit change 17%. As only one 'reason' for accessing the foodbank is required however, this does not take into account the (anecdotally proven) reality of people experiencing multiple crises, each one being a valid reason for access.

a. Warehouse move & streamline

Re-location of our Main Warehouse operation to a new venue in Blurton took place on 20th March 2015. This has significantly increased our efficiency due to the doubling of our floor space and enables many more volunteers to be helping us at one time.

Wesley Hall at Sneyd Green continues to partner with Stoke-on-Trent foodbank by providing additional (overflow) warehouse space, and by continuing to operate as a distribution centre twice a week.

A Van Driver was employed 6 hrs per week from January 2015. The departure of our Warehouse Assistant (30 hours pw), enabled a restructure. The current Van Driver became our Warehouse Co-ordinator, from 30th March at 16 hours a week. A new Warehouse Assistant was employed from 20th March (25 hours pw).



A project was run for 7 months to streamline the whole warehouse process. This included collections, donations, weighing-in, labelling, storing, etc. The warehouse has improved to such an extent that we are well able to support the newly-planned centres over the coming year. In addition we are also trialling the delivery of re-stock to our distribution centres, aiming to build on this until all our centres have the convenience of their stock being delivered to their centre.

b. Van

The purchase of a Van has increased efficiency for the Warehouse with the ability to move stock around the city when required.

c. Stocktakes

The stocktake carried out at the end of March showed an unacceptable level of inaccuracy (mismatch between stock held and stock recorded as held). Analysis identified that this was, in large part, caused by errors incurred through shortage of space at our warehouse facility. Moving to the new warehouse enabled a better system to be put in place, ensuring that inaccuracies are quickly identified and issues addressed.

d. Harvest, Christmas Hampers, Easter Eggs

Seasonal shopping lists were given out for half of the December supermarket collections at Tesco's stores. This, along with many other donations of Christmas goods meant, we were able to put together a tremendous number of hampers to give out to Guests in the run-up to Christmas. Often Guests were tearful at the generosity of this gift.



A volunteer with Christmas hampers given at Christmas. They were beautifully wrapped by Youth Offender Teams.



Amazing numbers of Easter Eggs were also donated to give out to Guests.

e. Adopt-a-Month

The Adopt-a-Month project has been introduced since January in partnership with schools from across the City. A good number of Junior and Infant schools have signed up to this project, with others showing an interest in getting involved. Following a school assembly delivered by Stoke-on-Trent foodbank, schools then choose a month in which to collect food items that the foodbank is currently short of. This has had the effect of improved balance of stock items. In addition to school assemblies, there are also school visits made to the main warehouse to launch their support for Adopt-a-Month. (Many schools have now also been set up as referrers, giving them the ability to issue foodbank vouchers directly to pupils/families in need.) The idea for Adopt-a-Month came as a result of the huge number of school donations received during Harvest time 2014. It is hoped that this Adopt-a-Month project, together with the circulation of shortened pre-harvest shopping lists (asking only for the items we are short of) will assist us greatly, with the Warehouse receiving items needed rather than ones of which we have surplus.

f. Supermarket collections

We took part in three Tesco National Supermarket collections, July & December 2014, and July 2015.



10.6 tonnes of food was donated at these events. Tesco always give foodbank 30% of the average value of food collected as a monetary donation!



g. Fresh fruit and veg: Freshview



Stoke-on-Trent foodbank collects a weekly supply of fresh fruit and vegetables from Freshview wholesalers. This fresh produce goes directly out to foodbank guests Monday to Thursday together with their normal food parcels.

We are grateful to Freshview for their support and generosity.

4. Volunteers and Supporters

a. Distribution Centres

A key objective over the past year has been to increase the number of distribution points operating across the city, working towards the vision set at the birth of the Foodbank – to have enough sites across the city so that everyone is within walking distance of a local foodbank distribution point.

Four more Teams of Volunteers created new distribution centres which opened during the year.

Below: Grace Church, Hanley opened 20th August 2014, Wednesdays 7pm-9pm



Wonderful information leaflet holders for all centres from UCB (United Christian Broadcasters)



Below: Hope Community Church, Hanley opened 30th September 2014, Tuesdays 10am-12midday



Fabulous shelving was provided free by Seddon Construction and Sanctuary Housing here and at several other centres



Below: Community Growth Church, Meir Park, 4th October 2014, Saturdays 10am-12midday



A Distribution Centre is now open every day of the week



Below: New Testament Church of God, Hanley, 23rd April 2015



Now there are now 3 Distribution Centres operating in Hanley covering the 3 days in the middle of the week.



In addition, consideration is being given to the further “gaps” identified in provision – via the data mapping exercise by Steve Johnston (City-wide Intelligence Manager, Stoke on Trent City Council). These are identified as: Tunstall north – Goldenhill & Sandyford, Fegg Hayes and Chell Heath (since closure), and the Norton/Ball Green area. There is a recognition that not all Churches approached have the resources (facilities/ability) to set up as a distribution centre, although there has been very positive and generous engagement with Stoke-on-Trent foodbank in other ways, such as volunteering and, in particular, donating goods, from so many Churches across the City. Currently there are 3 more distribution centres planning to open soon.

b. Volunteers week

All of the distribution centres were visited and presented with certificates, a keepsake was given to each team to show our appreciation, and to celebrate our third year

c. Training

- 63 Volunteers have received effective training in Food Hygiene Level 2, First Aid, Manual Handling, Conflict Management and Developing Community Approaches + Story-telling through Creative Consultation.
- 67 Volunteers have done a variety of in-house training, in Ethical Consideration, Manual Handling awareness, Database Input and Introduction into Warehouse training.

Centre Leads

A number of Centre Leads attended a session at ‘The Walk Centre’ to support them in building safe working practice at their Distribution Centres to minimise risk to Volunteers and Guests. Sessions are held for Centre Leads to get together every 3-4 months for mutual sharing and support, combined with updates on Stoke-on-Trent foodbank developments and some learning.

Recording stories workshops

The New Victoria Theatre Borderlines group is working with us to offer our volunteers who are budding interviewers and film-makers a series of workshops. We hope that these volunteers will then take part in creatively capturing the stories of guests who have given us their contact details in order to share their story with us.

d. Supportive Volunteer Placements

SOT foodbank offers supportive placements to various groups, for example:

- Placement opportunities with the Job Centre
- Members of the WALK ex-offenders project
- Engaged Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme placements for students
- Regular placement opportunities for the Young Offenders team
- Supporting volunteers with learning disabilities from St John’s Welcome Centre to complete various NVQs during their weekly placement

e. Volunteers influence in leadership

A team of volunteers have formed as a Foodbank Management Support group. This group are empowered and equipped, led by our Volunteer and Beneficiary Co-ordinator. They have significant engagement and impact in key projects, and bring valuable experience and expertise.

Centre Leads are volunteers who are committed to lead each distribution centre team. They ensure each team is co-ordinated, protected, and above all equipped to provide a welcoming and caring environment. They in turn encourage and inspire their team of volunteers and are supported with quarterly Leads sessions.

From Good to Great

Our Volunteer Empowerment Strategy is instrumental in providing support recognition and developing our volunteers so that they can reach their potential.

Our big goal standardised induction materials that include how they contribute towards the vision, mission and values of foodbank.

- bespoke induction materials for each area in which we support volunteers to complement our core training and provide our volunteers with the information they need to carry out their roles effectively.
- extensive range of training on offer that enables the volunteer to gain accredited qualifications to enable them in the future.

5. Staffing

a. Office relocation

Our main office moved into the Community Fire Station, Lower Bethesda Street, Hanley on 16th March. The Fire Service have provided this facility to Stoke-on-Trent foodbank free of charge.

b. Staff structure

The Project Manager is supported by a team to ensure the foodbank meets the Vision set and supported by the Trustees, and is sustainable into the future.

- Warehouse Co-ordinator: Co-ordinating the day-to-day operation of the foodbank warehouse
- Warehouse Assistant: Preparing and dispatching the orders, collecting and delivering goods
- Centre Leads: Create a Centre in which people can be compassionate and generous with integrity in their provision of food parcels and signposting
- Health Co-ordinator: Introducing a series of Health related activities, and facilitating links with partners that contribute towards addressing the health issues that are affected by poverty and deprivation.
- Volunteer and Beneficiary Co-ordinator: Engage and Equip Volunteers and Beneficiaries within the delivery and evaluation of the Foodbank
- Finance Assistants and Treasurer: Payments, Budgets and Accounts
- Office Manager: Managing administration, enquiries and vouchers

A Structure Chart is included at the end of this document as: Appendix A

6. Feedback

We have always encouraged feedback from our Guests. We now ensure that all Guests and volunteers are asked to complete a feedback form when they visit foodbank. We are measuring the impact of our service on the following areas:

Area	Target agreed with Big Lottery	Where we are at
The number of recipients who report that their stress or anxiety levels have decreased as a result of the emergency food	60% by the end of year one	81.1%
The number of recipients who report that their lives have been positively impacted as a result of engagement with the foodbank	10,000 by the end of year two	5,988 at the end of year one

<p>The number of recipients who identify that they feel valued and respected with self esteem, sharing their stories</p>	<p>50 people by the end of the project</p>	<p>10 people have engaged in sharing their story. 7 volunteers have just been trained in Developing Community Approaches + Story Telling through Creative Consultation. The team will now plan to engage with the clients that want to share their story.</p>
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From 1st August 2014 to 31st July 2015

- 99% of Guests who have given feedback are satisfied with the welcome and service received during their visit
- 75.8% of Guests who have given feedback have received signposting
- 418 of the guests that filled in questionnaires gave their contact details for us to hear their story or for them to be contacted to volunteer themselves.

7. More than Food

a. Cooking on a Budget

Five “Cook, Taste and Learn” sessions have taken place at distribution centres this year (thanks to Rev. Howard Jones - recent Masterchef star!). Interested Guests have then taken up the opportunity of a follow-on cooking programme which is linked to these sessions. Cooking on a budget recipe booklets are now available at Centres, courtesy of Potteries Moneywise. More Cook, Taste and Learn courses are being planned for September and November.

b. School Holiday Clubs

The aim of these Clubs are to support healthy eating and activity amongst children and families living in deprived areas during school holidays.

These Holiday Clubs take place at strategic locations based upon deprivation and need. Key partners that are involved in developing and running the Clubs include; Foodbank, Public Health, Primary Schools, City Council Parks, Ground Works West Midlands, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, CGC Stoke, Meir Community Committee (The Square), and Staffordshire Police.

The first of the school holiday breakfast/lunch clubs was held in February 2015. Two more took place at Burslem and Meir over the May half-term break. These have a theme of healthy eating and healthy activity. A pallet of Nutrigrain bars arrived from Kelloggs to support this (thanks to the corporate contacts team at the Trussell Trust)





c. Money Advice at Centres

A pilot project to provide money advice to Guests took place this year. 120 hours was provided by Money Matters over a four month period from September to December 2014 offering face-to-face benefits and debt advice and budgeting support to Foodbank clients at eight different Stoke-on-Trent foodbank Distribution Centres and one Foodbank Distribution Centre in Biddulph.

Stoke-on-Trent foodbank recognises that the situations which causes a crisis and bring Guests to receive a food parcel does not quickly abate. Often Guests are presenting themselves, asking for more than the three vouchers which we give (as a guideline amount) to assist during a crisis situation. This can become problematic for our Volunteers, who see Guests turning up with voucher #4, or #5, even though the Guests are genuine in their need at that time. However for some Guests, rather than being an immediate crisis it is an ongoing situation of deprivation. Without intervention these Guests are likely to be in need of many more food vouchers than the guideline of 3 per crisis within a 6 month period. As previously indicated above, the 3 main reasons for accessing Stoke-on-Trent foodbank are; Debt, Benefit Delays and Low Income. Therefore, having a financial Advisor present at a distribution centre to meet Guests to discuss their issues immediately, increases the likelihood of the Guest acting on the contact and advice given. Follow-up support was also available, and the pilot saw that this was taken up, with most cases worked on until the issues were resolved.

SOT foodbank is in the process of ensuring funding for the provision of this service to Guests to continue going forwards.

d. Sustainable Food City

The first meeting of the newly formed North Staffs Community Food Network took place on the 25th March. This group is made up of individuals from across North Staffordshire that are involved in the following; the growing of fresh fruit and vegetables, the storage and distribution of the fresh produce, the distributing of emergency food parcels, the management of citywide allotments, the supporting of vulnerable individuals and families experiencing food poverty. SOT foodbank are a member of this Network and have been engaged in a number of events and activities as a result

Stoke-on-Trent foodbank has established a new partnership with Burslem Park. They have offered to allocate a section of their allotment, which is located within the park, to Stoke-on-Trent foodbank for the 2015 growing season

8. Funding Developments



i. Big Lottery Reaching Communities

The amount of Big Lottery funding to the 31st July 2017. This amount costs of:

- Purchase of a transit Van
- Project Manager (part time)
- Part funding of Office Manager hours
- Part funding of Volunteer Coordinator hours
- Finance Officer (part time)
- A percentage of running costs
- Van
- Roof repairs (Wesley Hall)

is over 3 years. From the 1st August 14 was funded specifically to cover the



ii. Directorate of Public Health

The Directorate of Public Health funding is over 2 years. From 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2016. This partnership working aims to bring together the values of the SOT foodbank in reducing poverty in the City, with the aims of the Public Health agenda of the SOT City Council. The funding has supported growth to enable provision more widely across the City, as well as facilitating the provision of a range of other services for our Guests. Examples of these are Cooking on a Budget, Healthy themed holiday clubs, money advice, links to provision of fresh food (Freshview, allotments etc)

- Warehouse Co-ordinator (part time)
- Warehouse Assistant (part time)
- Part funding of Office Manager
- Part funding of Volunteer Coordinator hours
- Health Engagement Co-ordinator (part time)
- Set up costs of new distribution centres
- Health Engagement related activities

iii. UCB



- Digital radios to play UCB in distribution centres as background
- Information leaflet display stands for distribution centres
- Display Boards for use at events

iv. Staffordshire Community Foundation



- Funding for 1 month of the pilot of money advice at centres
- Christmas Hamper packaging
- Holiday Club provisions
- Health Engagement provisions

v. Mirror Fund



The Trustees are sincerely appreciative for all forms of support given to Stoke-on-Trent foodbank.

Here we have identified particular funders, and we've referred to other supporters throughout the Report.

Individuals and organizations have helped us achieve all you've read about through their individual donations of money or food, their offering of time or other resources, and through the number of co-operative partnerships and commitments to work together. Thank you all.

- Grant funding to support provision of money advice to Guests

9. The Future

Our activities over the last 2 years are very much in tune with the Trussell Trust “More than food” agenda that has been launched by them in this last year. <http://www.trusselltrust.org/more-than-food>

Vision

Our vision is to:

“Provide emergency food, whilst working to reduce the need for return visits and facilitating engagement of our Guests with services/opportunities aimed at reducing food poverty”.

These 3 Key areas of activity are described further below.

i. Emergency food provision:

a) **Emergency food parcels for referred people in crisis**

What it is

- Provision of food parcels following the Trussell Trust model and standards
- Available to all people across Stoke-on-Trent referred with a foodbank voucher
- Provided in a way in which reflects the values of SOT foodbank
- Creation of foodbank centres in which people can be compassionate and generous with integrity and respecting people’s humanity
- A provision which relies on the service of Volunteers at all levels of the organisation and endeavours to provide a beneficial experience to them throughout this time
- Aiming to increase the number of distribution centres to reduce travel distance for Guests
- Promoting the service positively to reduce the stigma felt by Guests

b) **Signposting activity**

What it is

- A routine and expected element of the service provided to every Guest, where a Volunteer seeks to recommend other sources of information/support where appropriate
- Set up in a folder format by the foodbank HQ team at centre start up
- Each centre maintaining and adapting the signposting folder and displaying relevant informative leaflets
- A passing on of information where the foodbank HQ/Centre has a reasonable basic knowledge of the integrity of the information/support
- Seeks to encourage, motivate and empower individuals with opportunities to engage with services that could alleviate their situation

ii. Reducing the need for return visits to foodbank:

a) **Money Advice**

What it is

- Aimed to address the top 3 reasons for attendance at foodbank (debt, low income, benefits delay)
- Facilitating the provision of an accredited money issues advisor at our distribution centres.

b) Job Shop/Online access

What it is

- A limited access point for Guests with limited or no current internet access, to enable them to seek information, complete required job centre /Universal Credit claim related activity
- At some centres it will be a member of the Library information services team attending with a laptop/s to provide job search support, advise of available training, give limited internet access where required
- At certain centres it will be a room/group of laptops with support of volunteers with a reasonable level of IT skill and basic level job seeker guidance

c) Eating/cooking on a budget

What it is

- Interactive cooking displays by a trained individual with a correctly equipped mobile kitchen, during foodbank distribution
- Aimed to interest Guests in attending the 6 week Cook and Eat sessions commissioned by the SOT City Council and run by community groups at various venues across the City. The foodbank session will be timed to run just before a 6 week course will be running in the nearby area.
- Aimed at reducing the impact that the 3 top reasons for accessing foodbank (debt, low income and benefits delay) have on causing food poverty for households
- Aims to improve dietary choices for Guests surviving on low incomes
- Supported by the provision of recipe cards

iii. Facilitating engagement of our Guests with services/opportunities aimed at reducing food poverty:

a) Holiday clubs

What it is

- Encouraging SOT Churches (including foodbank centres where possible) to run their own school holiday clubs based on the preparation and eating of healthy nutritious food, and on fun exercise and activity
- Children invited by targeted invitation of schools with a high percentage of free school meals

b) Challenging Isolation

What it is

- Foodbank exploring and promoting engagement of foodbank Guests, Volunteers and Distribution Centres with existing related provision and initiatives/schemes

c) Distribution of fresh food when available across the city

What it is

- Always acting in accordance with Environmental Health regulations
- Engagement with North Staffordshire Food Network to support and promote Sustainable Food City
- Distributing sources of fresh food where available, and where capacity and keep fresh ability allows
- Linking with allotments growers to distribute surplus produce around our centres and where practical to our partner organisations on route
- Benefiting from links with providers of fresh produce, regularly or ad hoc

All of this requires continued donations of food, volunteer time, and money. In addition further grant funding to ensure the required infrastructure to maintain the provision of Premises, Staff, Equipment and Services. In particular, SOT Foodbank has a vision for a Warehouse and office co-located, with suitable access and parking. We put our faith in God for His ongoing provision for the ministry that is Stoke-on-Trent foodbank.

Appendix A

Structure Chart - Stoke-on-Trent foodbank (August 2015)

