



Volunteers Newsletter - 6th August 2021

Thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who keep the Foodbank up and running so well. Since January 2,625 food parcels have been provided, and a further 625 support services recorded which includes advice sessions and shopping.

You may have been aware that we had been looking at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the foodbank and various change have been implemented:

- Around 30 more distanced households have been referred to other Foodbanks
- Once a week deliveries have been implemented for the Downham Estate and other more distant areas
- Service users are being asked to come into the Foodbank in person. Deliveries still available in certain circumstances.

More details in the Activities report below.

Donations

Our thanks to everyone who donates to the foodbank. Amongst our regular donors are a couple who bring supplies in every 2 weeks and who won't leave their names – we just know them as “The Couple from Chislehurst”. If you do know them, please pass on our thanks.

Focus on Advice

Rev Catherine is seeing an increase in the demand for advice. Last week she spoke to 4 families about eviction cases alone.

We are looking at ways of building up an advice team to support this work. If you, or anyone you know, has:

experience of advocacy work, housing, benefits, employment and similar fields OR

would be willing to help with form-filling and triage of cases - do get in touch.

No more Thursdays

The numbers coming in over the five days were so variable that not opening on Thursday and reducing the opening time to 2 hours on a Monday and Saturday should have no impact on service levels.

Everyone is welcome to the Thursday coffee morning in the church and we are considering providing refreshments at one or more of the

foodbank sessions to offer more opportunities for people to socialise and engage with neighbours. Watch this space....

Should we be allowing so much choice?

A Saturday volunteer recently told me of a customer who thanked her for being allowed an element of choice when she came in eg Heinz instead of others' baked beans. Many of our customers' lives allow them few choices; if they are coming to the Foodbank to help them get through, allowing some choice in what they receive – where we have the options - shows a spirit of generosity and care for the person's whole well-being.

It is a matter of balance – on a busy Friday there isn't the time to make up bespoke bags. A level of diplomacy is required handling the few service users who do seem to think we can supply anything.

So allowing a *moderate* level of choice is something that is special about the Mottingham Foodbank and allows volunteers to treat every service user as an individual.

Registration Forms

A reminder please to fill these in for the service users. Great work has been done to get these completed though they are not always entirely filled in or they are illegible.

Sadly, illiteracy is around and it is one thing that people often hide. When the volunteer fills in the form it avoids any awkwardness, and is an opportunity to engage in conversation.

Not forgetting to explain the GDPR consent and ask the individual to sign or initial the form.

August Bank Holiday

The foodbank will be closed on Monday 30th with an additional session on Tuesday 31st.

End Notes

St Ed's wider activities include the building project which will offer training opportunities for local youngsters and mentoring roles for people from the construction trade, including decorating and carpentry. If you or anyone you know might be interested in training or mentoring let us know.

We have now formed a Personal Shoppers team. Thank you to the volunteers supporting this service.

And finally... thank you for those who let us know about your holidays. If anyone has to step down at short notice please post directly in the WhatsApp group asap to get the message out.

A big Thank You to everyone for your continuing support.



Foodbank Activities For Those Who Like Numbers

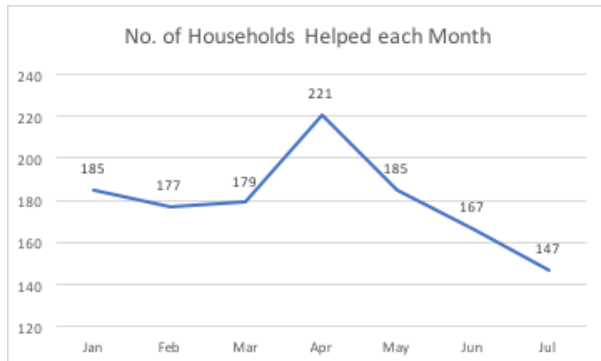
All Support Activities

This year 2,625 food parcels have been provided which accounts for 81% of all the 3,250 support activities recorded Jan-July.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Total to Date
Deliveries	219	218	240	219	213	157	171	1,437
Collected	175	147	182	184	165	159	176	1,188
Shopping	28	23	24	27	27	25	18	172
Other	50	62	55	142	51	56	37	453
Total	472	450	501	572	456	397	402	3,250

Number of households

425 households have sought help during the year. In May, we contacted around 30 households who were furthest from St Ed's that we were no longer able to deliver to them, though they are still welcome to come into the Foodbank. We also provided them with information on other Foodbanks closer to them.

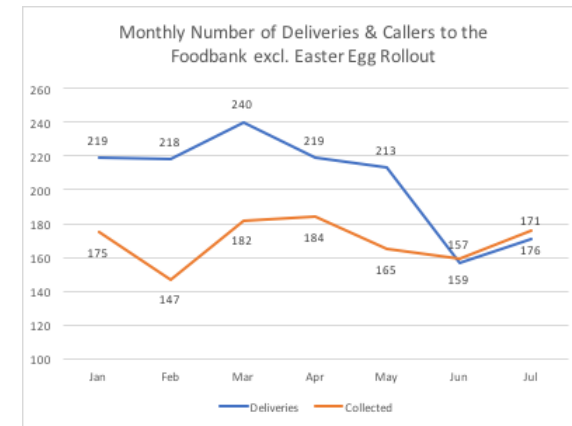


This will have contributed to the downward trend though the Foodbank continues to be contacted by new households at an average rate of 28 each month this year.

To Deliver or Not to Deliver?

St Ed's response to the lockdown in March last year had been phenomenal yet we were all recognising that since restrictions were being lifted, and more people being vaccinated, service users could be encouraged to come into the Foodbank in person.

At the end of April we announced that deliveries would be available for those who were housebound, significantly disabled or ill, self-isolating or in a caring role e.g. single parent with young children.



Focus on Advice & Personal Shoppers

Currently making up 19% of support activities the demand for "Other" support services such as giving advice (benefits, credit union, housing) and shopping is not diminishing. The drop in July reflects Rev Catherine's week on leave.

