Management report March 2023

We have seen a significant uplift in demand since last month, feeding 245 adults, 172 children in 148 households. This compares with 150 adults, 76 children and 87 households in the same month last year. Indeed the last Thursday of the month looked similar to the 16th December in numbers of people fed.

In March, we have been promoting the Bank the Food app, which allows you to see what we really need, if you are kind enough to donate food to the food bank. You may have seen us in Waitrose talking to people about it and helping them download the app. I am very grateful to those volunteers who gave up their time to help. I am also very grateful to Waitrose for the opportunity to promote it in the store. It was good to meet many of our supporters and indeed we gained a new volunteer as well. We have achieved a 30% increase in the numbers of people using the app, just over 100 extra people.

This month I wanted to highlight the inflation in the cost of a food bank parcel. This is a selection of basic, long-life items, all bought at the cheapest price. Kate, the volunteer who manages our shopping for us, is an expert in sourcing the best value. She last calculated the price of a parcel for 2 adults, a teenager, and a primary age child on 18 August last year. Comparisons are made dated 28February this year, so just about 6 months. In that time our parcel has gone up by 16% or just over £8. Kate emphasises that an individual would be able to access some items more cheaply e.g., by buying from the Asda Essentials range, where we are only able to buy three of each item. Overall, we find Tesco cheaper for food bank shopping.

The 16% increase compares with the news recently that food inflation overall is running at 18%, a 45-year high, contributing two whole percentage points to the overall inflation rate. This disproportionately affects those on a fixed or limited income.

We are so very grateful to be so well supported by you all in what are challenging times for everyone,

With my best wishes for Easter

Alice Penney