**In the bag: 2017 Reviewed**

Since Black Country Foodbank started in 2006 we have provided more than **1,172,650** meals to people in crisis across the Black Country. This doesn't include the 20 plus partnerships we have with other local organisations to provide hot meals to children, families and adults facing hardship.

We saw a distinct increase in demand for provision in the autumn and winter of 2017. From anecdotal evidence we believe the application process for Universal Credit has pushed many people in Dudley and some parts of Sandwell into crisis.

**In total in 2017 Black Country Foodbank provided 182,560 meals across 3 boroughs in partnership with local churches and community groups.**

Case Study

Helen has 2 children. Having just split up with her partner, her change in circumstances meant she had to apply for Universal Credit. Knowing she would have almost no income for 6 weeks she made efforts to cut her to costs to an absolute minimum. She stopped using her car, relying on family and friends instead and turned off her heating, even though it was December. She already suffers from anxiety but became increasingly anxious about paying the rent in future, her family's health, and coping with budgeting for a month at a time as well as paying back debts she accrued. She received Foodbank provision for 6 weeks (more than double the usual provision) and spent at least an hour in the Foodbank each week to get warm.

 Focus on Dudley

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| **Springs**, Upper Gornal  Provided 2,740 adult and 1,600 child meals. Over 70% of users walk to Springs, with one person walking 9.5 miles.  **Replenish**, Stourbridge, provided 8,360 adult and 4,360 children’s meals. More than half of those who visited walked, an average of 1.2 miles each way, with some walking more than 4.5 miles. Replenish also collected nearly 18tonnes of food in donations.   |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | **Darkhouse**, Coseley  Provided 2,110 adult meals and 1,710 child meals. 27% were collected by a support worker. |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  | **Refresh**, Dudley, provided 28,880 meals in 2017. 35% of these were for children. The team provided food to 83 people in one day in December, their busiest in 7 and a half years. |  |  |  |
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| **Take A Break**, Lower Gornal, provided 1,230 meals in 2017 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Giving Hands**, Brierley Hill, provided 2,140 meals plus over 100 free clothing items to people in need |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  | **Netherton** Foodbank, Netherton opened in January 2018 at Primrose Hill Community Church, Wednesday 9:30 til 12:30. Our 20th Foodbank! |  |  |  |
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| **BHP**, Brierley Hill, provided 14,700 adult meals an increase of 9.5% and 9,560 child meals, an increase of 33% on 2016. The BHP, partnered with South St Church to offer Make Lunch to local children. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  | **Life Central**, Halesowen, provided 7,240 adult an increase of 10%, and 5,480 child meals an increase of 41% in 2017. |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  | **The Carpenters Store**, Colley Gate, provided 1,250 adult meals and 820 children’s meals in 2017 as well as working closely with local schools to offer holiday provision. |  |  |  |  |
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| Focus on Walsall |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **All Saints**, Darlaston provided 2,650 meals in 2017, an increase of 23% on 2016. All Saints also support another local church with their soup kitchen.   |  | | --- | |  | |  | **The Thomas Project,** Aldridge, provided 5,320 meals in 2017. An increase of 1% on the previous year. |  |  |  |  | **The Rock**, Walsall town centre, provided 28,120 meals in 2017, a fall of about 12% on 2016. |  |  |
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| **Bridging the Gap**, Willenhall provided 6,080 meals in 2017 an increase of about 6% on the previous year. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Ablewell Advice**, Walsall town centre, provided 8,780 meals in 2017 an increase of 423% on 2016. Extra sessions and community engagement projects have enables this growth. |  |  |
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|  |  |  | **The Small St Centre**, Walsall town centre, provided 5,850 meals in 2017 a fall of around 60%. Improving the volunteer base in 2018 will offer the opportunity to re-open an extra session that closed in 2017 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Focus on Sandwell  **The Well**, Tipton, provided 15,110 meals in 2017, an increase of about 6%. The Well also collected 10tonnes of food donations from the local community in 2017.  **Fountain of Life**, Oldbury provided 2,850 meals in 2017 an increase of 25% on 2016.  **Community Link**, Cradley Heath provided 8,340 meals last year, an increase of 37% on 2016. They also partnered with Make Lunch to provide hot meals to families in the holidays.   |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **The James Project,** Oldhill provided 6,810 meals in 2017, an increase of 43% on the previous year. |  |  |
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| There is consistent growth in the number and diversity of Voucher Holding agencies in Sandwell leading to increasing demand for Foodbank provision. This is reflected by all the Sandwell Foodbanks. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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People receiving provision by borough.



Craig received Foodbank provision throughout his Universal Credit application. (6 weeks in total) Out of his payments he has to repay the advance he received as well as court costs he incurred previously. Craig is expecting to pay off his debt over the next twelve months and will probably need Foodbank support at intervals throughout this time. If he gets work, his benefit stops immediately even though he may have to wait another 4 weeks to get paid.

We've seen some big shifts in 2017 in the reasons people attend a Foodbank. Benefit issues, although often still the catalyst for crisis, are no longer seen as the underlying reason for the need. Those citing homelessness has more than doubled and the numbers of people who cite "entering employment" is also significantly higher.

Case Study

We donated 21tonnes of excess food; beans, soup, veg and pasta, plus toiletries and baby products to local community groups who provide meals to individuals, children and families facing hardship in 2017.



Partnerships: reaching the need

We partner with over 200 agencies, who give out vouchers to ensure Foodbank provision goes where it is most needed. We distributed over £150,000 worth of food and £32,000 worth of non food (toiletries and cleaning on behalf of our partnering agencies in 2017.

Having a good diversity of partnering agencies ensures we can reach people in crisis from all walks of life. Agencies we partner with include:



Focus on The Storehouse

During 2017 we supported our Foodbanks with donations of food to ensure they could offer a range of healthy ambient food to their users. **We donated 58tonnes in Dudley, 34tonnes in Walsall and 19tonnes in Sandwell** plus non food items**.**

Food and non food donated directly to the Storehouse rarely meets demand on an month by month basis. The Storehouse is sustained by the huge generosity of local people, schools and churches especially during Harvest and Christmas. This excess is then used to keep up with demand during the rest of the year. We experience shortages of some stock the most during the Summer months.

**During Harvest 2017 we collected over 27tonnes of food.**