

### **Why are IFAN and The Trussell Trust working together?**

It is vital to understand the true scale of emergency food aid, and IFAN and the Trussell Trust are pleased to be able collaborate on this important research. Though the Trussell Trust is the UK's largest single foodbank network, there are more than 700 independent foodbanks operating across the UK. IFAN works to provide a voice for independent foodbanks and other independent food aid providers.

### **If volunteers are doing this work anyway, why does the Government need to step in?**

The work of volunteers is currently vital to ensure those in crisis are able to access food. But the ability to feed one's self or one's family should not be dependent on charity. Voluntary organisations cannot replace the welfare state – they are run by the generosity of communities but do not have the capacity to replace a strong safety net. Policies which mean people, both in and out of work, have enough money to live on, are key to making sure people don't find themselves in need of a foodbank.

### **Are foodbanks funded by the Government?**

No, neither Trussell Trust nor independent foodbanks are funded by Government. The Trussell Trust believe foodbanks should be separate from state welfare provision and have advised its foodbanks against entering into contractual service level agreements with local authorities. Foodbanks that are part of the Trussell Trust network are independent charities, however, and some may choose to receive a local grant to help with their work. Unrestricted grants that are not linked to service level agreements can be helpful to local foodbanks.

IFAN was founded in 2016. It was set up to provide a voice for independent food aid organisations, to connect members to each other, to disseminate knowledge to its members and others about food poverty and the best responses to it, and to advocate for change. Whilst IFAN supports the work of independent food aid projects providing emergency food, IFAN recognises that food poverty is the result of a structural crisis that must be addressed by Government. IFAN campaigns for changes that will ensure emergency food aid will no longer be needed. IFAN is an unincorporated charitable association managed by a Board of Trustees elected by its members. It receives no local or central state funding, and has no faith based or political affiliations.

### **How can we help reduce food poverty?**

Ultimately both IFAN and the Trussell Trust would like to see the eradication of the need for food banks. To tackle food poverty we need to take a twin track approach; campaigning for change, and supporting the immediate needs of those in crisis. Foodbanks are one way in which this immediate need can be met. Foodbanks are voluntary-run organisations which depend on the generosity of the local community. If you would like to help, do get in touch with your local foodbank and find out what they need. This could be with food donations, your time, money to help with the costs of sourcing, storing and distributing food, or to help with campaigning work. You can find your local foodbank on The Trussell Trust or the IFAN website.

### **What is the difference between Trussell Trust and IFAN foodbanks?**

IFAN represents a number of independent foodbanks and other food aid providers. Independent foodbanks work in a variety of different ways to help households in need, including both referral and 'open access' systems, pre-packaged and free choice food

parcels/baskets, and food parcel delivery schemes. Trussell Trust foodbanks operate on the Trussell Trust model of referral, with a standard packing list and operating manual.

## **Methodology**

### **How did you arrive at the final numbers?**

The research was devised and carried out collaboratively between researchers at The Trussell Trust and IFAN with counsel from academics at Queen Mary University of London. A randomised sample of 300 Trussell Trust and independent foodbank centres was created and weighted according to the total number of Trussell Trust and independent foodbank centres, to create a representative sample for survey. The sample centres were asked 3 short questions about: the average number of volunteers per session; their hours of distribution, including set-up and packing-away time; and any additional volunteer hours spent doing 'behind the scenes' work (liaising with donors, picking up and sorting food, delivering food parcels, fund raising, and paperwork). The monetary value of this volunteer work was calculated by multiplying the number of volunteer hours by the current value of the National Living Wage for those over the age of 25.

### **Is this an overestimation of the value of volunteers' work?**

The research details the total number of hours spent running foodbanks each week as reported by a sample of 300 foodbanks. The sample is 15% of the total number of independent and Trussell Trust foodbanks known to be operating in September 2017. With so large a sample we can be confident we have captured an accurate picture of the total number of volunteer hours supporting the UK's foodbanks each week. However, the total number of volunteers reported here is liable to be an under-estimate. Many foodbanks have more volunteers supporting the project than work at the project in any one week. The total number of volunteers supporting the UK's foodbanks, whether through regular or occasional volunteer work, is likely to be much higher.

### **What costs are associated with running a foodbank?**

Foodbanks and foodbank style projects vary in terms of the scale and the support that they are able to offer in their local community, therefore the cost of running a foodbank varies tremendously. Foodbanks need a dedicated hosting space to meet people referred to the foodbank and a dry and secure space for food storage. Foodbanks often have to find funding for rent and utilities, insurance, fire safety and vermin control measures, telephone and internet access, computer hardware and software, storage containers and vans for the collection or delivery of food. They also need equipment such as racking, weight scales, carrier bags, boxes and stationery. As foodbanks develop, it sometimes becomes necessary to employ a paid project manager to coordinate the varied activities of the foodbank.

### **Are foodbanks proselytizing charities?**

No. The Trussell Trust is a poverty charity founded on Christian principles and works with people of all faiths and none.

Independent foodbanks are run by a variety of faith-based and secular organisations. IFAN itself has no religious affiliations.

**Aren't foodbanks used by people who have spent all their money on junk food, tattoos, cigarettes, etc? Aren't foodbanks just used by skivers and scroungers?**

It is not helpful to draw crude stereotypes about people who need to use foodbanks. Public perception of benefit fraud is 34 times greater than its real level (IPSOS MORI Survey 2013), and benefit overpayments, including both fraud and official error, account for 2% of total benefit expenditure (Government National Statistics 2016/17). In fact, many people who are referred to foodbanks are working but are still having to choose between heating and eating. Others are trying to survive on benefits, or cope with benefits delays – especially the much-criticised delays associated with the move to Universal Credit. Going to a foodbank is a last resort when all other coping strategies have been exhausted. It takes courage to admit you need food. The stark reality is that without foodbanks people go hungry.