



NEWCASTLE CITY BRANCH

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FOOD BANKS

HOW UNISON BRANCHES CAN REFER MEMBERS TO FOOD BANKS

In recent years, Unison's own charity, There for You, has received an increasing number of requests on behalf of members needing emergency help to buy food and pay for fuel. Whilst emergency help is available, branches and branch welfare officers should be aware of local support that is available so that when dealing with an emergency, branches have a system in place whereby they can directly refer their member to a food bank if appropriate.

FOOD BANKS

13 million people live below the poverty line in the UK*

*Source: government indices of deprivation

WHY DO PEOPLE NEED EMERGENCY FOOD?

1 in 5 people live in poverty in the UK as many families hit crisis and cannot afford food and are going hungry in their own homes. Rising food and fuel costs, static incomes, high unemployment and changes to benefits are causing many families to struggle to put food on the table and the number of people needing food banks to grow significantly.

WHO DO FOOD BANKS HELP?

Food bank clients are often low income families affected by a crisis such as reduced working hours, redundancy or even an unexpected bill. Others experience benefit delay, are victims of domestic violence, are hit by illness or have debt problems.

Often food bank clients face decisions between eating and paying the rent. Some are so desperate they consider stealing food to feed their children and these aren't homeless people, they are often working families. Food banks meet mothers every day who skip their own meal to feed their children. Typically one third of food bank recipients are children.

HOW DOES A FOOD BANK WORK?

Food banks are run by communities, not the State. Non-perishable food is donated by local people, and sorted, packed and distributed by volunteers. Every client is referred to the food bank by a professional such as a doctor or social worker who gives them a voucher. However as food banks are an emergency food service, clients are normally entitled to up to three food bank vouchers to prevent dependency on food banks.

Step 1: Non-perishable food is donated by the public

Step 2: Volunteers sort and pack food into emergency food boxes

Step 3: People in crisis receive a food bank voucher from welfare professionals

Step 4: Food bank vouchers are exchanged for three days of food

Step 5: Food banks take time to listen and signpost clients to further support.

HOW CAN I REFER A UNISON MEMBER?

The Trussell Trust has over 400 food banks covering most of the UK - their locations can be found at www.trusselltrust.org.uk

Agencies that regularly refer clients to a local food bank are expected to register with them and hold vouchers, and UNISON branch officers may certainly do so.

If cases are likely to be intermittent, or 'one offs' a branch welfare officer should contact the local food bank by phone, explain the situation, provide the required details, and ask the food bank to generate an emergency voucher. This voucher might be posted to our member or their branch welfare officer (or branch in the absence of a bwo), or be held at the food bank awaiting the member's arrival (in which case they should bring simple proof of identity).

If the member's situation is not likely to be quickly resolved, and may need more than three vouchers, branches will need to discuss this with the food bank to validate the need for additional vouchers.

CHECK LIST - THINGS UNISON BRANCHES CAN DO

FIND OUT which food banks are in your area - you can do this by checking on the Trussell Trust website www.trusselltrust.org.uk Also look on the local authority website to find out more information about other food banks operating in your area and the people they help.

REGISTER with your food bank so that in an emergency you can make an immediate referral.

SUPPORT your local food bank by checking if your employer would be willing to set up a 'collection point' so that staff can make food donations if they wish.

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE remember that one-off emergency help is also available through UNISON's There for You to help with food and emergency fuel. New guidelines will be issued in the coming weeks which branches and branch welfare officers should look out for.

HOW ELSE CAN UNISON HELP MEMBERS IN HARDSHIP?

For more information on ways that UNISON There for you can help your members, visit unison.org.uk/thereforyou or call 0207 121 5620

Local Foodbanks

Name	address	telephone	website
Newcastle West End	The Food Bank Centre Benwell Lane Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 6NG	07580 751365	<p>http://newcastlewestend.foodbank.org.uk</p> <p>1 Foodbank Centre - Church of the Venerable Bede</p> <p>OPENING TIMES</p> <p>Mon 10:00 - 12:00 Tue Closed Wed Closed Thu 10:00 - 16:00 Fri Closed Sat Closed Sun Closed</p> <p>ADDRESS - Benwell Grove/ West Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 8AQ</p>
Newcastle East End	Elim Church Newcastle, The Dream Centre, Heaton Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE6 1SB	0191 224 2422	<p>http://newcastleeast.foodbank.org.uk</p> <p>Open:</p> <p>Every Wednesday 10am - 12.30pm Every Friday 10.00am - 12.30pm</p> <p>Donations only <i>Every Tuesday</i> 10:00am - 1:00pm</p>
Walker & District	City of God Christian Centre, 25 Church Walk, Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 3DP	07517 846366	<p>http://walkerdistrict.foodbank.org.uk/</p> <p>Open - Thursdays - 11am - 1.30pm</p> <p>Please note you will need a foodbank voucher in order to receive help.</p>
Gateshead Foodbank	Gateshead Advice Centre, The Davidson Building, Swan Street, Gateshead, NE8 1BG	0191 487 0898	<p>http://gateshead.foodbank.org.uk</p> <p>Tuesday 12.30pm - 3.30pm Friday 9.30am - 12.30pm</p> <p>Blaydon Trinity Methodist Church Lucy Street Blaydon NE21 5PU</p> <p>Open Friday 1.30pm -3.30pm</p>