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Charity provides 1 million meals a month as demand for food soars

FareShare takes on seven new charities every week to help meet demand

Figures released today reveal FareShare, the national food redistribution charity, has seen the biggest increase in the amount of food given out since it began in 1994. FareShare provided charities with food for one million meals every month last year.

FareShare is also taking on seven new charities every week to help meet demand, a 41% increase in twelve months. The organisation is now supporting 1,296 charities and community projects, meaning 62,200 people received food from FareShare every day last year, up from 43,700 in 2012 and 36,500 in 2011.

Lindsay Boswell, CEO, FareShare said: *“The trends are alarming. We’re supporting more people and more charities than ever and while we hear that the economy is recovering, we know it will always be hardest for the most vulnerable in society to regularly access food.”*

The frontline organisations we work with offer not only a meal, but vital support services. Food is often what draws a beneficiary into a charity but it’s the extra services, like counselling, employment advice and housing assistance that really count. These address the causes of poverty and that’s where the help really starts.”

Based on the charities FareShare supports, people affected by homelessness are still the highest beneficiary group to receive food (30%). However, the number of children and families receiving help through breakfast clubs, youth centres and community cafes has doubled in the past year and now accounts for a quarter of all people accessing FareShare food. The majority of this is surplus, meaning it would have otherwise gone to waste; ending up in landfill or being fed to animals. This food is all in-date but has

become surplus as a result of labelling errors, damaged packaging or not meeting specifications. FareShare received 5,500 tonnes of food in the last year, 85% of which was surplus.

Lindsay Boswell continues: *“The charities we support are providing a lifeline to thousands of people every day. As more people turn to them for food, they’re turning to FareShare for help. We can’t do it without working in partnership with the food industry. We estimate that there’s enough surplus food for another 800 million meals in the UK. We’re urgently calling on the industry to act and divert their surpluses to FareShare so we can feed more people.”*

FareShare saved its member charities a total of more than £16 million last year on their food bills. More than 80% of these charities invest the savings into providing their clients with additional support services, helping address the wider causes of why they are struggling to feed themselves.

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Notes to the editor

Media enquiries

Interviews, case studies and a regional breakdown of the figures are available upon request.

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About FareShare

- FareShare is a unique charity fighting hunger and its underlying causes by providing food to more than 1,290 local charities and community organisations across the UK, including homeless shelters, children’s breakfast clubs, women’s refuge centres and luncheon clubs for the elderly, helping to feed 62,200 people every day
- By working in partnership with the food industry, FareShare received 5,500 tonnes of food last year. The majority of this was surplus and would otherwise have gone to waste. This was mainly fresh produce, such as fruit, vegetables and meat
- Last year FareShare redistributed enough food for 12 million meals, saving each charity an average of £13,000 a year and food businesses 19,500 tonnes of CO₂ emissions
- FareShare’s member charities prepare and serve the food onsite, offering their beneficiaries a hot, nutritious meal when they may otherwise go without



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