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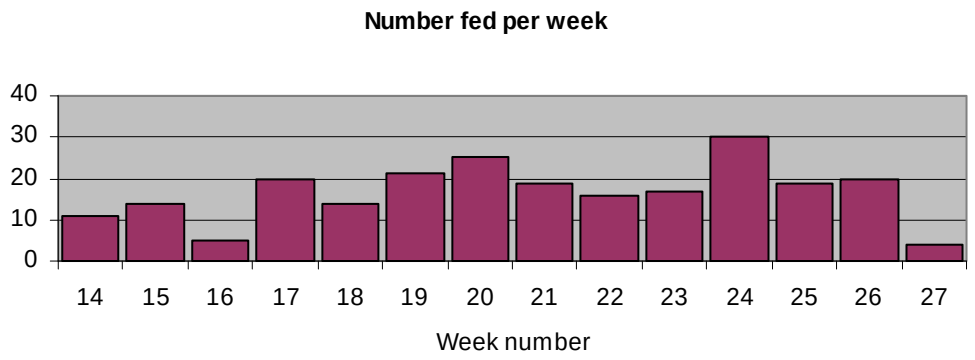
EXETER foodbank

Apr-June 2010

newsletter

Feeding local people..

During the second quarter of this year we fed 203 adults and 32 children which is a 20% drop in numbers from last quarter. The reasons for vouchers being issued have changed slightly. Benefit delays still account for over half of the reasons but has gone down 8%. However low income, debt and cut benefit have gone up slightly. Numbers fed do vary throughout the year but we have fed roughly the same numbers as this time last year.



Note: weeks 14 and 27 are half weeks.

In memory of Tony Grayson

It is with great sadness that we have to report the passing away of Tony Grayson after a long battle with bone cancer. Tony was an active member of Exeter Food Bank and contributed to decision making, food collecting and sorting. He inspired us all to persevere despite his own personal health battles. His genuine warmth and friendliness will be greatly missed. We know he has gone to a better place.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Liz, Ben and Claire during this time.

Research sheds light on debt in low-income families

The Institute for Public Policy Research published a report this year called “Strength Against Shocks: low-income families and debt” and made the following observations:

- Debt problems are rarely as a result of ‘bad’ money management but often caused by a fall in household income because of redundancy, relationship break-up or ill health.
- Low-income households are the ones that are most vulnerable to debt problems.
- Mortgage-holders are particularly vulnerable when there is a fall in household income.
- Finances are strained by everyday occurrences like a broken washing machine, a leaking pipe, or an unexpectedly high bill and seasonal and occasional pressures such as Christmas and birthdays.

The full report and it’s conclusions are available from:
http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=726

A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) called “Credit and debt in low-income families” looked at types of debt, triggers for debt and how people coped over a twelve month period. Some of the key findings of the report were:

- Over-indebtedness was more typically due to inadequate income than to ‘consumerism’.
- Triggers into over-indebtedness included moving in and out of low-paid work and associated delays in the processing of benefit payments; long-term benefit income; unanticipated and/or or large costs; and ill health/disability.
- Work offered a route out of over-indebtedness and poverty, but only if it was permanent sustainable employment that paid adequately.

The full report is available from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/credit-debt-low-incomes-families

A further JRF report entitled "A minimum income standard for the UK in 2010“, just released, highlights the following points:

- A single person in the UK needs to earn at least £14,400 a year before tax in 2010, to afford a basic but acceptable standard of living. A couple with two children needs £29,200.
- Inflation has caused the cost of a minimum household budget to rise by 3–4 per cent, in the year to April 2010, in line with general inflation. However, new calculations show that over the past decade, the rising cost of food, public transport and other essentials means that a minimum budget costs 38 per cent more, despite general inflation at just 23 per cent.
- As a result, a single person who in 2000 could afford a minimum basket of goods and services, but whose income had just risen by the official inflation rate, would be £19 a week short of being able to afford the same basket in 2010 – a fall in living standard of over 10 per cent.

This report is available from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/minimum-income-standard-2010

In conclusion it is clear from both our experience of people referred to us and current research, that earning enough to get by is getting tougher and a change in circumstances is often all that it takes to push people into a crisis. Thank you for standing with us and providing support for your local community.

Supermarket collection

Our next supermarket collection is on Saturday October 9th, further details to come. In the meantime you can always drop food off in our green collecting box behind the checkouts at Sainsbury's Pinhoe.

Currently short of..

Custard, rice pudding, sponge puddings, granulated sugar, UHT milk (semi-skimmed - 1L), potatoes (tins & packets), pasta sauce and meat meals.

Thanks

Not mentioned in the last newsletter but thanks also go to Colyton Grammar school who collected 1190 items of food, weighing in at 597kg! Well done year 9 tutor group.

Help wanted

Anyone interested in occasional food collections and sorting on a regular one-evening-a-month basis please contact Pete Scott on scotts@clara.net.

Hungry? Your neighbour might be!