



Still here and still working in these difficult times

Trussell Trust a response to the crisis

More than 1.8 million people have applied for Universal Credit in recent weeks, and it is likely that more and more individuals and families are going to need to use foodbanks for some time to come.

Like a tidal wave gathering pace an economic crisis is sweeping towards us - but we don't all have lifeboats. We need emergency measures to ensure people can make ends meet during this crisis. We have the power to come together as a country and make sure support is there to stop any of us being into poverty during this emergency.

We've joined forces with other anti-poverty charities. Together, we're urging the government to provide a Coronavirus Emergency Income Support Scheme to help the nation weather the storm of this pandemic. Read more at thetrusselltrust.org, or on social media platforms. The last few weeks have shown we must come together to protect each other against the unexpected.

Aston & Nechells Foodbank have never faced such a challenge. Suddenly, as a result of school closures, social distancing, lockdowns and restrictions of all kinds, our food sources were in danger of drying

up and many of our volunteers were forced to stay away in order to keep safe or to provide childcare. We knew our services would be in greater demand than ever, but how would we stock our warehouse, staff our

Demand from ANFB has
risen by **43%**
compared to 2019

centres or pay our bills?

The answer came immediately! We were overwhelmed with support from numerous sources and although we had to close our Ward End centre for a few weeks, it has now reopened at a new

location and all three centres are operating normally, albeit with carefully managed social distancing and numerous safety procedures in place. Our warehouse is seeing enormous amounts of food coming in and going out!



ANFB volunteers are now designated essential workers. A number of new folks have joined us whilst unable to work; some volunteers are working from home or being called out to collect donations. Many at the distribution centres are working longer hours every week, our warehouse is constantly busy, and administration is never ending! With demand for food rising our volunteers are under pressure but have risen to the challenge!

Asda

B&M

Birmingham City Council

British Gas

Cadburys

Cadent Gas

Ebenezer Fellowship

Grantham Yorke Trust

Greggs

Heart of England Emergency Fund

Khalsa Aid

Knowle Masonic Lodge

Langar Aid

Liam Byrne MP

RS Components

SALTS

Shelagh's Sewing Circle Sheffield

Tesco

The congregation of St Chads
Cathedral

The Charitable Aid Foundation

The Crucial Space

Trussell Trust

Warwickshire Masonic Lodge

Your generous financial and practical support at this difficult time is enabling us to provide a lifeline to many individuals and families in food crisis. We are enormously grateful to every organisation, company, community group, faith group or individual for each donation

THANK YOU!

There are a number of regular standing order donors who continue to support us.
Thanks to all of you.

Many food and financial donations have been made anonymously, and we've received some unsolicited grants. Thank you!

It's impossible to mention everyone by name who is supporting us but please know that we are truly thankful for your help, and be assured, your help is helping!

Justgiving helps us to keep going!

Our Ward End centre was unable to operate for four weeks, a number of volunteers had to step down, and St Margaret's church closed. However, new volunteers came forward and we have re-opened at a new location. We are grateful to the elders of the Ward End Elim Church, Church Walk, St Margaret's Road, who agreed to help us during this time by allowing us to use their church space for our sessions.

We need to maintain our food supplies and income. please help us to keep operating at this increased level of need by donating to **Justgiving** through our website astonnechells.foodbank.co.uk. There has been a tremendous response via Justgiving to date and we are extremely grateful to you all for donating so generously.

Here are some thoughts from our volunteers about their experiences at Foodbank during the lockdown

My name is Maddy and for 6 weeks now I've been volunteering at the Aston and Nechells Foodbank warehouse.

Before the lockdown I was a self-employed stage manager, so I lost my livelihood overnight when the theatre industry closed - and now understandably there's no sign of it reopening in the near future. Having been used to being so busy, I've found it quite hard to adjust! So, as well as applying for other jobs, I wanted to find something more useful I could do with my time and was pleased when I was able to volunteer at Aston.

One of the best things about my job is the feeling of teamwork, so it's been great to meet and get to know the group over the past few weeks. Obviously, I really enjoy the extra time out of the house, but also that I'm able to do something practical (the sorting, dating, labelling side of the work is right up my organisational street!) alongside friendly and likeminded people.

Taking the minute's silence together the other week really brought home the gravity of the crisis and why we were all there working together. It's not right that so many people are struggling and having to rely on services like these. Coronavirus aside, I'm glad that I'm able to help in what is already such a difficult situation.

Maddy (warehouse)

Sara arranged for me to go to a pub in Boldmere at 7.50am one day, to pick up all their bar snacks that they wanted to donate to a good cause. Then there was the client who tried to pass his voucher to the next person in the queue to get double use out of it, but Sara detected the goings-on and handled it brilliantly. The same guy comes back regularly, always with a smile, a bit of cheek, and a lot to say about life in general.

Aileen (Aston distribution)

Mission verse

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me...." Matthew 25: 35-36

WHERE ARE WE?

ANFB distribution centres are in Nechells, Ward End and Aston.

St Matthew's Church, Wardlow Road, Nechells, B7 4JH
every **Monday**
from 12.00 to 2.30pm

The Elim Church, Church Walk, St Margaret's Road, Ward End, B8 2BA
every **Wednesday**
from 1.00 to 3.00pm

The Salvation Army, Gladstone Street, Aston, B6 7NY
every **Friday**
from 12.30 to 2.30pm

ANFB Warehouse is located at St Matthew's Church, 63 Wardlow Rd Nechells B7 4JH and is open for deliveries from **10am to 12noon** every **Tuesday**.

At the start of lockdown the atmosphere from people using the foodbank was fear and uncertainty.

As we have progressed through the weeks volunteers have adjusted to the new rules and we have got ourselves into a good routine.

Last week we noticed that the atmosphere had lifted and clients were happy again to start talking and we are able to spend more time with them whilst obeying social distancing.

I am proud to be a volunteer.

Sara (Aston distribution)



Over the past few weeks Tesco have donated 2.5 tonnes of food

Shelagh's Sewing Circle in Sheffield donated 40 face coverings for our volunteers

ASDA and The Wellbeing Society continue to donate boxes of fresh food every week

In the week beginning Monday 15 May - 197 adults and children were supplied with food parcels from ANFB

Times have changed, but yes we're still going, we can't stop now, whilst our numbers are growing.

We're here for those in great need, for us providing support is more than a good deed.

A red voucher on arrival is preferable, but during these times we'll accept any referral.

You'll be asked questions, nothing too taxing, to help us help you with what you are lacking.

You'll be given a parcel with 3 days of food enough for just you or your whole brood.

We'll wave you off with a brief 'take care', but we hope we won't see you again here.

Kerry

At the heart of our Foodbank are the clients we seek so passionately to support. We don't view our clients as statistics but individuals in need of a hand up. Their stories are often difficult to hear but we hear them and will continue to offer all the help we can throughout the pandemic and beyond.



contact us

Aston and Nechells Foodbank
Admin Office
St Matthew's Church
63 Wardlow Road
Nechells
Birmingham
B7 4JH

Phone: 0121 359 0801

info@astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk

www.astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk

join us

We love to welcome new volunteers to the Foodbank Team. If you want to know more about how you can be involved please contact Aston and Nechells Foodbank on

0121 359 0801 or 07384 213621

Leave your details and a member of our admin team will get back to you.

like us on Facebook

Aston Nechells Foodbank 

Twitter

@A_Nfoodbank

Website

astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk



Prior to social distancing a donation of Easter Eggs from the Julie Hurst Care Home



Lots and lots of muffins from Khalsa Aid



One of a number Tesco donations



Donation of bags from RS Components

Lots of donations throughout the Friday session filling up our empty shelves !



Volunteers ready to go wearing donated face coverings



Maddy, one of our new volunteers unable to be at work so helping at the warehouse..also contributing to the newsletter !