

CAN DO 4:13

Company number 07508388, Charity No 1141676

1st August 2020

Aston Nechells Foodbank Covid-19 lockdown update

The purpose of this brief is to provide a third snapshot of the last few weeks that have seen further major changes at the Foodbank as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. We would also like to share and appreciate some of the huge contributions made by donors and volunteers.

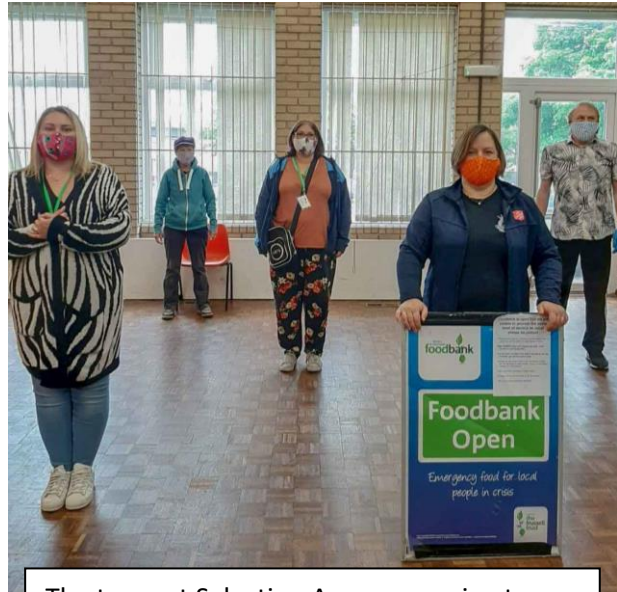
What does the data say?

During the last 3 months demand for food parcels has been high. The average for the last 4 months has been 106 parcels per week, last year's average was 82 parcels per week so there has been a 23% increase. The highest ever week was in May with 236 parcels a whopping 200% increase.

How did we cope?

Overall very well; thanks to hard work by the volunteers and streamlining the way we work. To reduce time inside the buildings food packs are pre-prepared and there is a one way system. Only one client at a time is allowed inside the building. Single person food parcels are collected by the client, with multiples according to the size of the family. In normal times we encourage clients to tell us their story while they have a cup of tea however that has now stopped due to social distancing requirements.

The team at Birmingham Settlement who issue vouchers have been helping by running a telephone advice service to support people in food poverty. In addition to red paper vouchers the Settlement and other partners have moved to an 'e' referral system that is paperless. This is ideal in the current situation as it means the data is already in the system .



The team at Salvation Army preparing to open the doors.



Busy Warehouse

The warehouse team has been very busy collecting and labelling donations. A consequence of the higher food volumes was the collection of a mountain of cardboard. It was eventually taken to be recycled by a local skip hire firm, Call A Skip who kindly donated a skip and helped the team to load it.

Left – Volunteers Maxine and Val practice social distancing and demonstrating the size of the skip load of recycled cardboard.

The warehouse is in a church hall that is closed to the public for the duration. This has been helpful allowing food parcels to be made up and stored on tables avoiding the need to be moved back into the store. This change of practice together with pre preparing food parcels has reduced the number of volunteers needed at distribution sessions.

Ward End changes

The biggest change has been at our Ward End centre. The Unity Hubb closed at the beginning of the lockdown and Ward End has had the biggest loss of volunteers because so many came into the group that had to shield.

Under the old arrangement the food was stored in the adjacent Elim church garage. On a temporary basis the church elders have agreed that we can also use the building for food distribution. The building lends itself nicely to a one way system for clients. After a number of teething problems it is now working well. It is much easier to have the food store and distribution in the same building. When the Elim Church reopens for worship this arrangement will be reviewed.

Amazing generosity

A combination of cash and food donations have been gratefully received. Food has been sourced from the central food collections and via donations from Supermarkets. We have been lucky to receive some fresh food that clients have been invited to take in addition to the longlife food parcel.



Above - Geoff Miller and Kerry Lenihan collecting the parcels donated by the vegetarian Society

Above – masks are delivered by a biker from the Shelagh Sewing Circle in Sheffield

Significant food donations

During the crisis we have received food donations from the public and businesses that have had a significant impact. The principal industrial benefactors were

- Birmingham City Council's emergency food store
- Feed Birmingham, (Organised by the Church of England, Diocese of Birmingham)
- Tesco
- B&M

We are grateful for all the generous donations we have received.

Significant cash donations

We have received a number of grants and donations from individuals. A number of bank standing orders have been taken out. The highlights since the last report are:

- Just giving - £1,700
- Souter Trust - £3,000
- Making a difference Trust - £500
- Eversheds Charitable Trust - £2,500
- A significant number of private anonymous donations

The generosity is amazing and we are very grateful to everyone.

What is changing?

Lockdown is unwinding and the emergency infrastructure that was put in place is being dismantled. Food donations from Feed Birmingham, the City Council emergency store, Tesco, B&M, etc have now ended. Schools and churches are not immediately reopening so there is a gap that will be managed by purchasing food.

At the beginning of lockdown a number of people on Furlough volunteered and they are beginning to return to work. Some volunteers are coming out of self-isolation and they are returning to their roles. Associated with the closure to the public of the 3 buildings housing the distribution centres the Foodbank has been able to avoid the chore of returning everything into the store at the end of a session.



Above – The reception at St Matthews. Sanitiser is being used by a new client. The volunteers are Hilary Miller and David Tomlinson. David has ended his furlough and has returned to work.

A new normal?

During July demand has become more consistent but is still higher than historic levels. The expectation is that demand will increase again as we enter into a deeper recession. There is going to be a gap in food donations until schools and churches reopen. The 30% increase in demand suggests that the Foodbank will need to purchase more food. For this reason it is very important that we maintain a high level of food and cash donations.

This will be the last COVID emergency update, from now on the normal newsletters will still be issued.

I do hope that you will continue to support the Aston & Nechells Foodbank. If you are able to make a donation please do so. It would be appreciated. You can donate in a variety of ways. Please see information on the next page.

Useful Information

Food distribution sessions are as follows: Nechells (Mondays 12-2 30pm), Ward End (Wednesday 1pm-3 pm and Aston (Fridays 12 30-2 30pm).

A red paper or 'e' voucher is required by clients. These are issued by one of our 160 community partners who assess if a person/family is in food poverty.

Website - <https://astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk>

Phone - 07384 213621

Email - info@astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk

Monetary Donations

Just giving - <https://www.justgiving.com/cando413>

Direct debit – See 'donate money' on <https://astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk>

Gift Aid - See 'gift aid on <https://astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk>

Cheque - please make payable to "CAN DO 4:13" and send to Mr Bob Trotman, Aston Parish Church, Witton Lane, Aston, Birmingham B6 6QA

Food donations.

Permanent collection points – Tesco supermarket in Witton Lane Aston
Sainsbury supermarket Mere Green

Direct to the foodbank – To the main warehouse in St Matthews Church Hall B7 4JH is open on a Tuesday morning from 10am to 12 noon. Please ring the doorbell to gain access. Food can also be delivered to any distribution session.

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