



Wandsworth Food Bank

The Wandsworth Food Bank provides emergency food, support and advice to people across the Borough of Wandsworth who have been pulled into poverty and hardship and who are referred in crisis. It is part of the Trussell Trust nationwide network of food banks, which together campaign to end destitution.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the need has more than doubled as an increasing number of local households have been swept into severe

hardship by the loss of jobs or of working hours, or illness. This has been exacerbated by benefit payments that do not cover the cost of essentials such as rent and food.

During the first lockdown in March 2020, the Wandsworth Food Bank provided emergency food and essential supplies to 1,200 individual households, seven in 10 of whom had never had to use its services before.

In November and December, Wandsworth Food Bank provided nearly 300 seven-day emergency food supplies a week to local people and families. Four in 10 of these are for children, three-quarters of whom are primary school age or younger.

Wandsworth Food Bank also runs an advice project in partnership with Citizens Advice Wandsworth and this saw a similar huge spike in need in 2020. The service provides expert advice and undertakes casework to try to help people resolve the problems causing crisis and hardship, including problems related to housing, benefits, employment, domestic violence, and rights of refugees and asylum seekers. It is a vital part of the provision offered by the Wandsworth Food Bank.

One older lady was helped after a bill to fix her boiler left her without enough income for food. She lives alone, has a very low income and severe long-term health problems. In addition, she had just come out of hospital. The Food Bank Advice Project looked for extra financial support for her.



She says: “My boiler had gone and I had no heating or hot water, and I thought, ‘I’ve got to fix it’. But when you get an unexpected cost like that – £150 – when you’re living hand to mouth anyway, it’s so hard. I didn’t know what to do. The food bank helped me out so much. I’m completely overwhelmed by everything they have done for me, it’s making me emotional. I’m so touched that there are so many kind people out there. The food they brought is just fantastic, and their support has taken so much pressure off me. I want to say a big thank you to all the people who have donated, and all the team and volunteers who put it together for people.”

Norwood & Brixton Food Bank

It is not just at the Wandsworth Food Bank that people are grateful for the help and support they are being given.

One of the clients at the Norwood & Brixton Food Bank, who was referred by Thames Reach, says: “I just wanted to thank the volunteers personally for their kindness and generosity, and to let them know how touched I was to receive the urgently needed help and support. They really did help me out of a dire situation and I cannot thank them enough for the work they do for myself and others.”

The Norwood & Brixton Food Bank started more than nine years ago and was originally based at St Luke, West Norwood. It is also part of the Trussell Trust network. The project has gradually expanded as the need has grown, working also from St Paul’s Brixton and Beacon Church, Brixton (when it was possible).

Gradually, those involved in the food bank came to realise that food poverty was a symptom of other underlying need and they developed a signposting and advice service to offer to clients alongside the provision of food.

When COVID-19 hit, the food bank quickly realised that face-to-face sessions were no longer possible and it moved to a completely new model of operation from the beginning of the first lockdown. This necessitated reorganising the warehouse to allow for social distancing and, following the generous loan of vehicles from a local firm, the distribution of food is now done by vans.

Further generosity from local community and individuals has allowed the creation of a Lambeth-wide food bank warehouse, and the Norwood & Brixton Food Bank has managed to integrate the stock from Waterloo and Vauxhall food banks within its newly expanded and fitted-out warehouse. It has implemented a new stock control system and facilitated a much broader geographical spread for its delivery service. The food bank is now delivering 80 to 100 food parcels a day – over a tonne of food. This is five times more than before lockdown and a remarkable tribute to the dedicated and professional project leads who coordinated and managed the whole process on behalf of the participating food banks.



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The food banks we are supporting run on the faith and generosity of all those who donate and volunteer. Please pray for them and consider what you can give to help to ensure that this wonderful life-giving and life-changing work can continue. You can donate through the Bishop of Southwark’s Lent Call: southwark.anglican.org/lentcall