



Spotlight on food bank charities

Research shows donations to these essential resources have gone down. So what can you do to help those in need?

Food banks are set up precisely to help at times like these – but they are at crisis point, with donations down and demand soaring.

A survey by the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) in October 2022 found that 64% of independent food banks have reported falling food donation levels

this year. More than half have needed to dip into reserves to pay for supplies, while one in four said they have needed to reduce the size of their food parcels.

Sabine Goodwin, coordinator for IFAN, said: 'Many of our members are really struggling to cope. I don't think it's ever been so bad as it is now. We are terrified of the scale and the level of inaction – and the misunderstanding that there seems to be about how serious this is. People are going to suffer enormously.'

Goodwin said that monetary donations are always more valuable than food donations, because they allow food banks to buy what's needed alongside funding other support, such as fuel vouchers.

She also emphasised more actions that can help: 'Please donate, but also write to your MP; take action and call this out. If you simply keep putting a sticking plaster over this problem, it's just not going to go away.'

Food banks can be independent or part of a wider group, such as the Trussell Trust. To find your nearest one, see trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank or foodaidnetwork.org.uk/our-members.