

Food banks in crisis as donations fall

By **Tony Whitfield**

FOOD banks are seeing significant drops in donations as the cost of living crisis hits home – with some people who used to give now reliant on them themselves.

More than 1,850 sites across the country depend predominately on the generosity of the public to keep their shelves replenished.

But many have seen donations drop, causing low stock and shortages.

The warnings came after Ashfield MP Lee Anderson was branded out of touch for claiming there is “not this massive use for food banks in this country” and those who knew how to cook and budget properly could make meals for 30p a day.

However, organisers which represent the network that feeds the country’s most vulnerable said demand is increasing and there is a real fear that the need may not be met if donations dry up.

The Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN), which represents over 550 food banks, said many are at breaking point and charitable food aid

has been an inadequate and unsustainable stopgap measure to growing poverty in the UK for 12 years.

Sabine Goodwin, IFAN co-ordinator, said: “The challenge is not that people don’t know how to budget or can’t cook but that the Government

is ignoring a rapidly worsening food insecurity crisis in plain sight.

“Food banks are struggling to cope as donation levels drop and demand for their help spirals out of control.

“At the very least, benefits must be uprated in line with inflation. The long-term impact of pushing yet more people into poverty and destitution will be devastating.”

She added: “Independent food banks are seeing significant drops in food and financial donations, and some people who used to donate are now having to use one themselves.”

The Trussell Trust said its network of over 1,300 food banks source their own stock and levels varied.

A spokeswoman added: “We are aware that some are seeing a decrease in donations and shortages of certain items, and would recommend contacting your local food bank or looking at our website for information about what’s needed in your area.

“While there are concerns about donations, the primary issue is need for our services, which has been increasing year on year. That’s why we need urgent Government action.

“We are encouraging our food banks to hold additional stock in preparation for any sharp increases in need.”



STRUGGLING: Food banks are running out of stock