



Meals supplied  
**up 10%**



Food donated  
**up 11%**

It would have been great to have been able to report that 2017/18 was the year that those in power came to grip with the problem of hunger in 21st Century Britain and ensured that the number of families needing access to emergency food supplies declined.

Sadly, the opposite was the case, and the roll out of Universal Credit, coupled with wages which are insufficient for families to survive on, has served to intensify the problem such that demand on Southport foodbank grew by over 10% in the last year. We have been fortunate that our supporters from the public and commercial organisations have responded with increased generosity and, as a result, our food donations were up by 11%, enabling us to cope with the demand. What is clear is that this cannot and must not be allowed to continue indefinitely - it is a national disgrace - and the Trussell Trust is working hard to both highlight and publicise the truths which lie behind the figures. In our area alone, through our six distribution centres, we provided almost 50,000 meals, over 20,000 of which went to feed hungry local children.

But we are here not only to provide food and a non-judgemental listening ear in a welcoming environment. Through our Money Advice and Welfare Benefits arms we aim to support clients through their difficult times and ensure that they are receiving all that to which they are entitled. In helping people further, we are also greatly supported by numerous outside agencies, each specialist in their own field.

The Food Pantry was a major addition to our armoury from November last and provides a service whereby families with ongoing financial problems can purchase food sourced from partner organisations at much reduced rates and thus feel secure whilst their other difficulties are being tackled, whilst giving them dignity and increasing their self-esteem.

## Notable landmarks in our year

- With support from the Co-op and the One Stop shop organisations we obtained a new (second hand) van to both collect and deliver food to our centres
  - We distributed 50,000 meals
  - Over 50 tonnes of food was donated, collected and processed
  - Over 100 volunteers gave over 11,000 hours of free service - we are so grateful
    - Food Pantry launched
  - We received substantial donations from Southport Soroptomists and Airway Solutions
- Two special event collections were held at Tesco, Kew with over 7 tonnes of food collected
  - We have been able to supply fresh food in addition to our usual offering on occasions
  - Through national agreement, increased participation has been arranged with Asda
- Locally we have added food donation points and formed partnerships with Southport Football Club, McDonald's at Kew, Champion Newspapers and Experian
- Numerous other local companies, churches, schools, Brownies, Rotary and individuals support us throughout the year - too many to mention individually in this short report - but greatly valued nonetheless

*We never forget that we are only one cog in the wheel of support*



## Welfare Benefits Advice

We provide advice, support and advocacy to clients with issues relating to welfare benefits. This includes assessing benefit entitlement, assisting with completing benefit forms (paper and online) and writing letters, telephoning DWP and other agencies, explaining decisions, assisting with challenging decisions and submitting appeals, and signposting clients to other agencies if appropriate. We also accompany clients to medical assessments and tribunals as appropriate. The service differs from advice services provided by other agencies because we engage with clients at their point of crisis when they first attend Foodbank and are able to act quickly to help resolve issues.

During 2017 / 2018 we supported more than 230 clients. We helped clients secure more than £250,000 (annual value plus arrears) and there are several clients who received more than £2000 in arrears owed to them. One client received more than £8000 and another £10,000 relating to underpayments of benefits dating back several years. Many clients tell us that they would not have coped financially or emotionally without our support. We also achieved a 100% success rate at appeal to tribunal (4/4) with more in the pipeline.

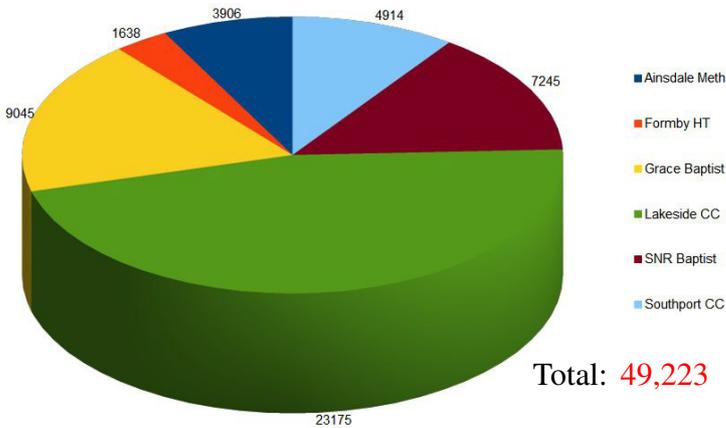
The advisor team grew from 2 in April 2017 to 5 in March 2018. There is broad and detailed knowledge of relevant subject matter and this is supported by continuous training and development.

During the year Universal Credit was rolled out in Southport and although there are some advantages to the changes many of our clients experienced financial hardship and difficulties navigating the new system, which resulted in delays to receiving benefits.

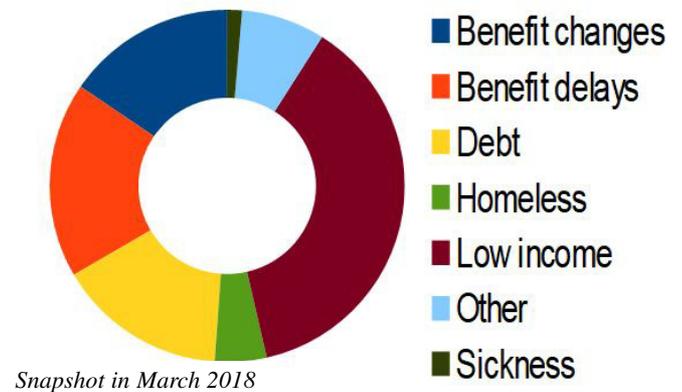
We also saw a worrying trend for non-UK EEA citizens experiencing unnecessary delays and obstacles in progressing claims and receiving benefits.

Looking ahead we expect to become increasingly involved in helping clients who are transferring to Universal Credit. And we aim to raise awareness of the particular difficulties in accessing benefits for clients with mental health issues.

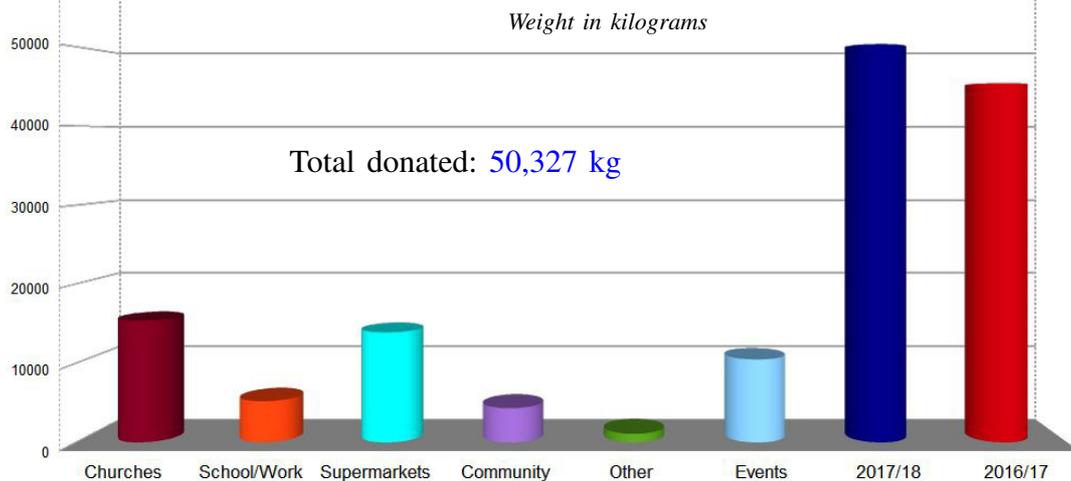
### Meals distributed - by distribution centres



### What drives our clients to the Foodbank



### Sources and weight of food



### Southport Community Money Advice

We took on ten new clients during the year and, of the existing ones, some will soon be debt free. Through co-operation with our Welfare Benefits group which secured the client's rightful benefit entitlement backdated and access to hardship grants, we were able to halt the repossession of the property one of our client's occupied.

Debt is an acknowledged source of stress and poor mental health. Our ability to help lift this burden is something which must be good for the whole community.

We gratefully acknowledge the support we have received from EVERYONE, including

