



Report and Accounts of Bromley Borough Foodbank

**For the period
1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023**

***“a community led charity, helping local
people to get back on their feet and improve
their financial independence”***

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Chair of Trustees' Statement

Let me say that the position of Chair of Trustees draws its strength from the whole trustee team. In this regard, BBF is extremely fortunate in having a Trustee Board made up of 5 people with proven track records in their fields of expertise and willing to volunteer high levels of time and energy to our work. What is more, as a team, we are united in our leadership of and commitment to supporting our clients. I could not wish for a better group.

We have a hard working team of salaried staff who manage and run our operations effectively and efficiently which means we can offer the best kind of service to our clients. They give more than just their paid hours and this is very much appreciated as everything seems to be very busy at the moment.

Then our army of volunteers provide a range of services from running the distribution centres to driving around making deliveries and much more. It is the volunteers who face the clients and listen daily to very sad stories of how poverty is affecting so many.

Our aim is to give immediate help in terms of food and other items, and then go the extra mile by signposting clients to help agencies who can provide potential ways to pull out of food poverty. We do not believe there is virtue in locking people into a reliance on hand-outs, nor is this how a nation such as ours should behave.

Over the last few months, we have met with the MPs who represent the Borough and had good conversations with them, which hopefully will continue. They have also visited our distribution centres to see how we operate. Having good relationships with local MPs, no matter which party they represent, is important for us as it greatly helps mutual understanding.

We have also been working on developing our relationship with Bromley Council, identifying which members are the most appropriate contacts. Our desire is to establish with them a strong working relationship where ideas can be discussed, data can be shared and joint actions agreed on how to make the best use of available resources in the fight against poverty. So much happening at a local level is linked to the Council, which makes this an essential partnership.

The continued generosity of the general public suggests there is an appetite for pushing national and local governments to act, by increasing significantly funds available for tackling poverty. We believe it is important to strengthen our relationship with local MPs and the Bromley Council so we can emphasise the public position and influence their thinking.

And it's very true that the generosity of the people of the Borough is so important for our work. Not just individuals but businesses, schools, charity organisations and others. It is only through this generosity that we are able to develop and grow our offer to clients.

The vision of Trussell Trust and all its networked food banks is simply for a UK without the need for foodbanks. We believe it is not right that many people cannot afford their own food. Last year, in the Trussell Trust network alone, more than 328,000 families (760,000 people) were forced to turn to food banks for the first time, there was a 37% increase in demand and 3 million food parcels were given out; not statistics showing Britain at its best. It is not right that anyone should experience hunger or poverty, and we know we all have a responsibility to stand alongside people in crisis.

And some basic numbers; a few years ago, the number of people who couldn't top up their Pre-pay meters was relatively low. There was a dramatic increase last year and this year already, the number is higher than for the whole of 2021. Universal Credit provides £85 pw for a single adult whereas the Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates the cost of essentials is around £120 pw. This highlights one of the reasons why many of those on benefits need to turn to foodbanks.

It is bodies such as Trussell Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation that collect, analyse and investigate all this data, thus providing a proper base for discussion with the Government and others. Understanding and action comes from facts not just feelings.

My thanks go out to all who work for, within, around and in support of BBF. If it wasn't for you, there would many 000's of hungry and despondent people and families around with little help to become financially independent.

We continue to work towards a just, compassionate future, where no one should have to use a food bank to get by. Together, we can end the need for foodbanks.

Simon Lees

Chair of Trustees

Objectives and Activities

Bromley Borough Foodbank (BBF) is formed and shaped by Christian principles, in response to Jesus' command to "Love your neighbour as yourself" Math 22:39, and is linked to many churches in the Borough. It is a member of the Trussell Trust (TT) franchise that has as its vision "a UK without the need for foodbanks", thus ending hunger resulting from poverty. Underpinning this vision is the BBF objective, within the Borough of Bromley, to relieve hardship amongst people by, in particular, but not exclusively:

- a) Providing emergency food and essential toiletries to individuals and families in need;
- b) Using such other means including the provision of support or signposting to relevant information and other advisory services supported by the churches in the Borough.

The clear aim of b) is to move our clients away from the need to use the services of a foodbank. We see this as fundamental to all we do.

The charity's affiliation to TT provides it with many tools, supply sources and in addition, TT has developed strategic links to a variety of organisations that enables a wide range of grants to be made available. Critically, anonymous client information is sent to TT so it can build a database across the UK in order to inform and challenge Government policy.

The main activities of BBF include:

- Running a number of distribution centres which are opened at different times during the week depending on the availability of the premises and volunteers
- Operating a warehouse for collecting, recording, sorting and organising distribution to the various centres
- Ensuring the supplies given out are appropriate to the people receiving them
- Linking with agencies which are entrusted to provide food vouchers to clients
- Working with schools which recommend families needing BBF support
- Liaising with supermarkets which provide food or financial support
- Developing relationships with churches and schools which commit to providing harvest festival supplies to the foodbank
- Gaining funding through presentations to a range of organisations, making collections, applying for grants and running fund raising events

Achievements and Performance

Trussell Trust is continuing to develop a practical roadmap for achieving the vision of “the UK without the need for foodbanks”. This includes 8 areas of attack with necessary action at all levels of society, meaning it is not just a government responsibility but requires the public to accept their role in realising the vision. The roadmap is summarised in the following diagram:



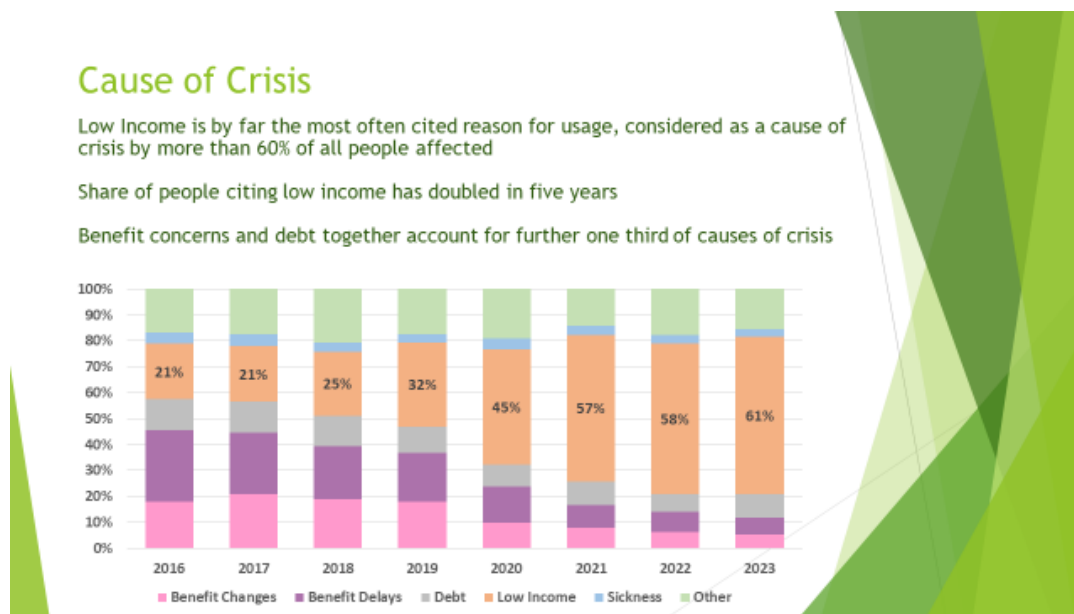
This provides us with a base for our development of BBF as we are fully behind these initiatives and will do all we can to play our part in this, taking account of local conditions and how well our funds hold up. Our intention to create a new post, Organising & Local Mobilisation Coordinator, is driven by the need to create staff space for strategic relationship building, engagement of local communities and communicating within the Borough.

The demand for our services has seen a big increase over the last year with the usage of vouchers by adults up 40%; for pensioners the increase being 10%. For children the increase has been over 50%, which puts this demand back up to the peak level during Covid.

During the year 120 tonnes of stock were given out, some 5 tonnes more than donations received. This puts a strain on the supply chain but we have managed to avoid buying in a lot of stock by reviewing how much stock we need to hold.

Our volunteer pool is nearing 200 and they gave a staggering 15,840 hours of their time to help our clients. Without this help we could not operate. It's a reminder of the fantastic value of volunteers in the charity sector but also the fact that so many areas of life in Britain depends on the hard work of unpaid workers.

If we look at the causes of food poverty, we can see how they have shifted over time with low income now the predominant reason. We are seeing more and more clients who work, sometimes full time, needing support as their wages are just not sufficient to cover everyday costs.



Probably the most significant issue affecting people with low income is the inadequate support provided by Universal Credit. The basic level is just not enough to fund essentials, let alone any extras. Until the level of support through this benefit is more in line with what is needed to provide essential living items, it will not be possible to wind down foodbanks.

We continue to sponsor CAB advisers who offer remote and outreach voluntary services to our centres and speak directly to clients who need their help. This has proved extremely successful in speeding up the process of gaining the correct type of assistance for people in need and reassuring clients that they are being listened to. For the last year, this helped clients gain access to over £700,000 in income uplift. However, CAB has been under extreme pressure as they experienced a 300% increase in demand for their services in December, which is, of course, unsustainable.

We believe it is important to seek improvements in the service we deliver and be willing to consider new ways to support our clients. Fortunately, our funds position has allowed us to implement two new initiatives that we see as delivering significant benefits to the clients.

The first initiative is a Supermarket Voucher Scheme

Our normal practice is to give out 7 days of food in a standard package. We have noticed that this can be difficult for families of 4 or more as the weight of the food makes travelling difficult. Perhaps more importantly, we believe our clients should be able to have more control on what they eat and be able to have a wider choice of what they have. We are therefore experimenting with, for larger families, providing only 3 days of food plus a supermarket voucher for the other 4 days. This has only been in operation for a few months but is already proving popular with clients and actually reduces the work at the various distribution centres. It also comes at a time when food donations have been reducing. How long we can offer this change of service depends on the strength of future financial donations.

The second initiative involves CAB gateway assessors

With the big increase in demand for the services of CAB and BBF, there have been times when staff have been overwhelmed and clients unable to obtain the help they need. The only way to solve this was for CAB to recruit 2 gateway assessors to work exclusively for the BBF client stream. This way, clients can be assessed quickly and correctly triaged before being given a voucher for BBF supplies. Unfortunately, the Council is not able to cover the costs of such recruitment, even though it is their responsibility. Therefore, BBF has committed for a period of 1 or 2 years to cover the associated costs. This only began in late Q1 2023 but has already had a significant impact on the total operations, particularly in BBF centres.

Public benefit

As a charity for the relief and prevention of poverty, BBF only needs to satisfy the “benefit” requirement of charity law; the “public” aspect then being automatically satisfied provided benefits are identifiable.

The Borough of Bromley is relatively wealthy; however, there still exists a significant number of people and families within the Borough who are in need of emergency supplies of food and other essential items. Analysis shows that the main causes of this are low income, benefit changes, debt, no recourse to public funds and sickness. Much of this situation could be alleviated if national governments and local councils saw this as a priority and responded appropriately. Without foodbanks such as BBF there would be no help for those finding themselves in food poverty, a direct consequence of financial poverty.

The BBF centres are set up to provide a whole range of food items and other supplies that are carefully packaged into appropriate parcels. There are standards that specify the best mix of foods to provide nutritious meals for individuals and families of different sizes. These take account of dietary needs as well as ages and number of children. In addition, various household goods are provided where needed to help with hygiene.

All the items distributed by BBF are donated by a wide range of individuals and organisations around the Borough. These donors and others often also make financial gifts to ensure BBF is financially secure. In addition, various grants are available from grant organisations or others, e.g. supermarkets.

Provisions are only given out on the basis of foodbank vouchers which, in order to provide the most appropriate help, are obtained from local agencies. If the agent feels someone is struggling to put food on the table due to financial hardship, they will issue them with a foodbank voucher. The local agency can also provide long-term support if needed to help address some of the issues behind the reasons for the crisis.

BBF works with a number of different agencies, such as Citizens Advice, children’s centres, housing associations, schools, social services, Hestia, health visitors and many others. They help identify the cause of the crisis, offering practical guidance and allow BBF to prepare suitable emergency food for the right number of people.

If we receive fresh fruit or vegetable, which we are unable to store, we can pass these items onto other food agencies.

From this, it is clear that the BBF is providing extremely valuable benefits.

Structure, Governance and Management

Bromley Borough Foodbank is governed by an agreed governance document and overseen by 5 Trustees.

It is part of a nationwide franchise network of foodbanks operating under the umbrella of the Trussell Trust.

There are 4 distribution centres operating within the Borough and run by the BBF:

Central Orpington

Unit 7-9
Walnuts Shopping Centre
Orpington High Street
Orpington
BR6 0TW

Penge

The Salvation Army
172-176 Maple Road
London
SE20 8JB

Central Bromley

United Reformed Church
Widmore Road
Bromley
BR1 1RY

Orpington

Oak Community Church
345 Chipperfield Road
St Paul's Cray
BR5 2LJ

All these facilities are offered to BBF cost free.

In addition, a warehouse is operated from premises in Ashgrove Industrial Estate, Bromley, which is leased to us. It is used to collect donated goods that are then weighed and recorded. This warehouse distributes items to the 4 distribution centres and is a key part of our operations. To facilitate this, we run a delivery van.

We also have access to the basement of the old Orpington Library, which is used for storing long dated stock.

BBF operates with a salaried Chief Operating Officer, 2 Warehouse Coordinators, Operations Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator. Some of these roles are part time. In addition, there are over 150 volunteers who run the various distribution centres and work within the warehouse.

Early in 2022 we introduced a new Trustee Sub-Committee structure in order to expedite decision making where trustees are involved and provide a clear framework for the Chief Operating Officer to work within.

Trustees Details

Mr Simon Lees – chair

Mr Stephen Walsh – secretary

Mr Duncan Aitkins

Mrs Jasmin Sen

Mrs Basak Aziz

New Trustees are provided with information about UK foodbanks, the Trussell Trust that supports BBF and introduced to the various BBF distribution centres and warehouse. They are made aware of any legislation that is relevant to charities and foodbanks, including training where appropriate. Trussell trust provides a wide range of documentation relevant to trustees' responsibilities.

No trustee has received any remuneration or benefit from their position within the charity.

The Trustee Board meets every 2 months and is supported by, as Minute Secretary, Andy Goddard.

Risk management statement

We recognise that risk management is an important element of good management practice and we encourage an open and receptive approach to identifying, discussing and addressing risks. We accept that risk can never be fully eliminated but the scale of most risks can be reduced by appropriate action and where residual exposure exists, ways to mitigate can often be identified.

We are particularly conscious that our premises are run mostly by a wide range of volunteers, some of whom may only be with us for a short time, and this can bring its own level of risk for older helpers or less experienced members. In addition, the clients who visit our distribution centres are often anxious and stressed, which can produce situations with where risks are possible for them and us. Regular conversations among the Centre Coordinators and the COO highlight any specific actions that are needed and any particular issues are reported to the Trustee Board.

We have developed risk assessment processes and this year, a range of actions have been taken following a number of risk reviews. In some cases, we have found it necessary to contract a consultant to help us update our processes and we are working through various action plans.

Our Health & Safety Sub-Committee is responsible for reviewing the risk register, with high-risk items considered by the Trustee Board on a regular basis.

Financial Review

The people of the Borough of Bromley, along with businesses, schools, shops and charity organisations, have continued to be most generous. We receive each month some 300 donations, most of which are regular, and plenty of on-off gifts. It has surprised us on many occasions the level of financial support we attract, especially from some organisations we had not heard of before. We are getting to know these businesses and have a number of partnerships working closely with us.

As can be seen from the accounts, we finished the year in a healthy financial position and this has enabled us to develop new initiatives.

Having a good level of income and reserves means we are able to pay the lease on our warehouse (£30,000 pa) without worrying where the next payment will come from. We have needed to spend quite a sum of money on important upgrading of our H & S capabilities, including fire safety at the warehouse. Running a professional distribution business is not cheap and being a charity does not lessen the responsibilities, especially with so many vulnerable clients and a large team of volunteers.

Our old van was proving to be too small to make the sort of deliveries we need to carry out and was not compliant with ULEZ! We therefore bought a new (2nd hand) van and went for an electric model, which all our drivers enjoy, and a local business installed a charger at the warehouse free. We sold the old van for a little more than we paid for it 3 1/2 years ago!

Our staff organisation has expanded in order to deal with the increasing demands for food support and to lessen the stress on all the teams. Two part-time administration assistants have greatly enhanced our ability to respond quickly to a large number of messages coming in each day and by introducing a job share for managing the warehouse, we are much better equipped to operate at full capability every day. We also now have someone working part-time, recruiting, training, supporting and coordinating all the activities of our important team of volunteers.

Donations got a boost towards the end of 2022 as the publicity over the cost of living galvanised those that could afford to give more. This then filtered through to Gift Aid. Donations have now returned to a more even level. We also continued to receive grants, mainly from TT but also other agencies.

Increased expenditure during the year included £40,000 for the new van, the first quarter's costs of the supermarket voucher scheme, our expanded staff team and we have taken the opportunity to upgrade a number of pieces of equipment, including IT items, so we can work more efficiently and effectively in supporting our clients.

Receipts and Payments Accounts

For the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023					
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Last year
	note	£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Donations	1	256,202	0	256,202	186,027
Gift Aid	2	32,888	0	32,888	25,830
Church funding	3	16,164	0	16,164	10,747
Grants	4	20,270	99,507	119,777	79,512
Fund raising		1,674	0	1,674	492
Interest		68		68	0
Sub total		327,266	99,507	426,773	302,608
Payments					
Staff	5	98,619	17,982	116,601	62,500
Contractor	6	0	0	0	6,758
Vehicle costs	7	45,705	0	45,705	4,434
Property	8	24,723	7,778	32,501	36,002
CAB secondment	9	9,113	27,454	36,567	45,393
Voucher scheme	10	20,500	0	20,500	
Other	11	36,571	2,469	39,040	46,269
Sub total		235,231	55,683	290,914	201,356
Net of receipts/ (payments)		92,035	43,824	135,859	101,252
Opening cash funds		526,879	40,369	567,248	465,996
Closing cash funds		618,914	84,193	703,107	567,248
Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period					
Cash funds					
Banks		NatWest current	40,407		
		NatWest saving	80,200		
		Flagstone Group	582,500	spread funds	
Total Cash			703,107		
* Warehouse lease contract until 15th July 2031 with break clause 15th July 2026					
* No guarantees have been given whereby any potential liability is outstanding					
* There are no debts outstanding secured by an express charge on assets					

Mr S Lees



23rd May 2023

Accounting Policies

a) Basis of preparation. The accounts have been prepared on a Cash Receipts and Payments basis.

b) Grants receivable. Grant monies are only included once the funds have been received. Where grants given are linked to specific activities or expenditure, they are accounted for as Restricted Funds.

c) Fixed assets. The new van was charged to expenditure rather than capitalised.

d) Reserves targets. The general reserve level has been uplifted to £60,000 in recognition of advice from Trussell Trust and also Charity Commission expectations. This policy will be kept under review.

e) Warehouse Lease Fund. We are committed for a minimum of 5 years rental for the new warehouse at a cost of about £30,000 per annum. Acting prudently, we have set a reserve of £150,000 to cover this 5 year period.

Notes to the Accounts

1. Individual donations, some from companies, saw a boost at the end of 2022, probably due to the publicity over the cost of living situation. The number of regular donors, both as standing orders and online giving, is close to 300 per month.
2. Gift aid has been claimed for everyone who has confirmed their eligibility for such tax refunds as well as anonymous gifts under the HRMC small gift scheme.
3. Church funding remains an important underpinning of our activities.
4. A number of restricted grants were received during the year. Through Trussell Trust we received £30,760 as further funding for a CAB secondee, £17,862 for use against expenditure on staff £34,750 to cover the costs of a future post for local mobilisation. A number of general grants were also received.
5. Staff cost are higher due to the need to extend our employee base to cope with ever increasing demand.
6. The contractor role has now ceased.
7. Vehicle costs include the expenditure on a new van at a cost of £40,560.

8. Property costs relate mainly to the warehouse lease.
9. Covers the costs of Citizen's Advice Bureau secondees.
10. This is the first quarter's costs of the new Voucher scheme.
11. The main areas of expenditure included in the "other" category are; fuel & Christmas vouchers, centre rental, IT equipment.

Benefits not included in the financial report.

-Well over 150 volunteers undertook some 16,000 hours of unpaid work providing a benefit of at least £200,000.

-Various premises were again provided free of charge to be used as distribution centres and this is a further benefit of at least £15,000.

-Generally, all items given out to clients are donated free to the Foodbank, although occasionally emergency purchases are undertaken. During the year, 120,000Kgs of food were distributed with an assumed value of £280,000.

Restricted funds - £

	Opening	Incoming	Outgoing	Closing
TT CAB support	21,240	30,760	27,454	24,546
TT Volunteers support	10,721	17,862	19,631	8,952
Warehouse lease	7,778	0	7,778	0
Rotary Club	500	0	500	0
LDF	130	0	130	0
TT Winter payment	0	5,000	190	4,810
Bank of America (vouchers)	0	6,135	0	6,135
TT OLM funding	0	34,750	0	34,750

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
BROMLEY BOROUGH FOODBANK**

I report on the accounts of the Bromley Borough Foodbank for the year ended 31st March 2023.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43 (2) of the Charities Act (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts (under section 43 (3) (a) of the 1993 Act);
- To follow procedure laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43 (7) (b) of the 1993 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT


In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act

have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name:

Catherine Emma Gower Melia
Non-serving Elder, The Temple United Reformed Church,
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London SE13 5SF

Date:

4th May 2023