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**PRESS RELEASE: UNDER STRICT EMBARGO FOR 00:01 WEDNESDAY, May 15, 2024**

**REACH Figures Show 50% More Children Fed Amid Economic News**

*Reach Community Projects, based in Haverhill, Suffolk, is concerned about a lack of long-term social security systems in place as latest statistics show their Haverhill foodbank has fed 56% more children than 5 years ago.*

Trussell Trust, who REACH work with in partnership, have had an alarming record number of emergency food parcels given out in the past year.

The news that the UK is technically out of recession was balanced by the Bank of England’s decision not to lower interest rates, indicating that there is still inflationary pressure in the economy.

REACH are concerned about the enormous rise in the number of children in the local area who have needed an emergency food parcel. The number in comparison to five years ago is a shocking 56% increase in children fed by REACH.

REACH also wants to highlight the steady increase since 2018 of adults aged over 65 being fed through emergency food, in line with the findings of Trussell Trust, from only 9 helped throughout 2018/19 to over 50 helped in 2023/24.

REACH notes that prices and rents are still rising and putting considerable pressure on already pressed families working hard to balance their own household economics. For example, food inflation is still running at 4% (*Office of National Statistics*), that for clothing is much the same (*Statistica*) and the *Department for Transport* reports bus fares rising at 4.6%.

REACH’s point is that the costs of food, clothing, accommodation, transport and other essentials of life, are still rising with consequential negative impact upon many families and individuals already in great need. This concern is borne out by the increasing numbers of people turning to REACH for debt and long-term support as well as the rising activity at its food bank warehouse.

**Quotes:**

Henry Wilson, CEO of Reach Community Projects, said:

“To see more and more families in our community having to turn to us for emergency support is not just saddening, it is also unacceptable. For even a single child to be hungry in need of food is a failure, and we need to see some real changes made across the board to prevent this from happening, and to turn this heartbreaking trend around.”

“One of the reasons I worry about our fellow citizens in need is that, while the cost of living continues its upward trend, one of the major safety nets, the Household Support Fund, is due to end in just a very few months from now and that, in itself, is likely to precipitate a further leap in the numbers suffering hardship along with the despair that so often accompanies it. I say again that Pounds in Pockets is what makes the difference.”

Real life example (\*name changed to protect identity)

*Aimee\*, who is a single mum aged 23, felt hopeless when she came to us for a food parcel. She wants to do the best she can for her toddler and has had to take a part time job topping up her Universal Credit payment of £311.68 a month (the standard amount for under 25s). She is doing all the right things, but just doesn’t have enough money coming in to cover the essentials, and she couldn’t afford to buy food for her daughter and still pay her bills.*

*We were able to provide food for them both, and stopped the monthly rental charge for her washing machine through funding from the Household Support Fund used to buy her one instead. This small act was an incredible relief for Aimee, who relies on her machine as much as anyone with a small toddler does, and said that expense back each month really made a difference. We’ll continue to advocate on her behalf, and support her with financial and budgeting advice.*

**Key stats:**

-56% increase in children fed compared to 5 years ago by Haverhill Foodbank, run by Reach Community Projects in partnership with the Trussell Trust

-Increase in over 65s receiving food - 9 in 2018/19 to 52 in 2023/24 (478% increase)

-Rising cost of essentials specified as the most common specified reason for needing a food parcel (23%)

- Food inflation is still running at 4% (*Office of National Statistics*)

*-Department for Transport* reports bus fares rising at 4.6%.

**-END-**

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*REACH Community Projects (registered charity 1169108) was founded in 2010 by Henry Wilson MBE, a lifelong resident of Haverhill. The charity aims to relieve and prevent financial hardship whilst tackling the causes. As well as operating a foodbank (part of the Trussell Trust national network) and providing emergency aid (help with utilities, basic bedding, and kitchenware through partnerships with other organisations), REACH works longer term with clients to help them rise above and out of their crisis. This includes offering debt and budgeting advice (Reach is part of the Community Money Advice network), signposting clients to other appropriate support (help with mental health, homelessness, legal advice etc.) and supporting clients in other ways including helping them to complete forms, apply for jobs, accompanying them to court hearings and more.*