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| **Worcester Foodbank – review of 2016** |  |

Worcester Foodbank, under the guidance of the Foodbank Manager and with a team of over 100 volunteers, has had a busy year, seeing a 35% increase in usage during the last 12 months. During 2016 we gave out 5,308 3 day food parcels to people who would otherwise have gone hungry, which equates to over 51 tonnes of food.

The rise in usage has necessitated a move in premises, and in July 2016 we moved into a new unit at 7 Lowesmoor Wharf. The new centre gives us space to deal with health and safety issues, and give clients more space and privacy. We are in the process of reordering the space, and have plans to add in a disabled toilet, shower and a simple kitchen. We realise the need to have a holistic approach to the needs of our clients, and to that end we plan to have CAP Debt Centre and Job Club operating from the same site, helping clients out of debt and into employment. We also have an excellent relationship with The Good Soil Project, and they now use some of our warehouse space.

At Foodbank, we are in the business of restoring lives and renewing hope. We feed the hungry, the lowly and the downtrodden, and through doing so we try and give people a glimpse of Jesus, the real Bread of Life. Most volunteers have a Christian background and are active in their local church, while other volunteers share the heart for serving in our community and overtly show God’s love in all that they do within Foodbank. We offer prayer to any client who would like it.

Here are just a few examples of the human stories we have encountered at Foodbank in the last year:

* A Young mum moved to this area to make a new start after marriage break up. She had gained a job as a carer but can’t start until her DBS clearance comes through. In the mean time she had very little income and a young daughter to care for. Foodbank fed her and her family, and gave them hope.
* An ex-soldier had made many job applications over 6 month period with not one offer of interview. He was making the required number of applications each week, but when his wife became ill and the school holidays loomed, his priority was to keep the family safe, and he fell behind with applications. His benefits were sanctioned for 6 weeks. Foodbank fed him and his family, and restored their dignity.
* On our ASDA food collection day a man whom our volunteers thought was an unlikely donor (wearing a Manchester United top!) came out of the shop carrying one tin and a carrier bag. He kept the tin and donated the bag saying thank you for helping his son last year. There are countless stories like this from former Foodbank clients.

We have helped run some other projects in the past year. The Christmas Toy Project, run by a volunteer who wanted to make sure that no child in Worcester went without a present on Christmas day, saw us give away 176 new, gift-wrapped, personally labelled toys. Another volunteer piloted a scheme with Stanley Road School which saw us supply School Holiday Food Parcels to families who rely on free school meals during term time. We have also developed an excellent PR team, who have been behind our successful Reverse Advent Calendar and In Their Shoes campaigns.