

## **West Cheshire Foodbank joins campaign to ensure everyone can afford the essentials.**

West Cheshire Foodbank is supporting the 'Guarantee our Essentials' campaign calling for the UK government to reform Universal Credit to ensure that everyone can afford the essentials we all need to get by - and help end the need for food banks.

They are joining more than 100 food banks across the UK who are taking action to show support for an 'Essentials Guarantee' and calling for the basic rate of Universal Credit to cover the cost of essentials that people need such as food, household bills, and travel costs.

Ian Oulton, Trustee of WCFB said: "we are seeing more and more people plunged deeper into poverty and coming through the doors of food banks. In the last 12 months we provided 16408 emergency food parcels to local people who couldn't afford the essentials. 5973 of these were provided for children. These statistics are reflective of the picture across the UK as the Trussell Trust recently announced that their network - of which we're a part - distributed almost three million emergency food parcels between April 2022 - March 2023 - the highest number on record".

"In our food bank, the majority of the people that we support are in receipt of Universal Credit, including many who will also be in work. Right now, Universal Credit is not providing enough to cover the costs of life's essentials, such as food, household bills or travel costs".

"The Trussell Trust estimates that to afford even these core essential costs a single person £120 a week, however the basic rate of Universal Credit is just £85 a week. This is already too low, yet people needing to use our food bank can have up to 25% of that deducted to repay debts, such as advance payments and budgeting loans from the Department for Work & Pensions".

"We're proud of the work that we're doing to help meet the needs of our community, but we don't want to exist. We believe everyone should have enough money to be able to afford to buy food and other essentials."

To find out more about the Guarantee our Essentials campaign, West Cheshire Foodbank is holding a stall in these locations:

8 September 2023 **Ellesmere Port**, 10.30am-4pm outside Food warehouse, Port Arcades

9 September 2023 **Chester** -10.30am - 3.30pm outside Town Hall

The food bank is inviting everyone from the local community to come and find out about the campaign, sign their petition and show support for their work in the community.