

Highways England weighs in with one tonne donation for food banks

Almost 1,000kg of items was collected by the teams taking care of motorways and main A roads across the East Midlands, while workers carrying out the widening of the A500 in Staffordshire delivered 37kg of goods to help people in need and are continuing to collect.

From tinned goods to pasta and rice, to tea bags and toilet rolls, a shopping list of foods desperately needed by food banks for the emergency parcels was collected.

The donations came as the Trussell Trust, the UK's largest food bank provider, revealed a 20 per cent increase in the number of food parcels going to children over the summer holidays last year.

Recent figures from the trust showed that 87,496 food parcels went to children in the UK during the summer break in 2018, 20 per cent up on the same period in 2017.

And the Trussell Trust expects demand this year to be as high as families who are entitled to free school meals during term time feel the extra financial pressure over the summer break.

To help those in local communities who risk going hungry this summer, staff from Highways England and the East Midlands Asset Delivery (EMAD) partnership organised collections at offices across the region – covering Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

The huge collection weighing almost one tonne included 156 tins of baked beans, 170 tins of tuna, 90 bags of pasta, 139 jars of cooking sauces, 155 tins of vegetables, 40 boxes of tea bags, 79 toilet rolls and over 300 nappies. The collections were divided up to go to three food banks in the region.

Highways England Assistant Contract Collaboration Manager Nicola Tomlinson said:

This fantastic contribution from all of our suppliers really does take working collaboratively to the next level. I'm astounded by the generosity of the workforces and hope our donation will make a big difference to families in communities across our region.

Kay Fleming, Framework Manager for nmcn, said:

I've never seen so many tins of beans and I used to work in a shop! I'm so proud of the East Midlands' Customer and People team who

promoted this worthwhile cause.

Meanwhile in Staffordshire, members of the Highways England and Osborne A500 Etruria Widening Team recently dropped off a delivery of food to the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank, part of the Trussell Trust network.

At the first delivery are John Bennett, warehouse coordinator for the Stoke food bank, Lee Brook, Osborne general foreperson; Kimberley Wild, Osborne performance manager; and Humzah Mir, Highways England project manager.

The A500 is being widened from two to three lanes in both directions between Porthill (A5271) and Wolstanton (A527) as part of a £17.5 million upgrade.

A collection box has been set up at the site office for food donations and the first delivery was made just before the schools broke up for summer. Collections will now continue over the duration of the scheme, due to finish autumn 2020.

Kimberley Wild, Osborne Performance Manager, said:

We continue to try to find opportunities to engage and help local communities where possible, particularly when we are effectively part of the community for a period of time, through our work. We hope that the food bank will be successful and help support the community.

Nigel Webster, from the Bulwell and Bestwood Foodbank in Nottingham, thanked EMAD for their donation and told how stocks were running low this time of year while Gareth Duffield, the Trussell Trust's Area Manager for Birmingham and Northern Counties, added:

We're so glad food banks in our network could benefit from the collection organised by Highways England to help support people facing crisis. We have seen a record demand in food bank use in the past decade, with more and more people struggling to afford the basics. This isn't right.

We're continually blown away by people's support to provide emergency help, and ultimately work towards a future without hunger and poverty.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.