

Feeding the Gaps

food poverty and food surplus redistribution in Oxford

"People have to decide whether to eat or heat their houses. Some even bring the free food that they receive back to the foodbank, because they have no money to pay for gas to cook it with."

1. THERE IS ENOUGH FOOD

- We waste 14 million tonnes of food every year in the UK
- The problem is reaching people

"Very occasionally we have to limit the amounts requested – but usually it's the other way around, we actually have to encourage people to take what they need."

2. FOOD FEEDS MORE THAN HUNGER

- Food acts as a gateway to access services offering a wide range of support
- Increased food-related skills help improve confidence and the ability to eat healthily.

"The top reason why people come – even above getting a free meal, is company. The second reason is hunger."

3. FOOD SERVICES ARE NOT ABUSED

- No services report repeated abuse
- Free and subsidised food is not creating dependency

"This happened once, with one individual – he took food and sold it – we have had no further issues since explaining to him that that isn't allowed."

4. MORE CAN BE DONE

- A cultural change is needed to break down stigmas of hunger and surplus food
- Food is best used with other forms of support, not just on its own

"We don't pitch it as a food parcel – we ask if they'd like to be part of a new green initiative, preventing good food from going to landfill. It works very well – they come away not just with a full belly with a feel good factor too."