



<p>A Very Different Year</p>	<p>Welcome To Our Annual Report 2019-2020</p>	
<p>Jeanne Watson Chair of trustees</p>		
	<p>Ellie Coteau Chief Executive</p>	<p>lockdown in early March, due to the spread of Covid-19, we quickly had to change our plans, and our ways of working. Many of our team were forced to shield at home, we had to close our premises to the public, and we were facing the highest levels of need we had ever seen at The Welcome Centre. Would we have enough volunteers to operate? Would we have enough money and food to continue to meet need? Would we even be able to access food, given national shortages and panic buying? And how on earth would our clients access food packs, when it wasn't safe for them to visit the Centre?</p> <p>We needn't have worried, the fantastic efforts of our team at the Centre and the wider Huddersfield community pulled us through. Thanks to those efforts, we were able to support everyone in need who was referred to us.</p> <p>We supported more people than ever before. In our busiest month, April, we provided 1,683 packs to 1,113 people.</p>
<p>Usually at this time of year we'd be welcoming you to our Annual General Meeting, greeting supporters old and new, and talking to you all about our challenges, successes, and future plans.</p> <p>For obvious reasons that isn't possible and so we've put together a virtual AGM that includes this report on the past 12 months. There are reflections from our staff team and facts and figures. We hope you'll find it interesting and informative and look forward to returning to a traditional get-together next year</p> <p>Finally from me, I'd like to pay tribute to the staff & volunteers whose courage and fortitude has been exemplary. It's been an immensely challenging year. I'm extremely proud of our response.</p> <p>We have played a pivotal role in protecting the most vulnerable and providing support to those most in need.</p>	<p>How do you even begin to sum up the last 12 months?</p> <p>This time last year we were getting ready for our first Harvest and Christmas period in our new warehouse, preparing to recruit extra staff and volunteers to grow our Advocacy, Guidance and Support service, and planning for what we expected to be our biggest ever Feeding Families summer programme.</p> <p>The early part of the year went smoothly; our new Centre Manager and General Assistant settled into their roles, two new trustees joined our Board, Harvest and Christmas at the new warehouse were a success, and we began to focus on forward planning for 2020. And then of course, everything changed...</p> <p>When the government announced a national UK</p>	

Welcome To Our Annual Report 2019-2020

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Volunteering at The Welcome Centre



We supported families and individuals who were already struggling pre-Covid and those who found themselves struggling for the first time due to the pandemic, people struggling with furlough, redundancy, illness, and new benefit claims, and people facing domestic violence, homelessness, and financial abuse.

How did we do it?

Team members who were still able to volunteer all took on extra shifts, two Kirklees Council staff members Martin and Maxine joined our team as full time volunteers, and we were inundated with volunteering offers from individuals throughout Huddersfield.

Local businesses donated food in bulk, supporters filled our supermarket collection points day after day, even when supermarket shelves were bare, and they also filled our bank account with generous financial donations, to help us to buy the food we needed.

Even with all of this generosity from supporters, we still needed to spend huge amounts of money on food to meet unprecedented levels of need, so Kirklees Council stepped in with additional funding to help us.

And perhaps most impressively, thanks to support from Kirklees Council and Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing, we suddenly had a daily fleet of vans and drivers, delivering food packs throughout Kirklees for us.

All in all, 2020 has been an incredibly difficult year for everyone. But it has also been a year of community spirit, generosity, and coming together to support each other. Here at The Welcome Centre, we've seen first hand the incredible generosity that exists with Huddersfield.

So all that is left for me to say is a heartfelt thank you. Thank you to our volunteers, staff and trustees for their extraordinary efforts over the last year, and thank you to all of the individuals, community groups, and businesses in Huddersfield, that have given so generously over the last year.

Behind the Scenes at Lord Street

Our day to day operations at Lord Street are led by our Centre Manager Mike Bristow and General Assistant Mandy Jowett. They lead our team of volunteers taking referrals, making food packs, and sending out food packs for home deliveries to clients.



Mike Bristow

“I would like to give a special mention to our volunteers who have been nothing short of amazing over the past year.”

CENTRE MANAGER’S REPORT

Mike Bristow

I joined the team last August and it has been quite the unexpected first year as Centre Manager! It was apparent to me quite quickly that I was joining an organisation completely driven by the needs of the clients, and one, which boasts a proud reputation.

I came on board off the back of another successful Feeding Families campaign and was straight into Christmas planning. This is a particularly busy time for the centre as many of our clients struggle with the financial pressures of the season. In addition to our usual food packs, we were able to provide clients with additional food to prepare a festive meal, and additional festive treats for them to enjoy. In total, we provided 471 festive meals; each tailored to meet the dietary needs of our clients, and adapted to their available cooking facilities.

Coronavirus has meant that we had to put many of our development plans on hold, but as a result, we have come up with some new ways of working, which have been a real

benefit to our volunteers and clients. At the beginning of lockdown, we introduced a delivery system for our packs. Despite having very little time to get the system up and running, we were able to introduce an efficient system that continues to work well. The drivers that have been supporting us from Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing and Local Welfare Provision have really bought into the values and ethos of The Welcome Centre, and have gone above and beyond to provide our clients with the level of service we pride ourselves on.

Lastly, I would like to give a special mention to our volunteers who have been nothing short of amazing over the past year. Many of our team have worked beyond their normal commitments to the centre and have worked incredibly hard to ensure we can meet the needs of our clients. Without their support, we simply would not be able to operate the way we do. We are incredibly thankful & grateful for all of the hours given up by our volunteer team.



The daily loading of goods at Lord Street is a significant task in itself



The store has been very busy with a continuous throughput of items from the Warehouse



Mandy Jowett

“It’s very enjoyable to work in a safe, well sanitised environment and to help ensure that our volunteers stick to the rules regarding social distancing, hand sanitation and cleaning work areas down between each shift.”

GENERAL ASSISTANT’S REPORT

Mandy Jowett

This time last year, I was thoroughly enjoying my two shifts per week volunteering as a Phone Referral Operator and was always happy to fill any red slots on the rota. Then when the part time General Assistant job was advertised, I applied and was delighted to get the job, which I began in January this year.

In the beginning, I focused on recruiting new volunteers as we needed to increase the volunteer numbers in Stores and on the phones along with updating the induction, training process and manuals, plus administration jobs and assisting Mike in the day to day running of the centre.

Then from March to September my weekly working hours changed to 5 mornings working remotely from home due to being required to isolate and during this time I continued to assist Mike in ordering stock, keeping in contact by phone with isolated volunteers, filling the rota and creating and sending the weekly

volunteer bulletin. Continuing my job through the difficult Covid-19 lockdown was really helpful in giving me a continued sense of purpose, along with our weekly Zoom staff meetings which Ellie organised.

Mike is a good manager and I was impressed how he hit the ground running when he started his job. Through the pandemic he and Ellie have done an awesome job of ensuring the centre, staff & volunteers stay safe and that clients are well cared for.

Since August I have been back in the centre and my focus has returned to recruiting and training volunteers, which is going very well. It’s very enjoyable to work in a safe, well sanitised environment and to help ensure that our volunteers stick to the rules regarding social distancing, hand sanitation and cleaning work areas down between each shift.

I have found the transition from volunteer to staff member very enjoyable and successful, and am delighted that my contract has been extended for another year.



Food parcels in preparation



Referrals have increased in 2019/20

2019-2020 TIMELINE

A Year of Challenges and Successes

September 2019

Huddersfield Town's First Team players volunteer at the The Welcome Centre for a day.

October – December 2019

The Welcome Centre's inaugural Winter Warmer Appeal raises more than £3,000.

December 2019

The Welcome Centre's 50p pot challenge funds 270 special Christmas packs for our clients.

January 2020

The Welcome Centre wins a national award from The Big Issue.

Mandy Jowett joins the staff team as our new General Assistant.

Kal Siddique and Henry Filloux-Bennett join the Trustee team.

March 2020: UK lockdown due to Covid-19

The Welcome Centre continues to operate but switches to a delivery system, facilitated by partners at Kirklees Council.

Ewing IT joins The Welcome Centre as a corporate partner.

Community Cards donates £4,000 to The Welcome Centre.

April 2020

The Welcome Centre's busiest ever month, distributing more packs to more clients than ever before.

Stafflex renew their corporate partnership with The Welcome Centre.

June 2020

The Welcome Centre wins the Examiner Community Group of the Decade Award.

The Lord-Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, on behalf of the Queen, thanks The Welcome Centre for services provided during Covid-19.

July 2020

Marshfest, our largest annual fundraising event, is unable to go ahead due to Covid-19 restrictions.

July – August 2020

The Welcome Centre's annual Feeding Families Programme does not need to go ahead this year, due to extension of free school meals voucher scheme over summer holidays.

August 2020

We welcomed back those volunteers and staff to the Centre, who had been required to shield since March.



Volunteers from Huddersfield Town at Lord Street in September



Lord Street had to close to clients following the National Lockdown.....



.....and then with the support of Kirklees Council we began delivering packs to clients

Donations from the public have increased in supermarkets



Collections have continued through the Covid crisis, but with the added complication of adhering to Covid-safe practices.

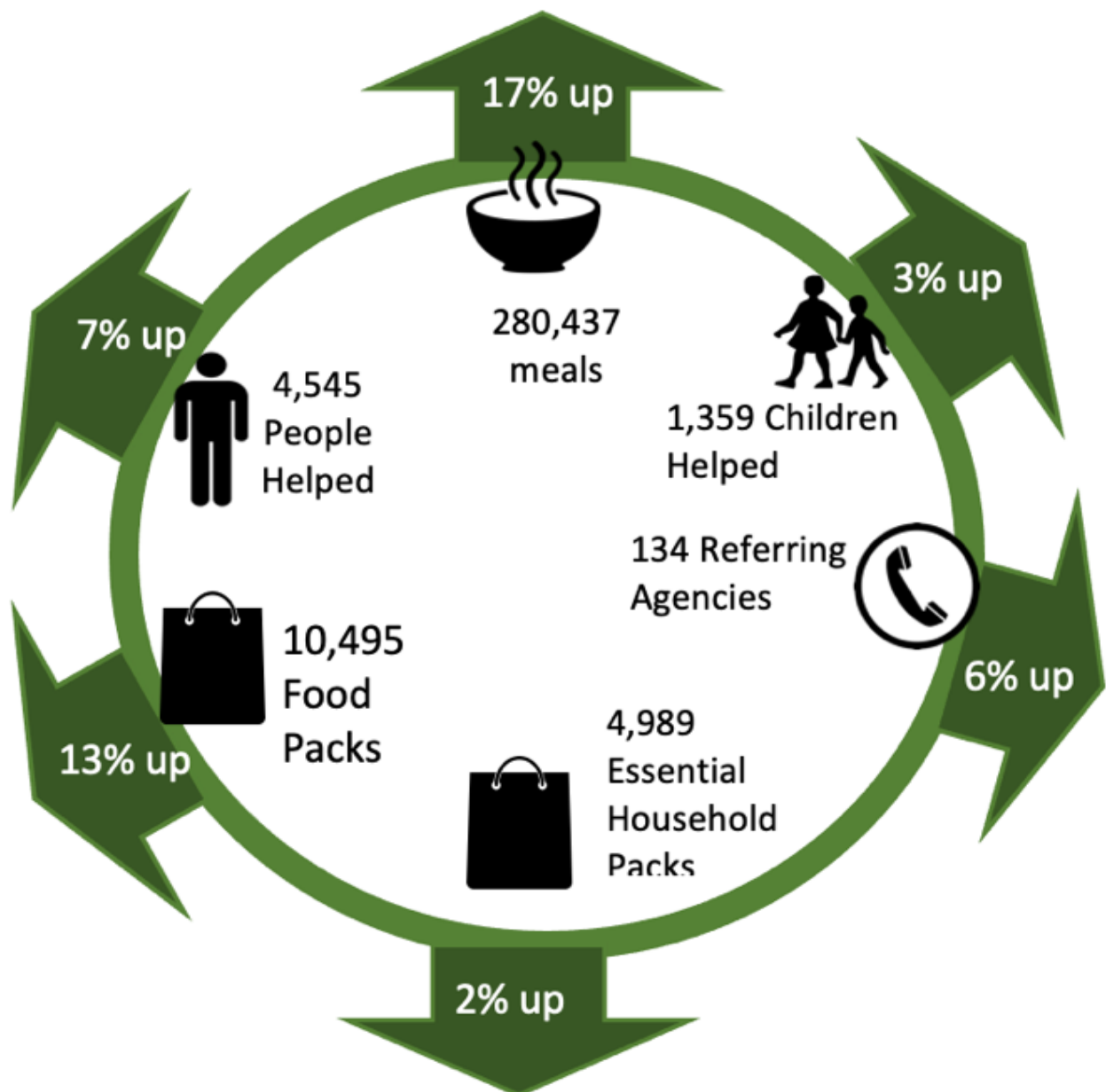


Challenging Conditions And Rising Demand

Increasing food poverty has led to higher client need in 2019/2020, compounding the successive increases in demand from previous years. Since lockdown in March rising demand has been combined with added challenge of packaging, labelling and then delivering food packs and essential household packs. On average 60 packs were assembled and prepared for delivery daily, although on busy days this could rise to over 100 packs.

In 2019/2020 food with an estimated value of £300,000 was distributed, of which 81% came from donations and the remainder was purchases of shortage items and fresh food for packs.

Arguably the most telling statistic is the 280,437 meals given out, a substantial 17% increase from the previous year. To put into perspective the operation at The Welcome Centre, this volume is equivalent to providing 3 meals a day for a family of four for over sixty years!



ALL THE KEY INDICATORS SHOW SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN 2019/2020 COMPARED WITH 2018/2019



Behind The Scenes At Our Warehouse

Our team of warehouse volunteers is led by our Warehouse Manager, Dave Woodward. Dave and his team have had a very busy year collecting donations from our supermarket drop off points, sorting and storing all of your donations, and delivering them to Lord Street ready to go in food packs. As Dave explains in his end of year reflections, thanks to community generosity we soon filled our new warehouse with much needed donations.



Dave Woodward

WAREHOUSE MANAGER'S REPORT Dave Woodward

September 2019 started well. We had settled into our new warehouse, installed our racking, completed our forklift training and started using our new forklift, much to the relief of my back! Harvest Festival donations were starting to come in and we were expecting another record year of donations from the ever-supportive community. I had an experienced team of volunteers ready and waiting to sort all the donations. Harvest donations went swimmingly; it was by far our most successful harvest to date and made me feel very humble. Somewhere in the warehouse the radio, playing in the background, mentioned a new virus that may have been discovered in a place called Wuhan. We paid little attention as we busied away like squirrels storing nuts for a hard winter ahead.

Christmas was just round the corner; we'd just finished sorting harvest donations when Christmas donations began to arrive. It wasn't long before I began to complain that the new warehouse was not big enough and we should have got a larger one nine months earlier! I complain about this every year at Christmas and my colleagues always smile, knowing my complaint will pass as stocks begin to diminish in the New Year.

As February rolled into March it was apparent

that the pandemic was going to arrive, and bring with it significant impact. We had to make lots of changes to how we work, including asking vulnerable volunteers to isolate. This was one of the darkest moments because many of these volunteers enjoy the work and interaction. Tears were shed but no hugs were allowed! We expected donations to fall during lockdown but after a week or two, something new began to emerge. Businesses that had to close began donating their stock. People were organising, holding online meetings, setting up groups and thinking about how they could help. Donations did not fall but began to rise!

Surprises were not confined to the community and volunteers. I too surprised myself. Ellie had set up weekly staff catch-up meetings on Zoom. This was going to be something entirely new to me. After missing the first 3 or 4 meetings I finally cracked Zoom. Who says old dogs can't learn new tricks!

If this year has had a theme it has been surprise. Some very bad, and some heart thumpingly good. The good stuff has all come from our supporters and volunteers and I would like to give a heart-thumping thank you to you all. We could not do what we do without your support.

Finally, if I never have to use Zoom again in my life I will not shed a tear!

More Than A Food Bank

Providing people in crisis with food and other essential items is just part of what we do. We also offer people visiting the food bank one to one Advocacy, Guidance and Support, to help them get back on track in the long term. Our Advocacy, Guidance and Support (AGS) service is delivered by Cath Williams. Cath's role normally focusses on face to face, one to one support work with our most vulnerable clients. Obviously this hasn't been possible during the pandemic, so Cath has focused on providing remote support over the phone, and working with our referral partners to make sure clients received the additional support they needed.

"Then the news of Covid-19 hit and everything changed..."



Cath Williams

AGS MANAGER'S REPORT

Cath Williams

In September 2019 I was looking forward to the upcoming changes to the Advocacy, Guidance & Support service. These were to include new ways for me to report and evaluate face to face client work, and improve ways of providing clients with essential furniture.

I developed a partnership with Kirklees Furniture Bank to supply good quality second hand furniture to clients, funded by individual grants from a range of charities. We started small, supporting 2-3 families a week. This, along with our Home-starter packs (pots, pans, plates etc.), bedding, towels and curtains ensured that clients had the basics to begin a tenancy, or replace worn out items.

In the run up to Christmas I was working face to face with clients needing intensive support, including PIP applications, tenancy support, and access to debt advice, all of which is even more poignant at that time of year.

By early Spring we'd received news that we'd be getting funding to grow our Advocacy, Guidance & Support service and had started putting plans in place. Then the news of Covid19 hit and everything changed...

Overnight we closed reception, switched to deliveries and watched as retailers ran out of food with panic buying. I endeavoured to keep clients and referral agencies fully informed of how The Welcome Centre was operating, and also other agencies and groups that could offer clients support, but it was an ever-changing picture.

I contacted the new Mutual Aid and Anchor groups throughout Kirklees who were helping people navigate this extraordinary situation, and I collated and shared information about retailers who could provide food deliveries for people who were isolating.

We were incredibly busy with enquiries from people not knowing where to turn. The priority was to keep people safe and fed. I spoke regularly to charities working with the homeless, including Kirklees Councils Rough Sleepers team & Simon on the Streets to ensure that we supplied emergency food and toiletries and assisted when people were given temporary housing under the new Government directives.

At this time the centre began switching to remote working. For me that meant concentrating on telephone referrals, managing recurring referrals, offering telephone welfare calls to clients and making sure clients could access the right support, which was becoming more difficult as more organisations were unable to offer face to face support. I also contacted referral agencies, schools and GP surgeries to let them know we were still operating (via a next day delivery service), and produced new leaflets explaining what help was available during the pandemic.

Now I'm back in the centre 3 days a week and continue to obtain grant funding for clients to get items via Kirklees Furniture Bank (now increased up to 10 families a week), and make essential welfare calls to the clients referred to us who don't have ongoing support in place.

It has been challenging and continues to be ever-changing, but when I look back on the last 12 months, I am proud to be a part of The Welcome Centre team.

ANGELA'S STORY



Angela was working on a zero-hours contract before the Coronavirus lockdown began. She was advised she was in the shielding category

due to medical issues and had no other choice but to give up work.

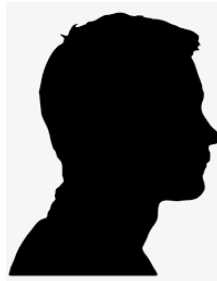
With such a sudden change to my income, I started to struggle with my bills and quickly found myself in arrears.

Angela was referred to The Welcome Centre by her GP and we provided her with several 7-day food packs, delivered to her at home. Cath, our Advocacy, Guidance and Support Manager contacted Angela and offered her budgeting advice on how to manage her bills.

The Welcome Centre not only delivered food to my home, but they helped me get a voucher from Local Welfare Provision to top up my gas and electricity which had nearly run out.

Angela was also referred to Uniform Exchange who provided her with free school uniforms for the children and Cath advised her how to access the summer "free school meal" voucher scheme. With the support and advice Angela received from The Welcome Centre, she is coping on the reduced income she suddenly found herself with.

CHRIS'S STORY



Chris works full time and owns his own home, however, like thousands of people across the UK he was furloughed in April 2020 due to Covid19.

I usually work lots of overtime to increase my monthly wage, so when I was furloughed my wage dropped significantly.

Chris had never claimed benefits before and wasn't sure what he needed to do. He contacted the Kirklees Covid Response team who explained there was help to support him and he was referred to The Welcome Centre for a food pack. Cath, Advocacy, Guidance and Support Manager at The Welcome Centre called Chris to see what other support he needed.

When I was furloughed I received 80% of my basic wage, but normally to manage my mortgage and other bills I do lots of overtime. With just the furlough payment I was nearly 40% down on my regular income and struggling to pay my mortgage and other bills.

Cath helped Chris apply for a wage top-up with Universal Credit which covered his mortgage interest payments and stopped him getting into arrears as well as applying for a council tax reduction. He received 5 weekly food packs whilst his Universal Credit was put in place.

As of now I'm still furloughed but hope to return to work soon. (October 2020)

Donations Of Time, Money And Food

The Welcome Centre depends on the support of our community – without the donations of money and food that we receive from community groups, businesses, churches, schools and mosques, we couldn't do what we do.

Emma Greenough looks after all of our donations, and thanks to everyone's generosity during these difficult times, Emma has had a very busy year...

"I even spent a cold and muddy afternoon up at Golcar Growers talking about how we could link in with a circular economy growing project and buy fresh vegetables for our packs."



Emma Greenough

MARKETING MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Emma Greenough

These last 12 months have been quite a rollercoaster and in an unexpected way, my most successful since I joined The Welcome Centre. Before lockdown, our work around social media and the website was really starting to make an impact as our audiences grew. Local photographer, Heather Magner had given us a whole bank of photos to use, and the images helped me to share our food bank story.

Work with local schools and churches at Harvest meant that we received more Harvest donations than ever before, most of which were our shortages items to restock the shelves. Christmas donations came flooding in online via our website donate page and the launch of our first-ever Winter Warmer Fuel Allowance appeal, combined with the 50p pot appeal, raised more than £6000 for The Welcome Centre.

During the last 12 months, we've welcomed new supporters Ewing IT, Huddersfield Rotary, Magic Rock, Towngate PLC as well as many new individuals who have become regular donors. Existing partners such as Stafflex, Syngenta, Community Cards and Sheards continued their support. I even spent a cold and muddy afternoon up at Golcar Growers talking about how we could link in with a circular economy growing project and buy fresh vegetables for our packs. It has been great seeing this come to fruition,

and seeing their first produce going out in packs this year.

We also wanted to focus on how we could appeal to a wider audience and unexpectedly that's what Covid 19 did. Suddenly I was chatting to the Independent, the Guardian, Yorkshire Post who featured articles about The Welcome Centre. The fact that we remained open and were delivering to people's homes during one of the hardest times our community has experienced really hit home, and to many that perhaps would never have thought to support a food bank before.

From March onwards, my dining table became my office, with a 9-year-old being home-schooled by my side and a dog for company. Hours became much longer as I struggled to get through so many emails from our fabulous community asking how they could help The Welcome Centre. With the help of one of our volunteers Alyson, we got through everything and the support kept coming.

It's also been a year with disappointments. Marshfest was cancelled which I love to be part of, the Dragon Boat race we finally had a team for was cancelled and working from home I missed the banter from the volunteers and staff team as well as the football chat at the office.

But finally, after 3 attempts we got the Community Group of the Decade award at the Examiner Awards. Sitting in my garden on a sunny evening on Zoom wasn't quite how I thought we'd be celebrating as a team, but the award really summed up the year we've had and was recognition of what a great team I work with.

The Welcome Centre Staff Team



LATEST NEWS

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR THE WELCOME CENTRE

ELLIE COTEAU

Our most recent piece of media coverage, a 4 page feature in the Guardian was published on 10th November. Subsequently, they also published an accompanying editorial piece.

This coverage was some time in the making; we started talking to the Guardian in mid-September, and then throughout October I had daily conversations with the journalist Sirin, who also came up to visit for a day.

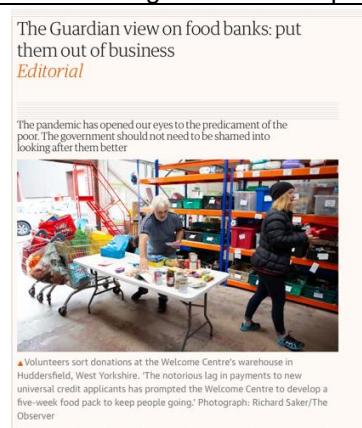
The end result is definitely worth the time and effort that went into it from everyone.

The response to the coverage has been overwhelmingly. We have been inundated with messages of support from our partner agencies and funders, existing donors and volunteers, and new people wanting to find out how to support us. Within 6 hours of the piece being published we received more than £2,000 in online donations.

Achieving such significant coverage in a national newspaper is something we can all be proud of.



<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/nov/10/half-term-hardship-and-heartbreak-one-month-in-the-life-of-a-food-bank-manager>



<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/10/the-guardian-view-on-food-banks-put-them-out-of-business>

AN EXTRA SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS



The Welcome Centre relies on a diverse group of talented, generous, committed individuals giving their time and energy to our work.

We've always known our volunteers are incredible, but this year really has highlighted just how incredible they are. In our busiest, most challenging year ever, our volunteers have worked extra shifts, longer shifts, busier shifts, remote shifts, and generally gone above and beyond to make sure that people have received their food packs.



Thank you to each and every one of our volunteers for their amazing efforts.



THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS

In particular we'd like to thank the following

Grant Funders



Business Partners



EST. 1884



DBW Ltd

MIS Computers

Business Supporters

AgroSmart Ltd, Barnaby's Day Nursery, Handmade Bakery, Hartleys Bakery, LV, Magic Rock, M & M Sykes Dairies, One 17 Community Supporters, Suma Wholefoods, Tesco

Community Supporters

Berry Brow Methodist Church and Community Centre, Christ Church Linthwaite, Community Cards, Denby Dale Lions, Holme Valley Lions, Holy Trinity Church Huddersfield, Huddersfield and District 68 Round Table, Huddersfield Town Supporters Association Huddersfield Community Trust - National Citizenship Service, Huddersfield Parish Church, Lower Cumberworth Methodist Church, O'Hooley and Tidow, Peter Walton Memorial, Rotary Club of Huddersfield, Rotary Club of Huddersfield Pennine, Scapegoat Hill Baptists, The Killermeters, St Patrick's Church Food Bank, Shri Guru Nanak Sikh Temple