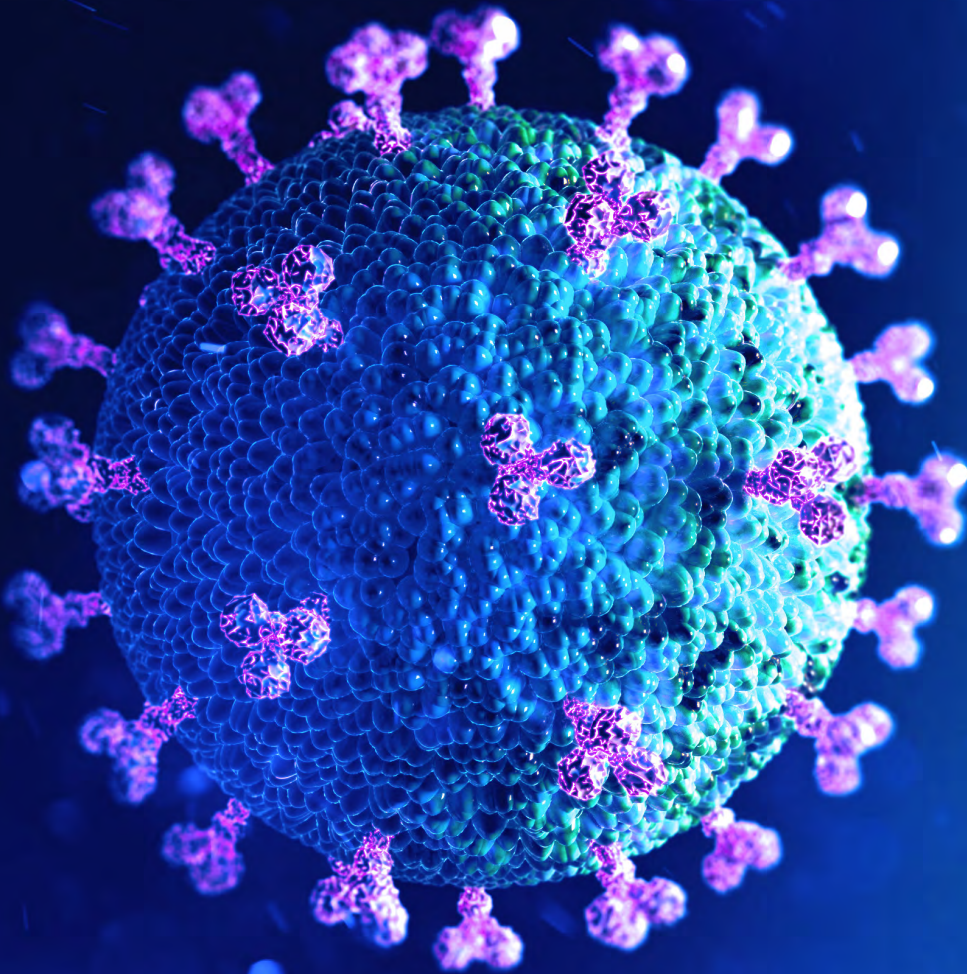




Cirencester
foodbank news

with Fairford & Tetbury



COVID-19
Foodbank update

Issue 9 • June 2020

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Royal Mail team in Fairford

Our community helping each other

We expected to be writing a newsletter at this point in the year to explain how we had developed over the last 12 months, however, the last ten to twelve weeks have changed so many things and we wanted to share how we have adapted to operate as the COVID-19 crisis continues.

Our only priority is to ensure the safe operation for everyone within the Foodbank. We have made significant changes to our operating model to ensure that we are able to work safely and continue to provide more needed than ever support to our local community.

So what's changed?

- Over 70% of our long-standing team are temporarily unable to volunteer with us as they fall into one of the shielding groups; we are continually thinking of all of them and look forward to welcoming them all back once it is safe to do so.
 - We have recruited more than 50 new volunteers – **thank you!**
 - We have changed our warehouse operations, now working with family groups only to ensure social distancing and increasing the number of warehouse sessions per week.
 - All of our 90+ referral agencies have moved onto our digital system and are issuing electronic foodbank vouchers.
 - Our Foodbank centres are temporarily closed and we are operating a home delivery service working with British Gas volunteers.
 - Our volunteers call each client and check their dietary requirements and which other household cleaning items, toiletries etc they are in need of.
 - Food parcels are packed into cardboard boxes and dispatched via our British Gas volunteer teams.
 - Our team is offering virtual signposting to enable our clients to access further support.
- A HUGE thank you** goes to our community for responding to our requests for support. We have been overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity displayed by so many of you. We were initially concerned that food donations would dry up and in the early days as the supermarket shelves were stripped bare donation levels fell away as foodbank demand soared. However, as the supply chains recovered and the AMAZING street collections developed, we have ensured that our levels of food stocks are much healthier and we have access to wholesale supplies too.
- A BIG thank you** to Cirencester Ashcroft Church, Cirencester Baptist Church, Fairford Community Centre and the St. Mary's Community Centre in Tetbury for being so supportive in keeping their facilities open to us and for all of their ongoing support.
- A MASSIVE thank you** goes to the Royal Mail postal teams who have been collecting for us every Saturday on their rounds. Not only have their fancy dress costumes made us all smile, they have collected around 1 tonne of food for us! Incredible!



Food is sorted by type in the warehouse

We are also so grateful for the wonderful financial donations. We love hearing the stories of fundraising from selling sunflowers and cakes to the Cirencester Creative Dance Academy choreograph competition to the Hockey Club virtually running around the world. It's inspiring to see so many different ways you are supporting us!



We also offer household cleaning items and toiletries

We have always had a huge focus on our partnerships with our referral agencies and this has and continues to be hugely beneficial as we continue to navigate through the crisis. As well as migrating all of our referral agencies onto our digital referral system, we have continued to meet (virtually!) with our close partners including Citizens Advice, The Churn Project, Cirencester Opportunity Group, Home Start and Cirencester Signpost. We've also engaged with every school in the community, the social worker teams, Cotswold District Council, the housing associations and many health professionals. The benefit of these partnerships enables us to provide greater mutual support to all of our clients.



Our British Gas delivery volunteers

COVID-19 has seen a significant increase in demand for foodbank services. Over the last 12 weeks we have seen an 81% increase in demand. There are many reasons why any one of us could need foodbank support, for many of our current clients reasons include being laid off (as a result of the crisis), being furloughed on an already low income, reduced hours at work impacting on family budgets, being self-employed and unable to access government support until June, waiting 5 weeks for initial Universal Credit payments, incurring debts as a result of lower income, sickness and struggling to access food vouchers in lieu of free school meals. As the economic impact of the crisis continues, we expect that demand for our support will remain heightened.

We are also tentatively planning ahead and looking at what the future looks like. We are learning lots as the home delivery system develops, we are monitoring usage of our digital referral system and investigating how we can deliver virtual signposting and expanding our partnerships.



Royal Mail team in Cirencester



Client feedback

"Thank you so much for our food delivery via British Gas. The kindness of your team on the phone, to the thoughtful extra items is so appreciated"

"Thank you to everyone at the Foodbank. It's a great help to me and my family"

"Thank you so much for our amazing food parcel delivery. Thank you so so much"

"Thank you for being there, you are literally a life-saver"



Ways to donate

The Foodbank is always very grateful for both food and monetary donations. There are a number of ways to donate financially:

1. Write a cheque to **Cirencester Foodbank**
2. Set a **standing order** up
3. Donate via *Virgin Giving*: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/cirencester-2>
4. Download a *gift aid form* here: [Gift Aid Form](#)

If you are considering donating, please also consider gift aiding your donation as this allows us to reclaim the tax on your behalf.

Cirencester Foodbank – Social media

You can now follow Cirencester Foodbank on twitter or visit us on Facebook. Do sign up for updates so you can see how you can get involved!



How to get help

To access Foodbank support, you need a voucher. They are available (virtually) from many different agencies including **Citizens Advice** on **0808 800 0511**, other local charities, schools and health professionals.

Where to donate

You can donate at the following supermarkets:
Tesco Extra, Cirencester
Waitrose, Cirencester
Tesco, Tetbury

Cirencester Foodbank in numbers since 2012



For further details of the work of the Cirencester Foodbank and how you can be involved please:

email: info@cirencester.foodbank.org.uk

or check out our

website: www.cirencester.foodbank.org.uk

find us at

 **@CirenFoodbank**  **Ciren Foodbank**

or write to us at

Cirencester Foodbank, Cirencester Baptist Church, Chesterton Lane, Cirencester GL7 1YE

Charity registration number: 1159810