



**EAST DURHAM TRUST FEED PROJECT
(Food Emergency East Durham)**

“A pay day loan company left me with £6 in my bank to last me a week. I was scared and wondering how I would ever manage to put any gas or electric on my key meter as well as feed my children and myself. When I received an emergency food parcel it was a real lifeline.”

Donna, 29 Easington

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THE VISION : "To source, acquire and distribute food parcels through the mobilisation of volunteers to support those in crisis in our local communities"

East Durham Trust 2011

Where it began.....

East Durham Trust was established in 2007 to tackle the effects of poverty and unemployment.

The Trust has a growing reputation for providing innovative and effective responses to local issues, such interventions range from the CHIT CHAT telephone befriending service where trained volunteers routinely call isolated and vulnerable people and the CREE mental health project where 18 inclusion groups have been set up along the lines of the 'Men's Shed's" model.

The Trust works on the principal that problems are solved by empowering local people and always work through community groups and individuals.

As well as providing the traditional core "CVS" services- such as managing the local Volunteer Centre and providing funding advice - the Trust manages its own building and hosts local organisations such as East Durham Credit Union, the local branches of Mind and Victim Support.

Staff and Trustees work in partnership with other local groups and Public Sector bodies in order to maximise the potential of collaboration.

In 2010 East Durham Trust recognised the need to be prepared for unprecedented levels of economic crisis in the local community. Specifically the local Area Action Partnership had adopted the need to 'Maintain the Social Fabric of the Community' as a priority. With continued economic recession and the later advent of Welfare Reform it was prophetically noted that local responses of a "soup kitchen" variety were likely to be necessary!

To this end East Durham Trust established the FEED (Food Emergency East Durham) project. From humble beginnings the project has proven to be a critical lifeline for hundreds of individuals and families and has become a flagship example of the power of compassionate communities in times of crisis.

This interim report is the story of the FEED project

*13 million people live below
the poverty line in the UK**

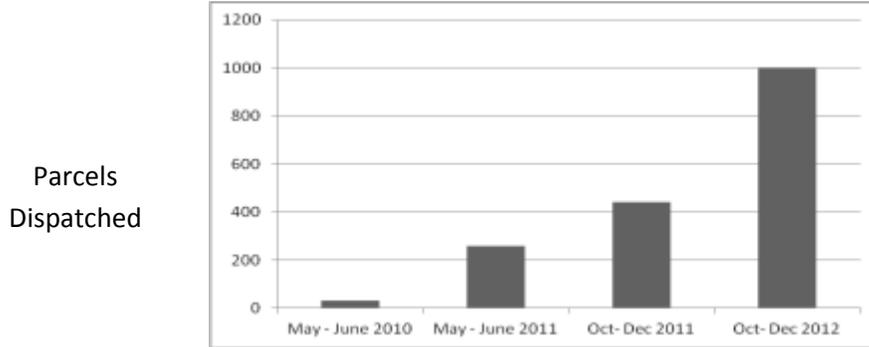
**source government indices of deprivation*

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FOOD ON THE TABLE.....

The Background

The **FEED** Project was established in May 2010 as a means of supporting vulnerable people who were adversely affected by the effects of economic downturn, recession and more recently Welfare Reform. The project has witnessed a sharp rise in parcels distributed escalating to current levels of around 50 per week.



There is little doubt that the current economic climate and cuts in public spending will lead to a significant increase in the number of individuals categorised as vulnerable. It is therefore envisaged that the need for parcels will increase.



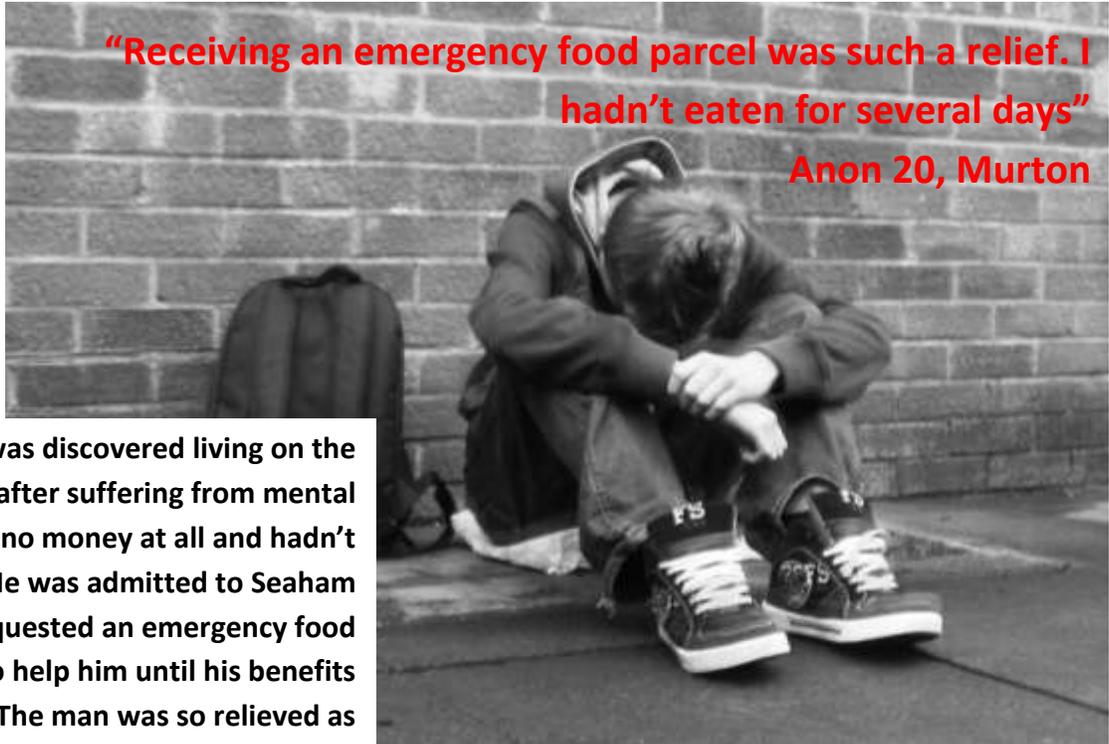
1 in 5 mums skip a meal to feed their children



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Who does FEED help?

To date FEED has distributed over **1000** food parcels to individuals and families in crisis situations with the help of over **40** volunteers.



A man in his 20's was discovered living on the streets of Murton after suffering from mental breakdown. He had no money at all and hadn't eaten for days. He was admitted to Seaham Crisis Centre who requested an emergency food parcel for him to help him until his benefits could be sorted out. The man was so relieved as he had not eaten for several days.

The FEED project helped me at a time when life was a real uphill struggle.

A local Crisis Centre requested an emergency food parcel for a lady who had just been discharged from hospital after receiving treatment for mental health problems. She was homeless with no money or means of buying any food. Understandably she had high levels of anxiety and was overwhelmed by the problems she faced. After receiving the emergency food parcel the lady was very appreciative that people had cared enough to help her. She was grateful that that support was at hand at time when she had nowhere else to turn, meaning that there was one less thing to add to all of her anxieties.



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The FEED project helped me move into full time employment.



Dan, 24 was referred for an emergency food parcel by his 'Back to Work' programme advisor. At the time he was claiming Jobseekers allowance and lived alone in a rented home. He was estranged from his family and so had no immediate support. Dan had completed his Fork Lift Truck licence training and as a direct result was offered employment. Moving from benefits to a monthly wage was a real barrier to accepting this offer, as it meant he wouldn't have any money coming in for around 5 weeks. His benefits would stop when employment commenced and he didn't qualify for any form of benefit run on. Dan was determined to start work and with support from his advisor looked for ways to remove these barriers. He was referred to FEED for an emergency food parcels to enable him to continue to feed himself whilst he had no money to buy food. He was delighted with his food parcels, it made him feel as if people do care. He really appreciated the help and support which kept Dan in his new job.

An unexpected health problem meant I had no money for food.

A 30 year lady from Peterlee was referred for an emergency food parcel after suffering from a stroke. Although she had previously worked, she wasn't entitled to any form of sickness pay from her employer. This meant she had no money after leaving hospital to cover her bills or to pay for food and this was understandably causing her a lot of stress, something that wouldn't help her recovery. She had applied for a crisis loan to see her through until a claim to Employment and Support Allowance could be made. The emergency food parcel helped to relieve some of her stress and concentrate on becoming well again.



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Funeral expenses left Mother and Father unable to afford to eat.

Already reeling from the death of their son, a husband and wife from Shotton found themselves unable to feed themselves after taking out a loan to cover expensive funeral costs, leaving them in a state of financial crisis. Debts began to spiral and soon the couple were choosing between heating, lighting or food. The couple would regularly go without eating for long periods of time and this was having a real detrimental effect on both their health and wellbeing. They had become undernourished and stress levels were soaring too. The emergency food parcel was a real life saver and having food helped the couple to face some of their other difficulties.

Unexpected household bill tips families budget into disarray

A 24 year old mother with two young children from Haswell found herself unable to feed her family when their cooker had broken and the very small amount of food in the family's home was frozen. The young mother was forced to use the little money she did had to repair the cooker and was therefore unable to buy any more food to last the family the remainder of the week until she got any further money. The emergency food parcel ensured that the family was fed and the young children didn't suffer from the family's misfortune.

Desperate mother who resorted to crime to feed her family is thrown a life line from the feed project

The probation service in Peterlee referred a 49 year old mother of three children who in desperation had stolen ready meals from a local supermarket to feed her family. The family's income had been looted by her husband who had stolen their money to feed his drugs habit, leaving his family with no money at all for food or anything else. The mother was ashamed that she had been forced into crime to feed her family but had acted in sheer desperation. She was relieved to have been offered a lifeline and was inspired by the generous spirit of her fellow community members.

“Rise in number of soup kitchens and Food Banks shows many North-East families are on the breadline”

The Northern Echo, 2012



Soup Kitchens similar to those of the 1985 Miners Strike are making a return

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FEED.....

The Model

The FEED project model includes:-

- Collection points, where baskets are situated mainly in Community Centres but also three workplaces.
- Baskets are periodically emptied and parcels 'made up' by volunteers.
- Referrals are taken from advocates who include Social Workers, Community Health Staff, Crisis Centre staff, and GPs and officers from the Probation Service.
- Parcels are either collected by the advocate or delivered to an agreed point.
- As well as basket collections food is also sourced from Fairshare, East Durham Trust has been a member for over a year and receives a weekly delivery.
- Perishable food (bread and milk) is purchased using monies from donations.
- **The FEED project is not a Foodbank!** It does not include the redemption of vouchers or the attendance of a designated pick up point. It has no links with the National Organisation the Trussell Trust or the local Durham Christian Partnership.
- One of the driving principles of the FEED project is the need to be sensitive to issues around dignity with the recipients of parcels and where necessary 'anonomise' the process.

*"I had nothing - not even a teabag
until FEED stepped in and
bridged the gap for me" Phil, 39*



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How does it work in practice?

Food donation baskets are located in 25 accessible venues across East Durham. These are mainly in community venues with the exception of 6 which are in work places. On a weekly basis a volunteer from FEED project will visit these donation points to collect the food.

The donated food is stored in the FEED room at Community House. This is a supplemented with food from the Fareshare scheme. Cash donated to the FEED project is used to purchase perishable food items such as bread and milk.

FEED project volunteer make up food parcels. These contain sufficient food to feed either an individual or family for up to three days.

FEED project advocates from various support organisation make referrals utilizing a specifically designed referral form to request an emergency food parcels for their clients. Advocates exist in various organizations including the Citizens Advice Bureau, East Durham Homes, Durham County Council, GP's, Social Workers, Durham County Credit Union, Seaham Crisis Centre, Harbour Domestic Violence workers plus many more

Volunteers deliver the food parcels directly to the advocate who will then pass this onto the client. Alternatively the advocate will collect the food parcel from Community House. Under no circumstances do beneficiaries collect parcels or refer into the project themselves. This ensures that all beneficiaries are receiving help from a relevant support organisation.

FEED beneficiaries receive their food parcel. Many are overwhelmed to think that their fellow community members have donated to a local project which has helped them. On many occasions beneficiaries wish to give something back, and when they find their feet again will donate to the project themselves.



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IMPACT.....

The Evidence

Since its inception in May 2010 East Durham Trusts FEED project has to date benefited:

- over **400 Families**
- over **600 Individuals**
- over **350 Children**

Feedback from beneficiaries and from FEED Advocates confirms that the provision of a parcel can prevent a problem from escalating into a crisis situation.

21% of FEED recipients have been in **mental health crisis** and a food parcel has **helped** to prevent a relapse

15% of FEED recipients were **victims of domestic violence** and a food parcel has **supported** them during the move to a refuge or a new home

40% of parcels have gone to families with **children**

6% of parcels have been as a direct result of **redundancy**. This figure is rising.

32% of parcels have been distributed to support those whose **benefits have stopped** due to review. This figure is rising.

7% as a result of **homelessness**

2% as a result of **relationship breakdowns**

“The children recently became subjects of Child Protection plans and mother is struggling financially. During a home visit today I discovered no food in the home apart from a frozen loaf of bread and some frozen chips. Mother does not receive any benefits until Friday (5 days later) so an emergency food parcel is required to ensure both herself and children are fed over the next few days.”

Direct quote from Social Worker with the Children's Safeguarding Team

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It's not just about the food.....

Community donation points continue to grow with four new organisations being enlisted in January 2013 to take donations on behalf of the project throughout East Durham.

During the lifetime of the project over **40 volunteers** have been involved in collecting, sorting and delivering food donations and parcels.

"We left with nothing, without the FEED parcel we wouldn't be able to eat while we're here"

Anonymous, Domestic Violence Victim

What does your volunteer role involve for the FEED project?

I collect food from donation points in local community venues bring it back to Community House, storing it in the designated FEED collection room. I ensure items are within use by dates and all packaging is still intact. I then make up food parcels for individuals and families ensuring there is sufficient food for three days within each parcel.

I also deliver food parcels to the FEED advocates, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau or to local Doctors Surgeries

What do you enjoy about volunteering for FEED project?

The main reason I volunteer is to help other people and make a valuable contribution to the local community. It can give you a great sense of self achievement and helps you to understand the problems faced by people in your local area.

It has also taught me that many people can be faced with serious problems but still manage to be extremely positive. This positivity definitely rubs off on you and it makes you feel much more resilient.

Colin, FEED Project Volunteer



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HOW CAN YOU HELP....

Volunteering

The FEED project is always looking for extra sets of hands to help with collecting food donations and delivering emergency food parcels to support organisations across East Durham. Contact East Durham Trust for further information.

Donating

Food donation points exist in 19 East Durham Venues. The project welcomes donations of non perishable food items (as suggested on the left) Public Donation points are as follows:

- Blackhall Community Centre
- Easington Social Welfare Centre
- East Durham College
- East Durham Homes Outlet Castle Dene Shopping Centre
- East Durham Homes Outlet St John's Square Seaham
- Greenhill's Centre, Wheatley Hill
- Healthworks Easington Colliery
- Lisa Dixon Centre, Haswell
- Shotton Community Centre
- St Mary's Church Hall, Horden
- The Pavilion, Helford Road Peterlee
- Wingate Family Centre
- Resource Centre, Murton
- Hazelwell Centre, Haswell
- Robin Todd Centre, South Hetton
- Horden Youth and Community Centre
- Community House, Yoden Road Peterlee
- Accent Housing, Middle Street, Blackhall
- Easington District Carers, Upper Yoden Way, Castle Dene Shopping Centre
- The Glebe Centre, Murton

Also located in some workplaces including:

- Durham County Council, Spectrum Business Park and the Centre for Health, Whitehouse Business Park
- McCrae House Murton
- St Marys Church Easington
- Peterlee Day Centre
- East Durham Homes
- East Durham College Houghall Site

The project also accepts cash donations.

These lists are not exhaustive with new donation points being enlisted on a regular basis. Contact East Durham Trust for further information.



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For more information about FEED contact:

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*“Emergency Food Banks
are stretched as more and more
people struggle to pay their bills”*

Getty Images, 2012

