

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

22nd June 2023

Dear Anthony,

RE: TRUSSELL TRUST CAMPAIGN ON FOOD BANK USAGE

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about the Trussell Trust report on food bank usage. I have read your comments with interest.

Although I do not want anyone to have to rely on a food bank, I am grateful to all those who volunteer their time to make sure they are provided in their local communities.

I know that the Government is committed to understanding and addressing poverty, which is why it has published official estimates of food bank usage for the first time. National statistics show that 93 percent of people were food secure in 2021/22.

I am confident that the Government is providing substantial support through the welfare system. It will spend around £276 billion through social security in Great Britain in 2023/24, including around £124 billion on people of working age and children. Following the Government's uprating exercise, benefits and pensions have increased by 10.1 percent, providing significant support with the cost of living to the most vulnerable. The average uplift for someone on Universal Credit will be around £600. Uprating is in addition to the increase in the National Living Wage to £10.42 an hour and the provision of more than £11 billion in Cost of Living Payments.

Moreover, the Government is continuing to ensure the provision of free school meals for infants, as well as benefits-related free school meals, which are helping two million children. The Government is also investing over £200 million per year through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, which supports disadvantaged children and their families, including by providing them with healthy food. The programme takes place across England and reached over 685,000 children during last year's summer holidays, of which 475,000 children were receiving benefits-related free school meals.

The Government will continue to do everything it can to help those on low pay, and I welcome that the number of those living in poverty today has fallen by two million since 2010.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE