Dear candidate,

As a supporter of the Trussell Trust, I am writing to ask you to commit to working to end the need food banks if you are elected on 6 May.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, more people than ever have been pushed into destitution, unable to afford the essentials that we all need to survive. This has led to unprecedented numbers of people needing emergency food.

However, these problems are not new. The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight and accelerated many of the issues that communities were already facing. **There has been a 71% increase in emergency food parcels provided by food banks in the Trussell Trust’s UK network between 2015/16 and 2019/20. This isn’t right.**

As we come out of lockdown, now is the time to build a better future for our communities, one where people do not need to rely on emergency food provision. This election offers a hugely important opportunity to work towards a hunger-free future.

**Will you commit to working to end the need for food banks?**To end the need for food banks and build back stronger communities, we need all levels of government to develop an action plan which:

1. **Ensures everyone is able to afford the basics.**  People are forced to charities for emergency food when there isn’t enough money for the essentials. Elected representatives should support a cash-first approach wherever possible, instead of relying on the distribution of emergency food. This means using your powers to improve the sufficiency, accessibility and responsiveness of cash-based crisis grants available in your area.
2. **Helps local and national services work together to ensure people get the right support at the right time.** Elected representatives should invest in the local support services that help to address the underlying needs in their communities. They should also commit to helping local services work together, to provide support which maximises incomes and ensures people do not fall through the gaps.
3. **Involves people with direct experience of poverty and local food banks in shaping any plan to end the need for food banks.** Elected representatives should work with people with direct experience of poverty in our community and work with food banks on how to deliver an ‘exit plan’ for ending the need for emergency food aid.

For further information on why we need an action plan to send the need for food banks please read the Trussell Trust’s briefing:

[https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/England-elections-briefing.pdf.](https://sloughfoodbank.sharepoint.com/sites/SloughFoodbank/Shared%20Documents/Communications/Changing%20Minds%20councillor%20campaign/Trussell%20Trust%E2%80%99s%20briefing%3A%20https%3A/www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/England-elections-briefing.pdf.)

Finally, I would be delighted to hear from you if you can pledge support to work to end the need for food banks, if you are elected on 6 May.. If you wish to signal your commitment to this cause, please use these links to tweet your support on social media

Twitter - <https://bit.ly/3fVR917>
Facebook - <https://bit.ly/3fUb7sT>

Or download this graphic <https://bit.ly/3mpNTfB> to display on any platform or print media.

I hope to hear from you soon.