Foodbanks

Foodbanks: Provide emergency food to those in need

BBC 1 recently aired a programme focusing on the food bank crisis in Scotland, following one of the busiest centres, Dundee. This was a real eye opener for me, particularly when they were discussing the number of children and families utilising such a service. Through working with children and parents whilst on placements and continuing to in future employment, it became apparent that I may be working with some individuals who use these facilities. Foodbanks are fast becoming the first point of call in emergency situations for families and as a result there is a clear strain on the banks themselves. This is due to the centres relying on donations from the public to assist demand. Throughout the programme I jotted down some notes; some information was interesting and some I was shocked by.

**The Food Bank: Scotland’s Hidden Hunger**

* Over 400% rise in people using foodbanks
* Some people rely solely on the foodbank to help them in times of need
* Dundee has one of the worst poverty rates in Scotland
* 1 in 4 children live under the poverty line
* Some of the people working at foodbanks have been in a situation requiring food – “I know how it feels”
* Maxwell Centre Dundee works towards decreasing poverty and social exclusion through a variety of ways
* Notion of compassion before caution
* Referrals come in thick and fast
* Foodbanks can provide relief for short period of time
* “stealing to eat” is on the increase across Scotland, many 1st time offenders
* Economic climate and redundancies are a huge issue for foodbanks
* Mass job losses have been experienced have foodbanks have overcome them h/e they are on the rise and when a big firm announces redundancies, foodbanks can face problems
* Setting up distribution centres in other parts of cities is difficult to do
* At the time of filming, The Trussell Trust had a 3 parcel limit to ensure the centre didn’t run out of food.
* At the centre, advice is given to addicts to help them find possible ways to change their lifestyle
* Variety of people from all walks of life are using foodbanks
* However, pride is a big reason why some don’t or haven’t until first time
* High utility bills and money issues are also major reasons for rising uses of foodbanks
* Some people believe that many individuals in need do not know that this service exists
* 250 000 people out of work due to mental health problems – another possible reason identified
* Finance impacts mental health in some way therefore potentially affecting other aspects of an individual’s life
* Referrals to foodbanks are on the increase
* The running of foodbanks takes a lot of energy and love
* “if felt food poverty, you don’t look down on others in their time of need”

Watching the programme, the last two points were particularly highlighted. Those who are working to help others give a lot of time to listen and do their best when a referral is required. Furthermore, the volunteers working in the foodbanks themselves are taking time out of their own lives and putting a lot of effort into drumming up public support to provide food, for example in local supermarkets. Having experienced food poverty himself, the foodbank worker recognises the importance of such a service and aims to help others who are faced with such a situation. He understands how it feels and therefore gives some comfort to those he helps when discussing their own circumstance.