

THE RT HON HUGO SWIRE MP

(East Devon)



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Clare Bryden
1 Miller Close
Exeter
Devon EX2 5NE

8 January 2014

Dear Ms Bryden

Thank you for contacting me about foodbanks.

I welcome the debate held in the House on 18 December on this very important issue, which you can read here,
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131218/debtext/131218-0003.htm>.

Foodbanks provide an incredibly valuable service, beyond the support provided by Government, and I would like to pay tribute to the hardworking volunteers involved. It is clear that people visit food banks for a variety of different reasons which need to be understood. The use of foodbanks went up tenfold during the previous administration and that was when the country was experiencing a period of sustained economic growth.

The Government is supporting foodbanks. I am proud that we have lifted the restrictions on food banks which previously prevented Jobcentres from notifying people about the support available, and are supporting 81 Trussell Trust-run food banks with funding from the social action fund.

Of course it is still highly undesirable that anybody should be in a position where they feel the need to visit a foodbank in the first place. To support families and tackle poverty we have taken 2.7 million people out of tax and cut income tax for 25 million people, giving them on average £700 extra a year. Work is the best way to lift outcomes, and I am delighted that there are now 1.25 million more people in jobs since the election. Importantly, Universal Credit will ensure that it always pays to work, making 3 million families better off by an average of £174 per month.

Alongside this, we have stopped the previous administration's fuel and petrol price increases saving families £300 and protected universal benefits for pensioners, including winter fuel payments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hugo Swire'.