Our Churches should be happy and willing to become a referral Agent for Ballymena Foodbank.

Signing up as a Referral Agent would enable Trussell Trust foodbank to issue vouchers to your Church, which can then be issued to those individuals who find themselves in financial crisis.

Trussell trust would welcome the opportunity to support every person who finds themselves in financial difficulties, and who requires emergency support while they work with the relevant agencies to secure future employment and /or financial support during which time Mortgage / rent payments, Direct Debits and bills still need to be paid, there may be no income to facilitate this.

Given the recent news in Ballymena and the devastation which is being felt by many families in the local area, we would like to offer our support, and connect with other Churches and agencies who will be coming alongside these families in the coming days and weeks. By receiving up to 3 or 4 vouchers, those in crisis could have the food they need for the next 3-4 weeks which could well mean that what limited money they do have would allow them to continue to make mortgage / rent payments, pay bills, pay Direct Debits and avoid them getting into debt at this difficult time.  Those who require longer term support, we can work with on a more individual basis.

**There are two key aspects to this, and we need your support for each:**

**(1)   Become a Voucher Holder – Referral Agencies**

Ballymena Foodbank work in Partnership with Trussell Trust,  and have the support of the wider Trussell trust Networks as well as the local support of **Referral Agencies**, e.g. Churches, MLAs, local council, Housing Executive, Health Care workers etc. who hold Trussell trust food vouchers, which can be issued in exchange for 3 days nutritionally balanced supply of food (size of parcels vary dependant on individuals, couples and families).

If you would like to sign up / register to be a Referral Agency and therein a Voucher holder, then please take one of the Registration forms with you together with the Referral Agency Handbook which explains how it works.  If you have any questions about this, then please contact Linda Thompson, Area Manager at 07788270673 who would be delighted to answer any questions you might have.

 **(2) Become a Food donor**

It would be impossible for the local Ballymena Foodbank to support those in need without having the support of the public, through their very generous food donations.  Perhaps you, your Church Family, your School or your family already donate, thank you!  If not, can I please ask that you consider doing so, and also encourage your church, school, family to donate what they can, to the local foodbank at the Dream Centre Ballymena, or Ballyloughan Church Ballymena, or at the collection points in Tesco Ballymena, or Sainsbury’s Ballymena.

I thank you in anticipation and trust that together we can make a difference to the lives of many who are facing the unknown at this time and fear for themselves and their families.  Of course above all of this we continue to remember all of the 1200 and their families and indeed those involved in every aspect of this terrible news, in prayer.