



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01571

Name of petitioner

John Beattie

Petition title

Food Bank Funding

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide direct funding to food banks to ensure that demand for their services can be fully met.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have contacted three MSPs; Johann Lamont; Humza Yousaf; and Nicola Sturgeon. So far, I have only received a reply from Ms Lamont, who attached a copy of the letter she sent to the First Minister on our behalf.

Humza Yousaf has also contacted me and I have spoken to him in person about the issue. He has been very supportive and has offered to do all he can to help us and our petition. He informed me he had written to John Swinney to ask about the government underspend and whether any of it can be allocated to help struggling food banks.

I contacted all three MSPs on 27/05/15.

I informed them I am calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to either 1. use their underspend (estimated £145m) to help struggling food banks meet increasing demand or 2. raise tax by 1p to raise an estimated £256m to alleviate the pressure.

As highlighted, we have been having food collections. We have used Sunny Govan Community Radio as a means of promoting our cause and broadcasting emergency appeals for food. All of this on top of other donations from other sources. However, demand is increasing and it has now reached the point where the community is donating lots and lots of food and less than two weeks later, the food bank shelves are empty.

We have also organised public meetings on the food bank issue.

Petition background information

The petition is necessary because people in Glasgow and elsewhere are going hungry. Particularly in our community. Govan is one of the poorest areas in Scotland. The response has been overwhelming but it is not enough. I feel it has now reached the

point where the Scottish Government has to use its resources to alleviate the problem.

The Steering Group of Glasgow South West food bank (charity no. SC45121) has estimated that it would need around £1,000 per week to meet the demand of its four food banks across Glasgow South West. If the situation is desperate in our community, we assume others are facing a similar struggle.

I have also been made aware that the Scottish Government created an Emergency Food Fund last year, which is now closed. With the food bank problem developing into a crisis, I would suggest the programme reopens.

I and other volunteers have been creating food collections in our local area of Govan to help our local food bank, Glasgow South West food bank, meet demand. Recently, the Glasgow SW food bank has been running out of supplies and at points are having to turn hungry people away. Despite our food collections and donations from other sources, the community is now at the point that it is struggling to meet the demand on food banks.

This is why we are calling on the Scottish Government to use their underspend or increase tax by 1p to help stem this developing crisis before it worsens. The Steering Group of Glasgow South West food bank (charity no. SC45121) has estimated that it would need around £1,000 per week to meet the demand of its four food banks across Glasgow South West. If the situation is desperate in our community, we assume others are facing a similar struggle.

With an estimated £12bn of welfare cuts expected in the next 5 years, we fear the situation will worsen. That is why we are asking the Scottish Government to use its resources and help feed its citizens. As highlighted, we have reached the point where the community can no longer meet the demand.

These would be examples of 'progressive' policies that the Scottish Government and the First Minister often speaks about aspiring to.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/foodbank>

Related information for petition

<http://glasgowsw.foodbank.org.uk>

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

30 / 07 / 2015

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Food bank usage has exploded over the last five years. In our community, Govan in Glasgow, we have now reached the point where the community is struggling to meet the demand of the food banks from our fellow citizens. Despite having organised food collections and used local resources such as Sunny Govan Community Radio to continually broadcast emergency appeals, the situation keeps getting worse. We hear of similar struggles elsewhere.

This is why we ask the Scottish Government to either 1. use money from it's underspend (estimated £145m) or 2. raise tax by 1p to collect an estimated £256m to combat food shortages in food banks to prevent our fellow citizens, many with children, from going hungry. It is estimated that £1,000 per week is required to sustain demand on Glasgow South West food bank alone. These 4 food banks so far have fed 4,745 people including 1,485 children.