



Mr Ned Sharratt
Assistant Clerk
Public Petitions Clerks
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

22nd October 2015

Dear Mr Sharratt

PETITION PE1571 – Food Bank Funding

Thank you for your correspondence dated 23rd September asking for COSLA's view on what the petition seeks and an outline of what support local authorities provide to foodbanks in their local areas.

Councils' support varies across Scotland both in type and scale. Typically it includes help with securing premises, grants to provide equipment and funding of advice workers. I note you have asked several local authorities to provide details of their work. I am sure you will receive a comprehensive response from those authorities which will be illustrative of the range in support provided.

With regard to what the petition is seeking, COSLA recognises the existence of food banks and the fact that they are an important expression of practical community support to those who require assistance locally. However, we are not convinced that government funding to secure additional food items is the correct solution. The Emergency Food Fund was not introduced to allow emergency food providers to purchase supplies. Instead it recognised that as well as responding to the immediate need for food aid, it was really important for individuals to address the underlying causes of poverty and prevent subsequent need. Advice and signposting is really important and should ideally be part of the service delivered through the foodbanks themselves. Local authorities are helping prevent increasing numbers of people and families reaching a financial crisis by offering financial support, advice and other assistance via the Scottish Welfare fund.

COSLA was and is supportive of the original intention behind the Emergency Food Fund. We believe preventing people requiring food aid should be a priority for society.

I hope this information is useful but please let me know if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely

Rory Mair
Chief Executive