

Euston Foodbank : Pandemic Lockdown updates during March 2020

Hand sanitisers and milk shortage - Currently client demand continues to be intense, and we aim to have a volunteer on the door restricting the number of clients at any one time so it doesn't become too crowded. Volunteers are using hand sanitiser between clients. Although four volunteers are resting due to health or work demands, the foodbank is still sufficiently staffed. We are using paper bags rather than plastic for bakery and vegetables, and biodegradable and recycled carry bags for people who forget to bring their own bags.

One of our paid workers plans to visit the USA for May, for the birth of a great niece/nephew. If this is possible we will look to arrange suitable cover. Each worker has half their weekly hours scheduled for the distribution sessions and the other half flexible to train volunteers, supervise corporate teams, input data and other admin, cover for each other and so forth. The statutory annual leave entitlement is 5.6 weeks pro rata.

The supermarkets have no UHT milk on the shelves, due to panic buying and fir online ordering has it faded to "out of stock", so it hasn't been possible to purchase any milk this last week or so.....I think juice us still available to buy, but milk is a real problem. Euston Foodbank usually buys up to 100 litres of milk a week as we get very little donated.

Foodbank supplies in a time of pandemic - we need uht milk – appeal in local papers - I am writing to appeal to any readers who have stockpiled UHT milk to consider donating half to the foodbank this week, as the shops will have more next week to be bought then. We are desperately short of UHT milk - all types, especially full milk but also semi, skim and non-dairy; and there is none in the supermarkets to buy or online to order.

The Euston Foodbank continues to operate the normal four sessions a week which are staffed by our trained volunteers and well attended by people in the community, usually a rolling number of around 100 households a week. People may be on the five week delay of universal benefit, a pensioner with a sudden bill, homeless, on a low income e.g. due to zero hours contracts, and of course the virus is impacting on available work.

We include at least a litre of uht milk in the allocation for each household but this means we need up to 100 litres a week, and we get nothing like that donated. I think it is simply too heavy, like long life juice, which we also need. But kind people donate money through our website so we usually buy what we need every week.

However for the last ten days there has been none to buy due to people stockpiling against future shortage due to the virus, which has meant we have had no milk to give families with children, and vulnerable people in poor health have not benefited from this simple source of nourishment.

Do you have 20 litres of UHT milk in the boot if your car, could you give the foodbank half? Please don't hoard more than you need because there are folk in our community who need it today, this week.

People ask what we are short of at the foodbank and it is UHT MILK please. (Also long life juice and tins of custard.) please give us your UHT milk!

We also really need volunteer drivers who are available in the evening to collect food from the local supermarkets. Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, mostly Co-op supermarkets nearby. If we can share this out between us we can have a timetable that is not too much of a burden on a couple of volunteers.

Consider donating money if you can't bring items to us, as we have little capacity or funding to collect. <https://euston.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/>

Do look on our website for the items we most need at the foodbank.

<https://euston.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

You can drop these items off to us on Tuesdays 1-4pm or other times we are open.

Apologies if we don't always answer the phone, we prioritise the people when we are open.

UHT milk, juice, tins of tuna, meat, rice, honey, dried fruit and nuts are always needed and grateful received. We need 5 tons of food a month to distribute, and we often receive only 70% of that in donations, so the more you can donate, the more we can support people. We currently have enough pasta, soup, tea, biscuits and beans, but are pleased with whatever you can give as we will be sure to need everything soon.

Response to Trussell Trust on latest government advice on Coronavirus

Thankyou. We are currently fine for volunteers, hand sanitising protocols, and restricting the number of people in the foodbank so the foodbank isn't crowded.

We have not yet resorted to standard prepared food parcels. BUT

Euston Foodbank is desperately short of UHT milk, there is none in the supermarkets around here to buy, the shelves are empty from panic buying, and none available online.

I mentioned this on Sunday and one parishioner brought around to the Sunday distribution session the 20 litres they had stockpiled.

So I have written to the local paper asking readers to give us half their hoarded milk.

And will make an excursion to one of the big supermarkets on the north circular. We normally buy many litres of milk every week because there is never enough donated.

Supplies needed - Demand at Euston Foodbank has increased by 59% these last weeks..."normally" we would expect to support a rolling number of around 100 households a week, around 6,000 people a year, but that looks set to double now in the pandemic. Do look at our website for our annual report, and updates. <https://euston.foodbank.org.uk/>

Many of the people who are referred to us are not locked into the government systems - they are homeless, or sanctioned or not entitled or living in chaotic households frequently in crisis and emergency situations. So we expect to keep up distribution sessions, even while pensioners and many on benefits can receive deliveries of the food parcels we put together.

But you can see we are in significant need of strengthening our supply chain. And it is almost impossible to buy items at the moment, as well as the expense. Many previous individual donors are getting in supplies for their own families instead. We are centrally located in London we are visited by many from around the mainline stations as well as the local estates.

Weekly we need: 100-200 litres of uht milk, half of that full milk if possible, and also 100-200 litres of longlife juice, orange is most popular.

We are currently completely out of rice - one or two kilo packs of long grain or basmati if possible, and tins of custard.

We also need tins of tuna/sardines, and corned beef/meat.

If possible I will send updates as our stocks are depleted, but those are our immediate needs.