

STANSTED AIRPORT & HARLOW FOODBANK

A FEEDING BRITAIN CASE STUDY

Airports reducing waste and giving back to the community

In the Autumn of 2016 the Environment Standards Manager at Stansted airport approached food banks in their surrounding area with an offer to redirect the goods surrendered by passengers at baggage check back in to the community. Harlow Foodbank takes in the bulk of deliveries from Stansted airport, enabling them to redistribute an additional 5.73 tonnes per year of non-perishable food, toiletries, and personal items to individuals and families in need.



THE NEED

With food banks across the UK reporting increasing demand, and research by think tanks, academics and NGOs showing that household budgets are being stretched further to accommodate rising costs of essentials, it is clear that additional support is needed. A 2017 Oxford University study on food banks found that the most common drivers of food bank use were benefit delays, income shocks, and low incomes. With the continued roll out of Universal Credit, food banks are preparing to increase the number of goods they can provide to the community during times of crises.



HOW AIRPORTS CAN HELP

While passengers remain frustrated at having to leave behind their goods, they are often pleased to find out that they will be put to good use. With monthly deliveries from Stansted Airport, food banks can provide more essential goods which alleviate some of the pressure on families who cannot afford food. The airport is likewise able to reduce their waste, lessen their environmental impact, and in some cases, improve customer relations.



THE PARTNERSHIP AT A GLANCE

1. Restricted items are surrendered by passengers at airport security.
2. Surrendered items are stored until there is enough to make a delivery (every 2-3 weeks).
3. Volunteers from the airport call the Harlow FoodBank to give them notice of the delivery and bring the items in at a convenient time.
4. A dedicated team of Foodbank volunteers sort and clean the donated goods, checking that everything is sealed and within best before dates.
5. Items are used in Foodbank parcels, with overstock redistributed to other front line services providers.

Top Items Donated

- Spreads
- Sauces
- Oils
- Honey
- Tinned soup, beans and fish
- Toiletries
- Gift sets
- Toys
- Socks



CHALLENGES

Bringing in additional goods from airports requires additional space and people power. One of the challenges of this partnership is that the size of the donations are typically quite large and require additional storage space, dedicated volunteers to safety check and sort the goods, and several distribution channels. Some donated stock may also arrive damaged with broken glass due to handling at the airport, which requires protective gloves for volunteers to sort the items. This is however minimal and results in only about 5 percent waste.

ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

1. Contact the Environmental standards team at your local airport to discuss a partnership.
 2. Ensure you have enough space to store donations, and channels to redistribute the items. Consider reaching out to other food aid projects in your community to team up.
 3. Designate a volunteer team with enough flexibility to come in at a weeks' notice to sort the donations.

SCALING IT UP

A minority of food banks offer people toothpaste, shower gels and other hygiene products in an attempt to meet their basic needs during a crisis period. In the Feeding Britain Report "A Routemap to Ending Hunger" the following recommendation was made to address this shortfall:

"We recommend that each airport makes contact with its local food bank to offer them unopened non-alcoholic drinks, toothpaste, shower gels and other hygiene products that are confiscated during security checks. Such supplies will play a crucial role in alleviating at least some of the pressure on household budgets when individuals and families cannot afford to buy food."

Since this recommendation was made, airports around the UK have embarked on partnerships just like this one between Stansted and Harlow Foodbank. Feeding Britain is keen to see this type of partnership further rolled out to increase emergency provision. If you require any assistance or further information to take on this partnership in your own area please don't hesitate to get in touch.

" This year we are again seeing an increase in referrals as many families and individuals find it difficult to make ends meet each week. 4.2 tonnes of non-perishable food are required each month to feed people in crisis.

The partnership with Stansted enabled us to redistribute 2.7 tonnes of non-perishable food, drinks and toiletries. "

- Gary Knott, Director of Community Services for Harlow Foodbank



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