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Epsom Foodbank warns of summer holiday pressure as donations fall

30 June 2026



Families facing the school summer break are increasingly worried about affording extra meals and snacks for children, according to Good Company Surrey, which says donations to its foodbank operation are down by 20 per cent compared with the same period last year.

In its latest newsletter, the charity said that while many people look forward to the holidays, the approaching break can bring anxiety for families already struggling financially.

Dafne, Good Company's Operations Manager, said the concern was not simply about the cost of food during the weeks away from school, but also the additional expense of preparing for a new school year.

She wrote: "For many of the families and individuals we support, however, the approaching summer holidays are not associated with a well-earned break or time away. Instead, they bring anxiety about providing extra meals and snacks during the long school holiday, guilt over what they cannot afford to give their children, and worry about the additional costs that come with preparing for a new school year."

The charity, which incorporates Epsom and Ewell Foodbank, said foodbanks and partner organisations can only meet demand where essential supplies are available. It appealed for donations, saying that even small contributions could help ensure local people did not go without during the summer.

The newsletter also highlighted wider support offered through Good Company's network. Epsom Pantry held its first peer-support meeting for parents of neurodiverse children on 10 June. Three members attended the initial session, which was intended to reduce isolation and allow parents to share information about services and activities. Another meeting is planned.

Good Company's three Advice Cafés — at St Barnabas in Epsom, Merland Rise in Tadworth and Leatherhead Community Hub — recently met to develop their work. The service says it has supported nearly 2,200 clients in the past two years, with benefits and grants, debt, and the cost of living among the main reasons people seek help.

The newsletter also carried a personal account from Sharon, a member of the Banstead Pantry Steering Committee, who described the pantry as a place where people could obtain affordable food but also find advice, companionship and a non-judgemental environment.

She said: "Banstead Pantry is a community that works within the local community, it is a real life line, it is a place where you can be yourself regardless of background and situation."

Good Company is also encouraging residents to support its work through fundraising challenges. Jonathan Lees, the charity's founder and Managing Director, is due to cycle 100km in Ride Reigate on 12 July, while Run Reigate follows on 20 September, offering 5km, 10km and half-marathon routes.

The charity's newsletter says donations, volunteering and community fundraising all remain important as it prepares for increased pressure over the school holidays.

Lionel Blackman

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