

Pest prevention boost for Worcestershire food banks

FOOD banks in Worcestershire are to be given a free pest survey as part of a new nationwide initiative.

More than 6,500 people received three days' emergency food from the centres between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015.

And Hinton Pest Control is stepping in to ensure food donated by members of the public each year does not attract unwelcome visitors during the run-up to Christmas.

The company has agreed to carry out free site surveys & provide advice at Trussell Trust food banks in Worcester, Pershore, Malvern Hills, North Cotswolds and Droitwich and Caring Hands food bank in Evesham as part of National Pest Prevention Week (Nov 9-14), run by leading trade body the British Pest Control Association (BPCA).

Trussell Trust food banks already have clear guidelines and practices in place to ensure high quality storage free from pests. But the service will help ensure none of the food banks have any problems ahead of the busy festive period.

Liz Davies, managing director of Hinton Pest Control, based in Hinton on the Green, said: "These food banks are providing a vital service for so many people and, while the volunteers who run them do great work and already have great practices in place, we felt we could do something to help make their storage facilities even safer. Food banks are generously supported by the public with various food donations and we would hate to see any donations lost to rodent damage whilst in storage.

"There are no problems at the moment, but any large scale storage of food can create a risk and it's vitally important to safeguard food that will be used for such an important purpose.

"Prevention is always better than cure, so we wanted to help make sure the food banks in our area have the very best services in place to ensure they remain pest-free and that any potential problems are avoided."

The surveys are part of National Pest Prevention Week – an initiative designed to raise increase public awareness of all pests, how they can be avoided, and the value of using expert controllers.

The Trussell Trust is the biggest food bank charity in the UK, operating more than 400 centres nationwide in partnership with churches and communities.

Adrian Curtis, UK food bank director for the Trust, said: "Our figures show more people than ever are turning to food banks, so we must all do what we can to prevent and relieve hunger in the UK.

“The initiative with the British Pest Control Association will help ensure our working practices continue to be spot on and that the risk of attracting pests to our food banks is minimised even further.

“Our foodbanks do a fantastic job of checking premises and preventing pest issues within storage areas, but it will be good to have further expert opinion and advice on what more we can do to maintain our high quality standards.”

ENDS



CAPTION: Liz Davies, managing director at Hinton, prepares to visit the Worcestershire food banks with senior technician Tim Cubberley (left) and technical director Steven Blount.