

Newsletter

Gateshead foodbank

Thank you Amelie—you're a Star!

Lynn Coulson is one of our regular volunteers. This is a photo of Lynn's granddaughter, 5 year old Amelie Moore, together with Amelie's younger brother, Ted. Amelie recently completed an alternative junior North Run and raised £100 for Gateshead Foodbank. She then bought food with the money raised and delivered it to our warehouse.

We'd like to say a HUGE thank you to Lynn and Amelie for their kindness. It's this kind of generosity which means Gateshead Foodbank can provide emergency food to our neighbours who are in crisis.



1.3 Million Emergency Parcels Provided in last 6 months

Twice a year our umbrella organisation, the Trussell Trust releases statistics about the number of emergency food parcels provided by foodbanks in its network, which include Gateshead Foodbank. On 10th November TT released the figures covering 1 April to 30 September 2022. The TT website sets out details. Here's the headlines:

- A record 1.3 million emergency food parcels were given out between April and September;
- That's more emergency food parcels given out during this period than in a full 12-month period five years ago;
- Almost half a million food parcels went to children;
- Over the same period, 320,000 people were forced to turn to a foodbank in the TT network for first time, representing a 40% increase compared to 2021; and
- One in five people referred to a TT foodbank are in working households.

These statistics are reflected in our own experience. Last year in the period April to September 2021, Gateshead Foodbank provided emergency food to 2,522 people (made up of 1,697 adults and 825 children). Over the same period this year, we gave out almost twice that amount, feeding a total of 4,280 people (made up of 2,790 adults and 1,490 children).



Both Gateshead Foodbank and the wider TT are now beginning to see need outstripping donations for the first time, so that we now rely on the generosity of our donors more than ever. You can find details of different ways in which to make financial donations on the Gateshead Foodbank website.

Tenth Anniversary Interview

Gateshead Foodbank first opened its doors ten years ago on 16th November 2002. To mark the occasion, we talk here to the Chair of the Foodbank, Jackie Beeley.

Q: How did you first become involved in Gateshead Foodbank?

In 2012 a few of us went to a concert in a Church in Durham where we saw a foodbank banner. We decided to explore whether Gateshead needed this kind of support and as they say, the rest is history! Having project managed many other new projects in my career, the role of Volunteer Chair/Coordinator landed in my lap.

Q: What does your role of Chair involve?

As Chair, I see my role as a Co-ordinator supporting the Steering Group and Trustees to develop the strategic plan, together with having a solid overview of what this means in practice for the operational side for volunteers and people who use the Foodbank.

Q: How do you feel about Gateshead Foodbank reaching its tenth anniversary?

I'm really humbled and proud of all the work which has been done over the years to support those in crisis by the Trustees and the many other volunteers. We have an extremely efficient warehouse, three distribution centres (in Gateshead, Birtley and Blaydon) and a full time employed Project Manager, Lesleyann Watson.

Ten years on, it is saddening that there's an increasing need for the Foodbank. We handed out 16,405 KG of food (being 3 days' worth of food to 1,835 people) in our first twelve months, compared with 90,089 KG of food (being 7 days' worth of food to 7,030 people) in the last twelve months.

Q: What about our donors? Can you tell us a bit about them?

We get food donations from all sorts of places in Gateshead, including Churches, businesses, voluntary organisations, and many regular individuals without whom we couldn't operate. We also have permanent collection food points in a variety of places across Gateshead (there's details on our website) and hold regular supermarket collections at Asda at the Metrocentre and Tesco in Trinity Square.

As a charity, we rely wholly on the support of our regular financial donors, many of whom wish to remain anonymous. We also bid for grants from a variety of organisations who have offered us support over the years.

Q: What does the Future hold for Gateshead Foodbank?

Back in 2012, we didn't expect the Foodbank to become as big as it is now. I can only see it getting busier and demand for emergency food growing given what's going on with the economy and rising costs. As well as giving out food, it is vital that people who use the Foodbank are signposted for extra support and advice when needed so that they can maximise their income. We recently received 3 years' funding to pay for the costs of financial inclusion advice to Foodbank users which is delivered by Gateshead Citizen Advice, and we are already seeing the benefits of this.



Prayer Points

Please pray for:

- The work of our financial inclusion advisers, Jana and Ngozi as they advise Gateshead Foodbank users who are facing financial hardship;
- Any of your friends or family who may be struggling to make ends meet; and
- The success of Gateshead Council's Warm Spaces initiative.

Annual General Meeting

Our next AGM will be held at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, 30th November at Fellside Methodist Church, Ancaster Road, Whickham NE16 5BJ. It will be a great opportunity to hear about the work of Gateshead Foodbank, what's been happening at each of our distribution centres and warehouse and also to hear about our finances. It's also a chance to meet our Trustees and other volunteers. Everyone is invited, you don't have to be involved in the Foodbank so do please come and join us.

Food Stats for October 2022

Food donations received: 16,064kg

Food given out: 12,152kg *

Number of people fed in our distribution centres at Birtley, Blaydon and Gateshead in total: 883

Number of adults fed = 602

Number of children fed = 281

*As you can see from these figures, we received a high volume of donations in October. This partly accounted for by our very successful collection at Asda at the MetroCentre and Harvest Festival collections from a number of schools and churches. **Thank you!**

Our next collection will be at Tesco, Trinity Square, Gateshead between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM on Thursday 1st to Saturday 3 December. Please note the Tesco dates in your diary and email us on info@gatesheadfoodbank.org if you can come along and help out for an hour or two.



A Prayer of Gratitude for our Volunteers provided by Trussell Trust

Loving God, we thank you for being with us during every change and crisis.

We thank you for the way you've shown yourself to us through the provision of food, through the people we have worked with, through the people we have met, through transformed lives, through new relationships, through the building of community, through generous giving, through times of laughter, through times of stress, through words of comfort, through words of challenge.

We thank you for the every day miracles, the angels disguised as strangers, the child that offered five loaves and fishes that fed the multitudes.

Give us grace to see your presence in our work, our volunteering, our encounters and our conversations.

We ask this in the name of Jesus our Saviour, Amen