

Newsletter



Introducing Diane Kindred, our new OLM

My name is Diane Kindred and I joined Gateshead Foodbank as Organising Local Mobilisation (OLM), or Local Organiser for short, just after Easter. Prior to that, I had been volunteering at Gateshead Foodbank for about 8 years. I first became involved in the Foodbank after my vicar at the time at St Alban's, Windy Nook in one of her sermons gave me a free day and asked me how I would spend it, so I volunteered at the Foodbank as I wanted to use that free day to help others. I had to stop volunteering due to ill health for a while and then Covid stopped a lot of us doing anything. I started volunteering again, whenever work allowed it, about 18 months ago.

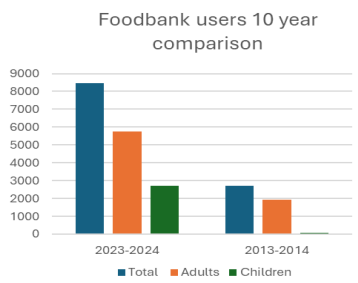


I have worked in retail for most of my life but have also campaigned for several charities over the years, including the NSPCC, Tearfund and Compassion UK, by lobbying Parliament and fund raising through church. I am part of the leadership team at St Alban's, and have just completed a Growing Leaders Course at St John's College in Durham. I feel that the tools I have gained by attending the course have equipped me for the role I am undertaking here at the Foodbank.

I am based at the Foodbank's main distribution centre in central Gateshead. As part of my role, I will be having 1-2-1 conversations with people who access the foodbank or other services, as well as volunteers, to identify common causes of poverty, heading up a team from those conversations who will campaign for change locally.

End of year Statistics: Gateshead Foodbank's financial year ended on 31 March 2024. Over that twelve month period, we gave out a total of 8,462 emergency food parcels, of which 5,760 were for adults and 2,702 were for children.

These figures are in contrast to the number of people we helped to feed ten years ago. In the year ended on 31 March 2014 we gave out food to a total of 2,693 people (1,910 adults and 783 children). There has therefore been a 214% increase in demand for our service over the last ten years.



Asda Collection

Our next supermarket collection will be at Asda at the Metrocentre, Gateshead on **Saturday 1st June between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM**. Our volunteers will be at the entrance to the shop handing out shopping lists and collecting donations of food and toiletries and also cash donations. Come along to Asda if you want to make a donation and to hear about our work.



Up the Heed!

We were kindly invited by Gateshead Football Club to hold a collection at their match against Hartlepool United on 26th March at the International Stadium. It was a brilliant evening. We received 150 KG of food and £94 in cash donations from the generous Gateshead FC supporters. We're really grateful to the club for their continued support for their community. The event was topped off by the Heed beating Hartlepool by SEVEN GOALS to one.



This picture shows Steve Thornton (Gateshead FC Foundation), Doug Thom (Warehouse volunteer) and Gary Bates (Distribution Volunteers). Thanks to everyone



Prayer Points

Please pray for the hundreds of people to whom Gateshead Foodbank provides emergency food each month; that each person who accesses the Foodbank would feel valued and cared for, as well as receiving the food and support they need; and that they will be well supported by Gateshead Foodbank to access any other services and activities that would help address some of the causes of their crisis.

Thank You St Chads

St Chads Community Project on Liddell Terrace is a community project offering childcare and family support services to local families in Gateshead. They offer a warm and welcoming space for everyone in our community and their mission is "working in partnership with families to build a better community."

In April they donated a load of fresh carrots. These were really appreciated by everyone using the Foodbank. Thank you!



Gateshead College

We're delighted to have been chosen by Gateshead College as their chosen charity for 2023/24. They offer the highest standards of education and real world skills - it's a combination which they call "employment edge" and it's totally unique to Gateshead College.

In March the staff and learners took part in The Great Big College Bake by putting their baking talents into action. As you can see they made a fine selection of cakes and savouries. At the same time they raised a massive £526.53 for the Foodbank. Fantastic.

Volunteer Focus – Phil Murnane

I began volunteering at the Foodbank warehouse around 18 months ago. My main role is around delivering the food by van from the warehouse to the main distribution centre in Gateshead. We also go out to collect donations from supermarkets and other donation points. In addition, I support a group of teenage volunteers in the warehouse on a Sunday evening, and also step in to help organise the normal warehouse sessions should either of the regular team managers be unavailable.

I worked for BT most of my working life, but after leaving them ran my own company for a few years. I retired fully 10 years ago. I was a regular at Gateshead Leisure Centre doing classes every day until Covid struck, and after that looked around for something active to do. The warehouse seemed ideal.

I think that following the covid pandemic, many of us felt a greater sense of social responsibility. For me, the opportunity to contribute and to get some physical activity in at the same time was compelling. The recruitment process was very simple - I went on to the Gateshead Foodbank website, filled in my details and when requested provided a couple of references. It didn't take long at all.

Working in the warehouse and delivering to the distribution centre is physical work. I know I've done a shift when it's over! We do have a good laugh though, stop for a cuppa half way through each session and we get to meet some lovely people who pop in with donations. I find it really rewarding.

The Foodbank only works if it has food to offer to people who are in need, and we're always looking for warehouse and driving volunteers (as well as volunteers in the three distribution centres) to make that happen; so, if you feel you want to contribute to the community and also want to get in a bit of physical activity, get your application in, grab your coat and hat (we have no heating in the warehouse) and join us.



EGG-cellent Response

Thank you to everyone who responded to our Easter appeal for donations in our last newsletter. Thanks to the generosity of our many kind supporters, we were able to give an Easter egg to everyone who visited the Foodbank in the run up to Easter.

We believe that it's touches like this which make people who come to the Foodbank know that they're not alone, and that our trustees and volunteers really care about doing something to try and help them in a time of crisis.

Different Ways to Help

There are lots of ways in which you can help Gateshead Foodbank. You can donate volunteering time, donate food, donate cash or partner with us. You can find details on our website at gateshead.foodbank.org.uk/give-help

If you decide to donate food, currently we're short of tinned meat and fish, beans, noodles, tea and coffee. We're also delighted to receive all types of toiletries including sanitary products, shampoo, shower gel, deodorant, toothpaste and cat and dog food. Also, we can always use more sturdy carrier bags as well as tin openers.

Some organisations have a collection bin in their reception area for staff and visitors. Others adopt us as their charity of the year (see the piece on Gateshead College on page 2). Many churches have a collection box for people to donate food regularly. Businesses offer resources such as teams volunteering at the warehouse or administrative support. Also some streets/neighbourhoods set up challenges using WhatsApp to see who can raise the most food for donating to the Foodbank. Please contact us at info@gatesheadfoodbank.org if you decide to get involved in any of these activities and we can try and feature your organisation in a future newsletter.

If you're short of time, you can donate money online using the website, Bankuet. They'll use your donation to bulk buy food and toiletries which they'll then deliver to our warehouse. Just go to bankuet.co.uk/gateshead.

You can also download an app called Bank the Food. Once you've followed Gateshead Foodbank on the app, it will send you a helpful "ping" with a reminder of the Foodbank's needs when you are shopping in your local supermarket.

Gateshead Foodbank relies almost entirely on donations of food and money to be able to offer emergency food to local people who are in crisis. We are grateful to all of our donors, trustees and volunteers. Your help is essential.



Gateshead Foodbank Financial Inclusion Service

Gateshead Foodbank funds the role of an Financial Inclusion Advisor (FIA), who are part of Citizens Advice Gateshead (CAG). They provide specialist financial advice to anyone who comes to the Foodbank. The project is currently funded for three years until July 2025 with a grant given to the Foodbank by the Trussell Trust. They can offer advice and support on a range of issues such as income maximisation, budgeting and formal debt solutions. In addition, individuals can be referred to the CAG's wider social welfare services such as housing, employment rights, debt and crisis support.

The objective behind this service is to address the underlying issues which cause anyone to have to use the Foodbank in the first place, so as to avoid the need for them having to do so again in the future. In the three months to 31st March 2024, we made 117 new referrals to the FIA which dealt with 165 people in total. The key issues covered were financial capability, debt, benefits and tax credits.

As a result of the advice given, a total of 34 people who accessed the Foodbank achieved or are expected to achieve a financial gain. Over the three month period, the service achieved financial gains totalling £64,400, 18 people were helped to manage £64,063 worth of debt and 8 individuals had £32,819 of debt written off.

The FIA anticipate that as a result of the service, 24 of the individuals who came to the Foodbank will not need any future assistance from Gateshead Foodbank. This has been achieved through new or increased benefit claims, budgeting changes following targeted advice and short term charitable or crisis support to help individuals over short term budget emergencies. If anyone returns to the Foodbank then, together with the FIA & CAG, we look into the reasons for this and whether any further support can be provided.