

# BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Annual Foodbank Statistics: 2024/25

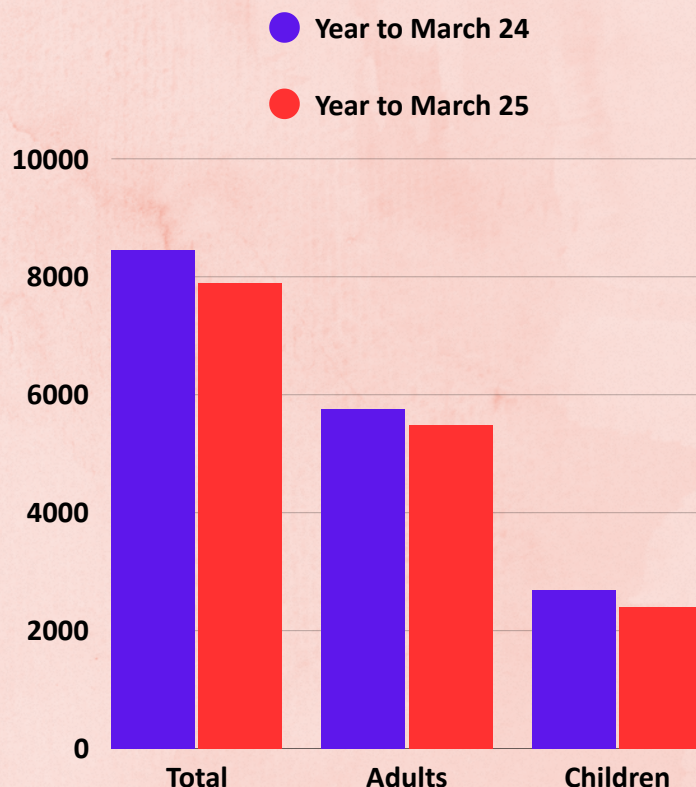
During the financial year to March 2025, our Foodbank experienced a welcome decrease in the number of people receiving emergency food assistance. The total number of recipients fell by 569 people, from 8,454 in the previous year to 7,885. This reduction is made up of 278 fewer adults and 291 fewer children utilizing our services. Several factors contributed to this positive change, including:

- **Collaborative Efforts:** Our partnerships with referral agents and with our dedicated staff and volunteers have been crucial. By working closely together, we've been able to guide individuals to appropriate advice and support;
- **Financial Inclusion Initiatives:** These initiatives have been instrumental in helping individuals increase their income and lower debt, reducing the need for emergency food assistance.

The main reasons for referrals to the Foodbank have remained consistent, namely priority debt, benefit delays and benefit sanctions.

57% of referrals are single individuals.

The reduction in the number of people relying on emergency food assistance is encouraging and highlights the impact of our collaborative efforts and the importance of continued financial guidance and support. By addressing the root causes of food insecurity, we aim to sustain and further this progress in the coming years.



## Supermarket Collection Dates

We hold regular collections at local supermarkets through the year, aiming to bolster support for families in need. Shoppers visiting participating supermarkets will have the opportunity to donate non-perishable food items, such as tinned food, rice, tea and coffee, as well as essential household items like toiletries and sanitary products. Volunteers from the Gateshead Foodbank will be on hand to assist with collections and provide information about the Foodbank's mission and the impact of community contributions. Some of our volunteers have joined after meeting us at a collection. Here's the dates of our next collections – please come and join us at one of them:

- 16th and 17<sup>th</sup> May – Asda, MetroCentre
- 13th and 14<sup>th</sup> June Tesco, Trinity Square
- 12th July Morrisons, Birtley
- 20th September Morrisons, Birtley
- 11th October Asda, MetroCentre
- 3 days in November to be confirmed – Tesco, Trinity Square





# Easter Eggs Donation Success

We're delighted to report on the success of our recent Easter egg donation drive. Following our appeal in the last newsletter, we received hundreds of Easter eggs thanks to the overwhelming generosity of so many individuals and organisations in our community. This amazing support allowed us to bring joy to everyone who visited the Gateshead Foodbank during the Easter season.

Not only were we able to provide an Easter egg to every guest at the Foodbank, but we also had some eggs left over. These additional eggs were distributed after Easter, extending the season's spirit of giving a bit longer.

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who donated. The sheer number of contributors makes it impossible to name each one individually, but please know that your kindness and generosity have made a significant impact.



## AHMADIYYA MUSLIM YOUTH ASSOCIATION NEWCASTLE

We want to say a big Foodbank thank you to Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association (AMYA) Newcastle, for their generous donation of 187kg worth emergency food. Community efforts and support like this keep us going, especially following on from the recent increases in people's water bills and council tax. It's hard to comprehend how people can afford the basic essentials when they were struggling even before these increases.

This donation is just one of many organized by AMYA under its Mercy4Mankind campaign. Throughout last year, the group hosted tree-planting events, fundraising drives, blood donations, and food distribution efforts. In the past two years alone, AMYA nationally has raised over £750,000 for British charities, donated 34 tonnes of food to foodbanks, provided 4.6 million meals, and contributed over 57,000 hours of community service.

# OUR KATY by Linda Watkin

Ethel Denyer - Katy - who passed away in April, was a longstanding volunteer at our distribution centre at Birtley Methodist Church and one of the original team members in 2017. She hardly missed a session since then. Her presence was a source of warmth and friendship, making her a truly special person in all our lives. Katy was quietly spoken, a good listener (not only her fellow volunteers but also Foodbank users could talk to her about anything and everything). She showed compassion and care to anyone who sat with her - although we all knew that she didn't put up with any nonsense either!

Katy was very organised and had taken on the team leader role when I was off getting hip replacements. Her ability to bring order and her attention to detail left a lasting impact on our team, for which we will always be grateful. She recruited Vicky, her precious daughter, into helping too. Katy was quirky, compassionate and had a real sense of humour. Her smile was a delight, and she was a very wise woman with a whole load of life experience that was always useful for advice for others. We all miss Katy hugely and our team will never quite be the same again. We are grateful to Vicky for choosing Gateshead Foodbank for donations at the funeral which raised over £470.

Katy: Thank you for being the person you were, the love that you shared and the gentle faithfulness in God that you lived your life by.



Linda Watkin  
Volunteer Team Leader, Birtley Distribution Centre

## Meeting Announcement

We're pleased to announce our upcoming meeting, which is taking place following the end of the 2024/25 financial year. We invite everyone interested in our work to join us on 28<sup>th</sup> May at 7:00 PM at Fellside Methodist Church, Ancaster Road, Whickham, NE16 5BJ.

During the meeting, we will cover several important topics, including:

- Financial Reports: An overview of our financial status at the close of the 2024/25 year;
- Financial Inclusion Work: Insights into our efforts to promote financial inclusion among our community;
- Foodbank User Statistics: A summary of our service usage data.
- Chair's Report: A presentation by our Chair, Jackie Beeley, on the Foodbank's achievements and future plans.

We encourage everyone to attend, whether you are already a volunteer, considering joining our team or simply interested in learning more about our work. There will be ample opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussions.

Find us at: [www.gateshead.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.gateshead.foodbank.org.uk) e: [info@gateshead.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@gateshead.foodbank.org.uk) t: 07496 840 720





## PRAYER POINTS

Heavenly Father, we ask for Your blessings upon all those who come to Gateshead Foodbank seeking assistance. May they find nourishment not only for their bodies but also for their spirits.

Grant them strength and hope in times of need, and comfort them with the knowledge that they are loved and cared for. May this support be a stepping stone to brighter days and a reminder of the compassion that exists in this world.

Bless the hands that give and those that receive. Let kindness and empathy flourish among us all.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY POWER WITH GATESHEAD FOODBANK

**by Diane Kindred**

At Gateshead Foodbank, we are committed to empowering our community through our Organising Programme. Our mission is to build community power and confidence, enabling residents to engage with local decision-makers and challenge injustices effectively.

One of the groups I have been supporting is the Shipcote Residents Association. This group has been actively addressing the pressing issues of fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling in their neighbourhood. During our first litter pick, five dedicated residents came together to clear a back lane, collecting an impressive 20 bags of rubbish in just two hours.

On 25<sup>th</sup> March, we hosted a meeting attended by all three ward councillors, nine residents, and three council officers from the housing, environmental health and antisocial behaviour departments. Prior to the meeting, we submitted questions to the councillors, some of which they addressed, while others will be answered by our next meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

As this group is in the early stages of addressing their community challenges, my role as an Organiser is to foster an environment where residents feel comfortable discussing other issues they encounter. Through building trust and confidence, we aim to tackle additional concerns as they arise.

Our second community litter pick was on 27<sup>th</sup> April. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Hope House for hosting our first meeting, Shipley Art Gallery for providing a venue for future meetings and RNIB Gateshead for printing our fliers.

Stay tuned for the next edition of our newsletter, where I will share photos and stories from our volunteers as we head to Westminster for Lobby Day.

Diane Kindred  
Local Organiser



# THE GENEROUS SUPPORTERS OF GATESHEAD FOODBANK

The efforts of Gateshead Foodbank are continually bolstered by the incredible generosity of various donors and organizations. Without their support, sustaining the Foodbank's operations would be challenging. Below, we highlight several organizations that have contributed to our cause. Although space limits us from mentioning all contributors, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to every supporter.

## **Gateshead Leisure Centre: A Festive Initiative**

Gateshead Leisure Centre has been a remarkable partner through their creative Leave It Hanging Christmas Tree campaign. This initiative encouraged leisure centre members to donate, resulting in a generous contribution of £635 worth of vouchers. These vouchers included activities such as swimming, soft play, Clip 'n Climb, and café treats, providing families in need with joyful experiences beyond their emergency food parcels. Witnessing the delight on the recipients' faces was truly rewarding, marking the start of an exciting partnership with the Leisure Centre.

## **Metrocentre: Hands-On Support**

The Metrocentre has also been instrumental in supporting Gateshead Foodbank. Representatives have been volunteering at our main distribution centre in central Gateshead every Wednesday afternoon. Their hands-on assistance in assembling emergency food parcels tailored to individual needs has been invaluable. This collaboration highlights the community's commitment to helping those in need.

## **Urban Park Market: Monthly Contributions**

Urban Park Market hosts vibrant monthly markets in Saltwell Park from April to October. Featuring over 40 food vendors, arts and crafts, fashion, live music, and free children's entertainment, these events are a community highlight. Generously, Urban Markets donate 25% of all door takings to Gateshead Foodbank, significantly aiding our mission to support local families.

## **A Heartfelt Thanks**

We extend our deepest appreciation to these supporters and countless others who contribute in various ways. Each donation, whether large or small, plays a critical role in the continued operation of Gateshead Foodbank, ensuring that we can provide essential support to those in need. Thank you to everyone who makes our work possible!



Shelley Sefton, Davey Ryan and Anthony Kennedy of Gateshead Leisure Centre on a recent visit to our main distribution centre