

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Breaking Barriers to Poverty – And Smashing Targets! 🎉

Since July 2022, Gateshead Foodbank has teamed up with Citizens Advice Gateshead (CAG) to do more than just provide food – we're tackling poverty at its roots. At the heart of this mission is Jana Pokutova, our incredible Social Welfare Advisor, offering expert help with debt, budgeting, housing, and employment.



And the Results? Outstanding!

In just 12 months, Jana helped service users gain a staggering **£764,114** – that's £389,114 over target and £312,000 more than last year! She also secured **£134,400** in debt write-offs, changing lives and restoring hope.

Over the first three years of her appointment, Jana has secured over **£1,000,000** in financial gains plus **£233,000** in debt relief orders and **£864,000** in debt management for **900** individuals.

Jana's become a vital part of our team, working hand-in-hand with Distribution Manager Lesleyann Watson and our amazing volunteers to ensure every visitor gets a warm welcome and the right support.

Trussell funded Jana's role for the first two years, and split the funding 50/50 with Gateshead Foodbank for the third year. In the current year (Year 4), the Postcode Lottery is funding 50% of Jana's role and Gateshead Foodbank is funding the other 50%. We sadly don't have any future funding for the following year. Financial funds are greatly needed to deliver such essential and effective service to those who are struggling to afford basic essentials and move on from using foodbank.



If you'd like to be part of this life-changing work, please consider donating. ✉ For bank transfer info, please email: info@gateshead.foodbank.org.uk

Together, we're not just feeding people – we're helping them thrive.



**Find us at: <https://gateshead.foodbank.org.uk/>
e: info@gateshead.foodbank.org.uk t: 07496 840 720**

Harvest 2025 Resources

Are you planning a Harvest celebration in your Church, school assembly or community group in support of Gateshead Foodbank?

Resources and support are available from Trussell to help you raise awareness of what Gateshead Foodbank is doing, and how the local community can best support us over the Autumn. We can send you a Harvest pack that includes the Foodbank Harvest shopping list to photocopy and distribute to supporters; collection point signs; a collection point poster and a Harvest appeal poster; Foodbank tri-fold leaflets; and a monetary response form (in case anyone wishes to make a monetary donation, rather than (or in addition to!) giving food).

If you'd like to receive this pack then please email us at info@gateshead.foodbank.org.uk

Local Donation Points

Did you know you can donate items like pasta, rice, and tinned goods at local drop-off points?

Every single donation helps us support families in need across our community.

Find your nearest drop-off on our website, under the Give Help tab then **click on Donate Food**.

<https://gateshead.foodbank.org.uk/>



WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Join our team and help make a real difference in the community. Whether you have a few hours to spare each week or can support occasionally, your time can truly help those in need.

For more information, visit our website by searching "Gateshead Foodbank Volunteer" or give us a call on 07496 840 720 – we'd love to chat with you!

SUPERMARKET COLLECTIONS

Our most recent supermarket collection was at Birtley on 12th July when customers donated 218 KG of food. Thank you to the Morrisons Birtley Community.

Our next collections are on:

- 20th September - Morrisons, Birtley
- 11th October - Asda, MetroCentre
- 3 days in November to be confirmed - Tesco, Trinity Square

Please come along to support us and hear about our work from our volunteers



TESCO

A huge thank you to Tesco Express Rowlands Gill for their incredible donation of nearly 200kg and for their continued support since December 2024. We're so grateful for their generosity and ongoing commitment to helping us make a difference!

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OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH GATESHEAD LEISURE

You will remember that Gateshead Leisure Centre was forced to close in July 2023 following Government cuts to the Council's budget. The charity, Gateshead Active Ltd is proud to have reopened the Leisure Centre on 14th June 2024 for the benefit of the local community, ensuring that this vital facility remains a welcoming and inclusive space for health, wellbeing and connection.

It has a gym, pool, soft play and numerous fitness classes. But it's more than just a fitness facility - it's a vibrant community hub where everyone is embraced and included.

As part of their ongoing commitment to community support, they're working with Gateshead Foodbank to help local families in need. The Leisure Centre now serves as a food donation drop-off point, making it easier for members of the public to contribute essential items.

In addition, and as reported previously, Gateshead Active has donated over £600 worth of free activities to the Foodbank to support children and families, including:

- Free swimming sessions
- Free soft play passes
- Café vouchers for use in the centre

These donations have brought moments of joy, relief and connection to families facing difficult times. The Leisure Centre will be running this initiative again this Christmas, continuing their mission to uplift and support those who need it most in our community.

They also run their Chatty Café every Tuesday from 11am to 1.30pm which everyone is welcome to join and receive a free hot drink. The Chatty Café is a weekly community wellbeing initiative developed and hosted at Gateshead Leisure Centre. It provides a welcoming space for all residents in Gateshead to engage in supportive conversations around mental health, physical health, wellbeing and social inclusion. The project brings together GP services, peer mental health supporters, NHS social prescribers, DWP disability employment advisors and other local agencies to offer holistic support through informal café chats, combined with fare-share food offerings and a data bank to offer additional IT support for those in digital data poverty.

Together, we're building a stronger, healthier Gateshead.

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A FOODBANK USER'S THANK YOU

Here at Gateshead Foodbank we want to share someone's experience of visiting us at the beginning of August. It takes courage to step into the foodbank. However, we are here to create a safe and supportive space for everyone:

"I visited yourselves this morning To collect a food parcel for myself and my little boy I just wanted to say a massive thank you.

"I must admit I was a bit worried about coming as I felt embarrassed, but you were all so friendly, welcoming and helpful.

"You do an amazing job and once I get myself back on my feet I will definitely be visiting yourselves again to drop food off for those in need. Keep up the great work I have so much admiration for you all.

"I honestly can't thank you enough."



Prayer Point

A prayer by Reverend Brenda Jones of Saint Andrew's Church, Lamesley:

In the darkness of our world my God, I need your light. When I am worried about paying for my heating, having food to feed my family and myself, I need your light. When I am feeling concerned about the health and well-being of my family, friends and strangers, I need your light. In the hours I am in most need I seek you, and find you in the foodbanks, the warm spaces, the smile and friendly greeting that is unexpectedly given as I go about my day. In those moments, my God, I find the hidden treasure of hope, peace and love that helps me through another day.



Local Organiser Updates

by Diane Kindred, Local Organiser

At Gateshead Foodbank, we aim not just to provide food and support, but to empower communities and challenge injustice. That's where my role as the Foodbank's first Local Organiser, appointed in April last year, comes in.

My work focuses on connecting with people who have lived experience of poverty, building community groups and supporting them to campaign for change. Since starting, I've been listening, facilitating dialogue with decision-makers and helping groups grow in confidence. Here are a few highlights:

Shipcote Residents Association

This thriving group now chair their own meetings, organises litter picks, and works closely with councillors. Recent wins include new dog fouling signs, extra bins, CCTV and bollards to improve safety.

Lobley Hill Community Action Group

With a new logo and growing membership, this group successfully brought attention to poor bus services through a BBC-featured petition. They've engaged councillors and secured pledges to improve neglected areas.

Highfield House Residents

This group is campaigning for fairer pricing and access to value products at local Tesco Express stores, highlighting the critical role of rural convenience shops.

These are just the beginning. Communities in Gateshead are showing their power to organise, influence, and create lasting change.



Photos from the recent Shipcote Residents Association social event at Shipley Art Gallery. Thank you to the Gateshead Foodbank Volunteers who helped and to the Shipley for hosting the event

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