

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

WE NEED TO BE HONEST... WE NEED YOUR HELP

Our finances are under increasing pressure. While food and cash donations have fallen, thousands of people are still turning to Gateshead Foodbank every year for support. Right now, **financial donations help us more than ever**. Why? Because every pound you donate enables us to:

- Buy the food and household essentials that are running low.
- Secure the best prices, helping your donation go even further.
- Ensure no one leaves our foodbank without the essentials they need.

Every donation, whatever its size, makes a real difference. If you've ever wondered how you could help your local community, **this is the moment**. Your support will help ensure that no one in Gateshead has to face hunger alone.

Ways to donate

By cheque: Send your cheque to Gateshead Foodbank, The Davidson Building, Swan Street, Gateshead NE8 1BG.

By bank transfer or standing order: Call us on 07496 840 720 and we'll be happy to provide our bank details.

Visit the Give Help page on our website for other ways to donate/help with money, food or volunteering time: <https://gateshead.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/>

By text donation: Use the Text Donate service below. This is the link for you to donate: <http://easydonate.org/NGPL01> **DONATE**

*Fundraising, payments and donations by **text donate** are processed and administered by the National Funding Scheme, operating as DONATE, a charity registered in England and Wales (1149800) and Scotland (SC045106). In addition to your text donation, your standard network message charges will apply (according to your service provider's rates). For full Terms & Conditions, visit www.easydonate.org. *

A Good News Story

Walking through Gateshead I heard someone shout, 'Hello, Flower!'

I turned but did not immediately recognise who had called out to me. After a few seconds I recognised a couple who I had talked to at our Foodbank Distribution Centre in Gateshead. When I first met them, they were homeless and living on the streets. However, the last time I talked to them they had just secured a property and were looking forward to moving in.

The transformation of this couple was amazing. They were wearing clean clothes and, most importantly, looked happy. We had a lovely chat and several warm hugs were exchanged. They told me that they were enjoying their new home and the occasional treat.



To me this couple symbolised our core mission at Gateshead Foodbank; to give our users a helping hand until life improves for them. Meeting this couple made me so glad for the rest of the day.

Susan le Jeune
Volunteer

Prayer Point



Loving God,

Thank you for the warmth and hope that summer brings. We pray for everyone who turns to Gateshead Foodbank for support, and for the volunteers, staff and donors whose kindness makes that support possible.

Bless every gift given, every hand that serves, and every person who receives. May our community grow in compassion, generosity and care for one another.

Help us to share what we have with open hearts, so that no one feels forgotten or alone.

Amen.

MYTHS DON'T FEED PEOPLE. FACTS DO.

Let's challenge some of the common misconceptions about foodbanks and shine a light on the reality of poverty in Gateshead.

✗ MYTH 1: People use the Foodbank every week.

✓ FACT: Most people don't.

Around 60% of the people who accessed Gateshead Foodbank in the last financial year needed support only once, and just over 90% used it three or fewer times. For most people, the Foodbank provides short-term help during an unexpected crisis such as redundancy, illness, delayed benefits or rising household costs.

✗ MYTH 2: People choose to use a Foodbank instead of working.

✓ FACT: Many people who use the Foodbank are in work.

Low wages, insecure employment, reduced hours and rising living costs mean that having a job doesn't always protect people from needing emergency support.

✗ MYTH 3: Foodbanks only hand out food.

✓ FACT: We do much more than provide food.

At Gateshead Foodbank, we:

- Provide emergency food parcels;
- Offer a warm, welcoming and non-judgemental space;
- Listen to people's circumstances;
- Connect people with our Financial Inclusion Service; and
- Help people maximise their income, tackle debt and build long-term financial stability.

Our aim is not just to help people through today's crisis, but to reduce the likelihood of another one in the future.

✗ MYTH4 : Foodbanks always have plenty of food.

✓ FACT: Donations don't always match demand.

Some weeks we experience shortages of essential items. Financial donations allow us to buy exactly what's needed when our shelves are running low, helping us respond quickly to changing demand.

YOU CAN HELP! Whether you donate food, give financially or volunteer your time, your support helps local people through difficult times and gives them hope for the future.

Community Generosity at Tesco

Our latest supermarket collection took place at Tesco, Trinity Square on the final Friday and Saturday in July. We were truly delighted by the kindness and generosity of Tesco's customers, who donated nearly two tonnes of food and almost £450 in cash over the two days.

We would like to thank Tesco for hosting the collection, their generous customers for their wonderful support, and our dedicated staff and volunteers who gave up their valuable time to make the event such a success.

From Receiving Help to Giving Back



One of our volunteers, Kim Davison, used Gateshead Foodbank in the past. Here, Kim shares her story.

"I first used Gateshead Foodbank a few years ago. At the time, I felt ashamed, nervous and scared about coming to the Foodbank.

"From the moment I arrived, the volunteers made me feel welcome and at ease. Their kindness and support helped me through a difficult time. Since then, I've been able to get back on my feet, despite facing some recent housing issues.

"I've been volunteering at the Foodbank's main distribution centre in central Gateshead since around May. I started by shadowing other volunteers, helping to pack food parcels and greeting people who'd come to collect food. I now volunteer as a greeter.

"Volunteering has made me much more confident and comfortable around other people, despite having autism and ADHD. It's been a rewarding experience, and I'm proud to be able to give something back to the service that supported me when I needed it most."



Our volunteers don't just give their time to Gateshead Foodbank – they bring hope, kindness and compassion to communities across Gateshead. Meet Tee Morley, whose commitment to Gateshead Foodbank and Gateshead Clubhouse is helping people find hope, support and community:

"I started helping out at Gateshead Foodbank a couple of years ago. I love my Friday mornings, meeting people and, hopefully, helping those who are going through difficult times. I also enjoy supporting our supermarket collections.

"The rest of my week is dedicated to Gateshead Clubhouse, a peer-run mental health community hub in Bensham. I've been Chair for the past few years and have been involved since its inception around 14 or 15 years ago. Of the three of us who started it all, sadly, I'm the last of the original founders, but there are plenty of new people coming through the ranks to carry things forward.

"The Clubhouse provides a safe space, affordable, nutritious meals and snacks (as well as choccy and crisps!), activities and outings. We offer everything from mindfulness, yoga, arts and crafts, Bollywood dancing, Airfix modelling and a Hearing Voices Support Group, to regular day trips. Once a year, a few hardy souls also head away together for a few days. This summer we visited Llandudno – a fabulous place I'd definitely love to return to.

"More than anything, though, we're there to support our members, provide signposting where appropriate, and help people live fulfilling lives despite some very challenging mental health diagnoses.

"I'm very lucky to be the chief cook, and I think it's this part of my role that recently earned me a crystal award from Gateshead Learning and Skills. I'm incredibly proud of it, but I couldn't mention it without recognising Terry, who helps enormously with the cooking.

"It's not my Clubhouse – it's our Clubhouse, for the people of Gateshead."

Shinu Yohannan's Charity Skydive



Our supporters continue to inspire us with the creative and courageous ways they stand alongside Gateshead Foodbank. On 15th August, supporter Shinu Yohannan is taking his commitment to new heights by completing a charity skydive from 14,000 feet to raise funds for our work, with all funds raised going directly to Gateshead Foodbank.

You can sponsor him by searching "JustGiving Shinu Yohannan". These funds will help us continue providing emergency food and practical support to individuals and families facing hardship across our community. We are deeply grateful for Shinu's courage and commitment.

Financial Inclusion Update

We recently completed the fourth annual review of our Financial Inclusion Service. During the past year, the service delivered significant benefits for Gateshead Foodbank clients:

- 207 new Foodbank users received support.
- £128,381 in financial gains was secured for clients.
- £355,116 of debt was successfully managed.
- £90,912 of debt was written off.

The service significantly exceeded its targets for both debt management and debt write-offs. This reflects the increasing complexity of the cases being supported, with financial advisers helping clients to resolve larger and more challenging debt issues.

Importantly, 43 people who accessed the service no longer needed to use Gateshead Foodbank after receiving support. This demonstrates that financial inclusion advice can help people improve their financial circumstances and reduce their reliance on emergency food provision.

Over the four years the service has been operating, it has continued to deliver strong financial outcomes for Gateshead Foodbank clients. The fact that 43 people no longer required foodbank support following intervention highlights the positive impact that financial inclusion advice can have in improving financial resilience and helping people move away from crisis support.

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

Update from our Local Organiser

Lobley Hill Community Festival – What a Success!

Lobley Hill Community Action Group was proud to help organise a fantastic fun day for all the family! With the sun shining, the day was packed with free hot dogs and ice cream. Face painting, dance routines, a singing choir, a brass quintet, cakes, a tombola, goats, alpacas and a bouncy castle.



We were also delighted to welcome our MP, Mark Ferguson, who judged the children's art competition. With hundreds of fantastic entries from pupils at Lobley Hill Primary School, choosing the winners was no easy task!

The festival was a huge success and showed what can be achieved when our community comes together. We are already looking forward to doing it all again next year!

Would you like to get involved and help make Lobley Hill an even better place to live? Join the Community Action Group and have your say!



Highfield House Community Garden

Thanks to a kind donation from our MP, Liz Twist, the Highfield group has started a new community garden. The garden will help make fresh food more affordable while encouraging local residents to grow their own fruit and vegetables. It will also provide a welcoming space for people to come together, learn new skills and support one another

Diane Kindred
Local Organiser