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# Welcome

# Welcome to our impact report for April 2024 to March 2025.

This was a pivotal year for our shared mission. A year of transition, momentum, and one where longstanding work began to shift the dial on some of the deep-rooted drivers of hardship – and a new phase of our journey took shape.

From growing political recognition of the need to strengthen the social security system, to significant breakthroughs in providing access to advice on money matters, we began to see progress on the policy changes we've long called for.

As the UK prepared for a General Election, we stood alongside food banks, partners, and people with lived experience to push hunger up the political agenda – helping to secure key policy commitments across the UK.

It was also the year we looked ahead. As our 2020-2025 strategy drew to a close, we launched Together for Change: Ending Hunger Together – our bold new five-year plan to end the need for food banks in the UK.

Yet while some signs of change began to emerge, the need for support remained vast. Over 2.9 million emergency food parcels were distributed by our community of food banks – a stark reminder of the scale of hardship facing communities across the UK.

Behind every parcel is the commitment of thousands of people who refuse to accept that hunger is inevitable. More than 40,000 volunteers gave over seven million hours of their time to their local food banks. Countless others donated, campaigned, offered advice, or simply listened.

This report captures what we've all achieved, together: the compassion shown, the pressure applied, and the path ahead. Thank you to everyone who made it possible.

Guedera M-VIII hyvelode

Emma Revie and
Matthew van Duyvenbode
Co-CEOs, Trussell



## Action to support a growing need

2.9<sub>M</sub>

emergency food parcels were distributed by food banks in the Trussell community - a **51% rise** over five years from 2019-20, highlighting the growing scale of need and continued pressure on food banks

1m+

emergency food parcels were provided for children, a **41% increase** compared to 2019–20. This sharp rise reflects the growing number of families with children struggling to afford the essentials 567,235

emergency food parcels were provided to people who've needed a food bank for the first time over the past year – an 8% increase compared to five years ago

270,000+

people donated their, time, money, or voice to our mission

55,000

people across the UK actively campaigned alongside Trussell



# Our strategy for 2020-2025

We are an anti-poverty charity and community of food banks. We work together to ensure no one in the UK needs a food bank to survive, while providing emergency food and practical support for people left without enough money to live on.

Our five-year strategy for 2020-2025 focused on three key themes:

We are in 1,400 food bank locations, supported by 40,000 volunteers, 12,000 churches, hundreds of thousands of community groups and schools, and millions of people around the UK.

### **Changing Communities**

Helping unlock even more of the potential of communities to become places where the underlying drivers of poverty are addressed, while supporting food banks to develop strategies to reduce the need for emergency food locally.

### **Changing Policy**

Influencing policy development and implementation – UK-wide, nationally and locally – in ways that are targeted towards supporting people facing hunger and hardship. The data we gather from the frontline work of food banks, and through our research, helps us advocate for effective solutions – and to push for the change we want to see in society.

### **Changing Minds**

Lasting change
happens when
wider society thinks
and acts differently
about an issue,
so we're building
understanding and empathy about
the drivers of food bank need and calling on greater numbers of
people to take action.

# **Changing Communities**

**Ending hunger requires more than food.** It demands connection, compassion, and change – rooted in the everyday actions of people working tirelessly in communities across the UK.

Through our **Changing Communities** work, we support food banks not just to respond to crisis, but to build local power, influence systems, and offer holistic support that restores dignity and hope.

This past year has shown us what's possible when food banks are supported to grow their reach, deepen their impact, and lead the way towards a future without the need for emergency food.



The power of community is recognising that sometimes people struggle, that it could be any one of us, and that the rest of us are there to help and walk alongside you.



**Stephanie Heath, Learning Lead**Lutterworth and Villages Foodbank



I had a great respect for the food bank... I was getting support, and starting to get back on my feet. It made me realise that I wanted to make that kind of difference to others too. So I started volunteering.



**Steve** lived experience partner

£94.9m+

in financial gains were achieved for people facing hardship through advice services delivered via food banks - a **43% increase** on 2023-2024

40,000

volunteers dedicated over seven million hours to supporting food banks – an **11% increase** since 2023–2024, and a 43% increase over five years

£16m+

in new grants was awarded to food banks during 2024–2025. Over the previous five years, from 2020–2025, a total of £90.5 million was provided in grants to food banks



## Investing in food banks

### Providing financial support through targeted grants

One of the ways in which we support the food banks in our community is through the provision of **financial grants**. At Trussell, our grant-making is driven by a single principle: responding to need, wherever and however it arises.

In 2024–2025, we invested over £16 million in targeted grant funding across our network – not just to meet urgent need, but to build long-term resilience in communities.

#### Meeting urgent need

When hardship spikes, we step in quickly to ensure food banks can respond.

• Emergency grants - £4.63 million
These grants provided a critical
safety net, enabling food banks
to meet record levels of need
amid rising hardship. Funds
helped cover essential costs like
food supplies, equipment, and
volunteer capacity during crises.

Supermarket top-up - £1.52 million
 As donations dropped and demand
 soared, these grants helped
 food banks with essential core
 costs, including keeping shelves
 stocked and maintaining essential
 food parcels.

## Boosting advice and support on money matters

We know emergency food provision is not the long-term solution to poverty, so we also invest in **advice and support services** that can help reduce the need.

Advice services - £5.91 million
 These grants supported food banks in embedding advice on money matters - including benefits advice, budgeting support and help with managing and reducing debts - to give people facing hardship the tools to regain control of their finances.



## Building local capacity and resilience

To create lasting change, we invest in the people, places and systems that underpin food bank services.

- Strategic resources £616,246
   These grants enable food banks to recruit key staff to develop their services and implement significant strategic programmes.
- Strategic facilities £718,808

  These funds enabled food banks to invest in improved infrastructure, equipment, and digital tools that support more efficient, dignified and sustainable service delivery.
- Volunteer development -£385,256

With over 40,000 volunteers powering the Trussell community, these grants funded training, development, and wellbeing support - helping strengthen the backbone of our movement.

 OLM (Organising, Leadership and Mobilisation) - £246,908
 Supporting food banks and communities in building advocacy and organising skills to influence local decision-making, these grants are helping to turn local insight into UK-wide influence.

Pathfinders - £954,131
 These Pathfinder Fundraising Support Grants were awarded to 21 food banks, enabling them to recruit local fundraising roles in support of longer-term strategic work.

## Other targeted support - £1.02 million

This includes tailored responses to region-specific issues, cost of living pressures, and other **locally identified needs** across our network.

Every pound we grant is a response to a real need – identified by communities, informed by data, and aimed at creating impact.

Whether meeting urgent hunger, unlocking income, building resilience, or **empowering change**, our grant-making is helping to shift food banks from crisis response to long-term community solutions.



£5.91<sub>M</sub>

in grants were provided to food banks in 2024-2025, supporting them to embed financial advice services £4.63<sub>M</sub>

in emergency grants were provided to food banks, ensuring they could meet record levels of need

## Volunteers: The beating heart of our movement

Food banks simply couldn't function without the unwavering dedication, compassion, and flexibility of volunteers. This year, over **40,000 volunteers** gave more than seven million hours of their time: sorting donations, packing parcels, offering advice, providing cups of tea, and lending a listening ear when someone needed it most.

10% of our volunteers have experienced food insecurity themselves

73% of volunteers say they are "very satisfied" with their role - far higher than the UK voluntary sector average

**90%+** say they would recommend volunteering with Trussell

"We couldn't do what we do without them - we simply wouldn't exist without their help and support." - Food bank coordinator Volunteers don't just give time. They give **hope**. They form friendships, offer peer support, and create safe, welcoming spaces where dignity is always front and centre.

Volunteer leaders across the UK tell us how important it is to invest in relationships and ensure **people feel valued**, with one volunteer explaining "People like to be appreciated. It's ingrained in us."

To better support volunteer coordination, we also invested in the delivery, onboarding and support of **Assemble** – a volunteer management platform that helps food bank teams schedule shifts, track training, manage compliance, and improve internal communications.





I used to need food banks, but now I volunteer there. I want people to leave the food bank with hope. The food bank makes such a difference to people's lives. You can see them walk in sad and stressed, and then they leave with a smile. That might come from a hug, a cup of tea, or a bit of food, but they're walking out differently to how they came in.



#### **Aaror**

A person with lived experience who now volunteers at a food bank

## Addressing the drivers of food bank need

As part of our organisational strategy, we recognise that hunger is not about food: it's a money problem. Food bank need is rooted in **financial insecurity**. To address this, we need to boost people's income and financial resilience – the core focus of our work in providing access to advice on matter matters, and the Help through Hardship helpline.

The Help through Hardship helpline, delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice and Mind, offers direct phone-based support to people navigating financial crisis – ensuring that individuals can access all the support they're entitled to.

Throughout the year, this service remained a lifeline for thousands of people. It doesn't just offer information; it provides joined-up, compassionate support that can completely change someone's circumstances.

Though call volumes dipped slightly compared with the previous year, the number of people we supported towards financial gains, and the total financial gains identified, both grew by 36% and 58% respectively.

Between April 2024 and March 2025:

- 130,934 calls were answered
- 43,106 people received detailed, high-quality advice
- £64.4 million+ in financial gains were identified
- £1,494 was the average income gain identified per caller
- 3,342 referrals were made to mental health support via Mind's Infoline





I felt very alone... but, following our conversation, I am so grateful for the advice, guidance and support.



Caller Help through Hardship helpline



The support provided by the Help through Hardship helpline is often multi-layered: in one case, a caller named Maria was connected to a £720 Turn2Us grant, received help applying for social security, got energy advice to reduce bills, and was referred to a local adviser to help manage rent arrears. Interventions like these restore stability, hope, and independence.

**58**%

more in the total value of financial gains was identified for people calling the Help through Hardship helpline in 2024-2025 than in the preceding year

36%

more people were supported towards financial gains via the Help through Hardship helpline in 2024-2025 than in 2023-2024



## Advice on money matters

### Tackling the root of food insecurity

Thanks to ongoing investment, partnership working and support from Trussell, as of 31 March 2025, 92% of the food banks in our community were providing people with access to free, high-quality advice on money-related matters.

In 2024-25 alone:

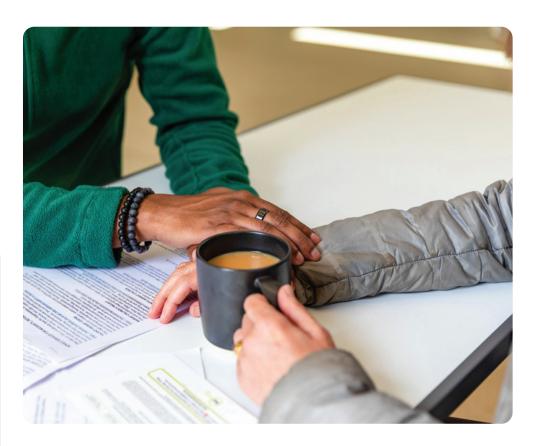
We supported **84,902 people** with access to advice on money matters.

- Of these, we supported 36,717 to access financial gains, and 8,613 to manage debt.
- Total financial gains (expected or confirmed) were £94.9 million.

- The total debt managed was £49.5 million+, of which £18.3 million was written off.
- Among people with an identified financial gain, the average gain per person was £1,118.
- The average amount of debt managed per person, where an outcome was achieved, was £5,757.

Compared to the previous year, financial gains rose by 43%, and debt written off increased by 46% – reflecting a growing capacity to address financial hardship at its roots.

The impact of such support is clear, with around a quarter of advice service recipients assessed by advisers deemed likely to no longer need to use a food bank.





I was so scared and stressed, because I always got told that once you were in debt you could never get out of it. But the food bank introduced me to some trusted debt advisors, who helped me plan to deal with the debt that I have. I'm so grateful for their help.



**Ruby** lived experience partner



#### Annie's story

Annie is a single parent, living with her teenage daughter.

"I'm working part-time in retail, and on Universal Credit, but it doesn't cover the cost of living," explains Annie.

"It's difficult to make ends meet. Afew years ago, I had £1,000 in energy debt. I was so worried, and falling behind on other bills. My daughter was due to start secondary school, but I couldn't afford the uniform." "The food bank staff were incredibly welcoming. They introduced me to someone who advised on energy costs. They also got in contact with local charities to help with the cost of a school uniform."



The food bank were a massive help, and the adviser was fantastic.

77

"I could not have completed the Debt Relief Order without the adviser's support... I am now debt-free for the first time in 10 years - and I finally feel positive about my life moving forward." - Money matters advice recipient

## Strengthening financial resilience

Money Matters, our independent evaluation of the advice services accessed through food banks, provided vital insights into what works when supporting people facing financial hardship. This research has gained traction in national conversations on financial exclusion, and has shaped the way advice is offered across and beyond our community of food banks – helping over 325 food banks review and embed its findings – while strengthening partnerships with local advice providers and informing our strategic direction.

Within Trussell, it's supported advocacy on income adequacy, and, crucially, it's shifted how food banks are understood – not just as providers of emergency food, but as access points to holistic advice. This reframing has led to **stronger service models**, greater policy influence, and firmer ground for driving long-term change.

325

food banks embedded the findings of our *Money Matters* research into advice services

And the new

strategy will bring

new opportunities

### **Pathfinders**

### Leading the way to long-term change

Food banks shouldn't have to exist – but, while they do, they can be places of transformation. From 2020 to 2025, our five-year Pathfinder programme provided food banks with intensive support as they tested new approaches and developed new partnerships – going beyond providing emergency food, to actively seeking to reduce the need for the food bank.

March 2025 marked the end of the programme. By this point:

- 55 food banks across the UK had been engaged as Pathfinders – receiving tailored grant funding, learning support, and strategic guidance.
- Projects ranged from co-located advice hubs to community organising initiatives, wraparound support services, and strengthening pathways to support - working with local partners and referral agencies to address the drivers of food bank need.

Throughout 2024-2025, the final year of the initiative, we focused on strengthening strategic foundations, with one-to-one support helping food banks sustain and build on their work beyond the programme, including sessions for trustees, staff and volunteers to plan their next steps. We also co-created a shared library of learnings, including written and video stories, to equip and inspire the Trussell community and beyond.



Food banks participating in the Pathfinder programme reported enhanced support offered through the food bank, stronger partnerships with local agencies and statutory services, strengthened local referral pathways, and increased involvement of people with lived experience of hardship in designing services.



Pathfinders gave us the confidence and resource to work differently - not just handing out food, but embedding advice, listening to our community, and helping people get out of crisis.



Pathfinder food bank lead

#### **Building services that honour dignity**

Dignity is at the heart of everything we do. During 2024-2025, food banks across the network continued embedding Dignity Principles into their day-to-day operations - creating spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and empowering. Initiatives included introducing children's play areas, quiet spaces, language translation and mental health signposting, investing in trauma-informed training for volunteers, and adapting opening hours, product offerings, and layout design - all based on guest feedback.

During 2024-2025, 380 people with lived experience of hunger and hardship also helped design our core programmes. To truly reflect and meet people's needs in the most dignified way possible, we widely consult with people who have needed to use a food bank at every stage of our work - through UK-wide forums, local consultation groups and sessions, faceto-face conversations, and questionnaires - as well as continually gathering and acting on feedback from people with lived experience.



Our food bank is about more than food – it's a community that says, 'You matter.' We do everything we can to make that clear the moment someone walks in.



Food bank manager South West England



## Organising for change: From survival to systemic action

While providing emergency help remains essential, our long-term goal is clear: a UK without the need for food banks. Achieving that vision requires communities not just to respond to hardship, but to organise for change.

This year, Trussell supported:

- 45+ community organising campaigns across the UK
- 180+ food banks with funding, coaching, and resources
- 86 people with lived experience trained in advocacy and organising
- engagement with 31 local authorities through our Organising Programme – on issues like housing, crisis grants, and Council Tax reform.

These grassroots campaigns – from Wrexham to Belfast, and from Cornwall to Glasgow – tackled **local injustices** and secured tangible wins.

"We saw that people didn't know about crisis grants, so we worked with volunteers and food bank guests to push for better promotion. Our council agreed - and now they've sent out thousands of leaflets."

- Food bank volunteer, Scotland

We also launched an **Organising**with Lived Experience toolkit,
now used by over 90 food banks,
and hosted our second **UK-wide**Forum, bringing together **130+**campaigners, staff, and community
leaders.

## A growing movement for a future without food banks

From delivering advice and advocacy to challenging local injustice, food banks are doing so much more than handing out food; they're building a movement.



Every success in inspiring communities to mobilise for change, every financial gain attained for a person facing hardship, and every guest welcomed with dignity brings us a step closer to a future where food banks are no longer needed.

Together, we are **changing communities**. And by doing so, we are changing what's possible.



I never thought I'd be the kind of person to speak at a council meeting. But I knew what we were asking for was right. And it worked.



Campaign participant, North of England

# **Changing Policy**

We're committed to end the need for food banks - and that means changing the systems that push people to the doors of a food bank in the first place.

Our **policy and public affairs work** is focused on tackling the upstream drivers of poverty, influencing the decisions that shape our social security system, and ensuring that people can afford the essentials.

We want every local authority to provide well-funded, accessible, and compassionate provision for people facing hardship. We advocate for **policy changes to reduce poverty**, and to ensure that everyone can access an affordable, safe, stable home and decent, secure, rewarding work.

Through research, engagement, and collaboration with people experiencing hardship, we work to ensure **the right support exists** at the right time – and that policy decisions are informed by the reality on the ground.



It's important to gather evidence of where policies could help reduce food bank need – and campaign for change. Every day, food banks are in touch with people experiencing poverty. While providing support, we also gather evidence of their circumstances. This helps us look at local drivers of poverty, and share our findings with policy makers.



Karen Mullan

Director, Foyle Network Foundation (Foyle Foodbank)

428

mentions of food banks and 47 references to Trussell were made in Parliament during 2024/5 – along with 18 mentions of Trussell in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and 12 in Wales' Senedd.

46

Parliamentarians joined the All-Party
Parliamentary Group on Ending the Need
for Food Banks, re-established by Trussell
following the General Election to bring key
evidence and solutions to the attention of the
UK government

8

local Cash-First partnerships, developed and delivered in partnership with Trussell, were established by the Scottish Government – ensuring access to emergency income and advice for people with no money for food



## This year's impact

This year, we've seen powerful examples of how policy change is possible – especially when it's driven by research, rooted in lived experience, and supported by a UK-wide movement. From Westminster to Stormont, and from the Senedd to Holyrood, our influencing work is shaping conversations about poverty, social security, and dignity.

#### Research

Trussell's research programme continues to shine a light on the causes and consequences of hunger and hardship in the UK. It directly influences **policy and practice** – to bring us closer to a future where no one is forced to rely on emergency food to survive.

## The cost of survival on Universal Credit

In partnership with YouGov, Trussell's research exposed the harsh reality faced by people claiming Universal Credit and disability benefits. A staggering 77% reported going without essentials in the past six months, with over 40% skipping meals to meet other costs. A quarter were unable to

afford over-the-counter medication or keep their homes warm. The findings were published as media reports of record cuts to social security for disabled people started to emerge; we immediately used them to provide important context to proposals from the outset for the public, our supporters, and parliamentarians. The evidence was raised in flagship broadcast and print media, emails from supporters directly to MPs, and by parliamentarians themselves in subsequent high-profile debates, sustaining its impact beyond its immediate release, over many weeks.

77%

of people claiming Universal Credit and disability benefits said they'd gone without the essentials



"If Universal Credit were to be paid at a rate for people to afford the essentials, [it could] ease the financial burden for many and also stop people from taking pay day loans, which incur such high interest rates, spiralling them further and further into debt and frequently mental distress too." - Food bank manager, South West England

### One emergency food parcel every 11 seconds

Our End of Year and Mid-Year Statistics revealed an unrelenting need for emergency food. In 2024-2025, Trussell food banks distributed nearly 2.9 million food parcels - more than a million of those being for children. That's equivalent to one every 11 seconds.

Our administrative data continues to provide a **pivotal lens** for understanding the extent of deep financial hardship in our communities with the public and policymakers alike.

We used our Mid-Year Stats update to build and deepen relationships with a new intake of MPs. A dropin event to share this data by constituency was attended by 61 MPs across political parties, including the Social Security Minister. As a result, Trussell and lived experience partners were able to have early in-depth conversations about the reality of severe hardship in communities - and to share our Guarantee our Essentials campaign messaging.

2024-2025 End of Year data also provided a stark reminder for policymakers across the UK of the distance we still need to travel to make significant progress on ending the need for food banks. On the day of release alone, 328 pieces of media coverage were secured across the UK. MPs across political parties cited Trussell and local food bank evidence in key parliamentary debates and questions. Treasury and DWP Ministers also cited the long-term trends in Trussell emergency food parcel data, indicating the evidence is being used at senior levels of government as a benchmark for progress.



The food bank helped me when I had nowhere else to turn. Now, I get to help shape how things change. That feels powerful.

MPs across policital parties, including the Social Security Minister, attended our Mid-Year Statistics drop-in event

Community advocate with lived experience





It is not right that people who have served our country are having to miss meals, turn to food banks or pawn possessions in order to survive.



#### Jed Mercurio

Television writer who served in the Royal Air Force, and now an Ambassador for Trussell.

#### Hardship after heroism

For the first time, in 2024–2025 we commissioned research into the financial hardship experienced by veterans in England and Wales. The findings were sobering: over a quarter of veterans (28%) had gone without essentials, while 27% said they ran out of food without the money to buy more. For veterans with children, almost half (47%) reported going without essentials, while 15% skipped meals so their children could eat.

Our research received detailed coverage in media outlets including the Sun, Daily Mail and Express – bringing the reality of food bank need and financial hardship to new audiences – while lived experience partner and influencer content further allowed us to shine a powerful spotlight on a particular group's experiences. The findings will also inform development of our new Prioritising Hunger and Hardship programme.

## Rethinking local crisis support

Trussell's Rapid Evidence Review of local crisis support highlighted a broken system. With the devolution of the Social Fund and inconsistent funding through short-term schemes like the Household Support Fund, people face a 'postcode lottery' in support availability. The review drew from 38 evidence sources, and concluded that ring-fenced, long-term funding is essential. It also strongly advocates for a cash-first approach to crisis support - ensuring dignity and flexibility for recipients - and for the integration of crisis support within broader community services.

These findings directly shaped the UK government's announcement (in their June 2025 Spending Review) of a new Crisis and Resilience Fund, to replace the Household Support Fund from

47%

of veterans with children reported going without essentials, while 15% skipped meals so their children could eat April 2026 – meaning that local authorities in England will have guaranteed funding to support people on low incomes facing a financial shock for at least three years. The new funding was explicitly linked to a manifesto commitment to end the need for emergency food parcels, and reflected the wording in our report A more resilient future: Rebuilding discretionary crisis support in England.

Together, our research efforts form a compelling and urgent evidence base. They show that hunger in the UK is not inevitable – it's a result of **policy choices**. And they equip us with the insight needed to advocate for a system that provides not just food, but fairness.



## **UK policy engagement**

### Ensuring early downpayments on a manifesto pledge

Our policy engagement directed at Westminster has focused on ensuring **early action** on the UK government's pledge to end the need for emergency food. This included:

 Facilitating a series of visits to food banks across the UK for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) food and fuel poverty team, meeting with staff and volunteers to inform the DWP's work on policy solutions to help the UK government on its manifesto commitment to end the need for emergency food.

- Bringing together the full range of policy analysis and evidence from the Trussell community and lived experience experts to shape key policy conversations, including on the Autumn Budget, the child poverty strategy, and the Spending Review.
- Being in active conversation with the DWP on how to reset local crisis support in England,

including sharing a new policy paper setting out a proposal for a long-term replacement for the **Household Support Fund** to shape their thinking.

 Delivering rapid analysis of planned cuts to social security for disabled people, informing urgent policy conversations between MPs and senior UK government leadership, and kickstarting a powerful supporter campaign. 428

mentions of food banks were made in Parliament

27

MPs took part in a the debate on food banks in Parliament in November 2024

We have seen significant impact already, including:

- Strong direct engagement from parliamentarians with our policy priorities, including key Ministers speaking at our Parliamentary events and hearing directly from lived experience experts about the policy solutions needed to end the need for emergency food, briefing teams across the DWP, HM Treasury, Cabinet Office and No. 10, and 428 mentions of food banks in Parliament.
- Securing important recommended steps towards an Essentials Guarantee, including announcements of plans to bring in a Fair Repayment Rate from April 2025, and for an aboveinflation boost to the basic rate of Universal Credit from April 2026.
- Quickly building significant pressure to minimise planned cuts to social security for disabled people, with an initial campaign action reaching all MPs in Westminster in a matter of weeks.



In November 2024, we also supported SNP MP Seamus Logan to lead **a debate on food banks** in Parliament. 27 MPs took part, making the case to government that no one should need a food bank to survive.



If we're serious about ending the need for food banks, we need everyone at the table.



**Crystal Clayton**Renfrewshire Foodbank

## **Scotland**

### Shaping a cash-first future

In Scotland, our focus this year was on advancing equitable support systems and ensuring that the voices of people with lived experience drive meaningful policy change.

#### During 2024-2025:

- Trussell remained a key member of the Scottish Government's Cash-First Programme Board, shaping support that prioritises dignity and agency over stigma.
- Individuals from our lived experience networks played an active role in shaping our input to the Board, as well as our response to the Scottish Welfare Fund review – where we called for clearer access, simpler eligibility, and greater promotion of available grants.
- Our policy and campaigning work also helped maintain pressure on the rollout of the Scottish Child Payment, and improving local authority crisis provision, so that it's better integrated and more accessible.

 Food banks across Scotland responded to multiple Scottish Parliament consultations, took part in cross-party roundtables, and met directly with MSPs to advocate for change rooted in real experience.

Thanks to this joined-up approach, there is growing recognition across Scottish Government portfolios that food banks are a symptom of wider policy failure – not a sustainable solution.

We're proud to be helping shape a future that puts cash-first principles, dignity, and lived experience at the centre of Scotland's anti-poverty efforts. As a result of this work, there is **growing recognition across**Scottish Government portfolios that food banks should not be a permanent fixture – but a symptom of systems that need redesigning.



## Wales

### Embedding insight, influencing change

In Wales, our work has become increasingly embedded in the country's political and civic fabric – with lived experience playing a growing role in shaping our evidence and voice.

#### During 2024-2025:

- We sat on the Steering Group for Streamlining Welsh Benefits, helping design a simpler, more compassionate system.
- Our consultation responses on Council Tax Reduction, Child Poverty Strategy, and food justice - were shaped by insights from food banks and people experiencing hardship.
- Trussell was referenced 12 times in the Senedd in 2024-25, with a further seven mentions of food banks. Notable political voices citing our work included Plaid Cymru Leader Rhun ap Iorwerth, Sioned Williams MS, Buffy Williams MS, and Llyr Gruffydd MS.

 We attended both the Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru party conferences, engaging directly with party leaders and elevating our presence on the national stage.

While direct lived experience participation in Welsh Government forums is still emerging, our advocacy continues to be grounded in real stories and informed by frontline insight – helping ensure future engagement is authentic, confident, and impactful.



## **Northern Ireland**

### Elevating lived experience in policy and debate

This year marked a breakthrough in our policy influence in Northern Ireland – powered by evidence, partnerships, and powerful testimony from people with lived experience.

In 2024-2025:

- We gave evidence to the Communities Committee on two occasions, as well as informing six Assembly Questions citing Trussell, and another 11 on food banks.
- Our recommendations directly contributed to two major policy wins: The extension of welfare mitigations (including Bedroom Tax and Benefit Cap protections) to 2028, and the Education Minister's expansion of childcare discounts, improving affordability for low-income families.
- In January 2025, the Northern Ireland Assembly held its first ever debate citing Trussell's data directly. Trussell was mentioned 18 times, and food banks 61 times.

Almost a quarter of the Assembly (22 MLAs) participated in the debate, including the **Communities Minister**.

Crucially, lived experience was front and centre:

- A person with lived experience co-briefed the Committee for Communities, answering questions directly and offering personal insight into life on low income.
- Others participated in a roundtable with Alliance Party Members, shaping conversations on welfare reform and hardship support.

This work demonstrates the power of evidence and lived experience to drive **system-level change** – and we will continue to build on that momentum.



# **Changing Minds**

Ending the need for food banks means more than changing policies - it means changing minds.

For decades, harmful misconceptions around poverty have distorted public understanding: fuelling stigma, leading people to blame individuals instead of recognising the structural causes of hardship, and shaping policies that far too often punish, rather than protect people.

This year, we've continued to build momentum for change by **shifting the conversation**: from blame to solidarity, from shame to dignity, and from a resigned acceptance of hunger to a collective resolve for change – while ensuring that we equip the public, media, and policymakers with the truth on what's driving hardship.



As a proud Ambassador for Trussell, I'm playing my part by speaking up about the need to support local food banks and push for the solutions that will end hunger for good.

While the work food banks do is vital, they shouldn't be needed. Conversations can build empathy, and help shift public thinking: from blame and shame, to compassion and change. If more of us talk about, listen to, and understand the causes of hunger and hardship, we can create a future where no one needs a food bank.



AJ Odudu Trussell Ambassador 22,000+

mentions of Trussell and its work were made in the media during 2024-2025 (compared to 11,027 in 2019-2020), while **9.9 million** social media engagements were achieved

174,947

members of the public supported our work financially by **donating to Trussell** 

55,000+

active campaigners across the UK joined our journey towards change - a 41% increase on 2023-2024



## Changing minds, building momentum

### From stigma to solidarity

Through our campaigns, media presence and narrative work, we've amplified the lived experience of hardship and reframed public conversations.

- More than 200 people with lived experience have helped shape our messaging and media appearances.
- People with lived experience are positioned as leaders of change throughout our communications.
- Behavioural insights have helped us reach beyond existing supporters to engage the 'moveable middle': people previously undecided about the causes of poverty.

## A presence that can't be ignored

By developing a credible and relatable public profile, we can engage a wide range of audiences while fostering empathy, **building consensus** and inspiring action. Through emotive storytelling, careful framing and a clear vision for change, we're working to ensure that hunger is seen not as inevitable but as solvable.

In 2024-2025:

- 22,000+ mentions of Trussell were made in the media.
- 250+ interviews with Trussell spokespeople, including volunteers and people with lived experience, appeared in the media.

- 9.9 million engagements with our online content, and 745 million social media impressions were achieved.
- 33 high-profile public figures supported campaigns and helped promote our message, including Guy Garvey, Bill Nighy, Hugh Bonneville, Joely Richardson, Dame Joanna Lumley, Aisling Bea and Stanley Tucci.

### Shifting public attitudes

- 87% of the public (up from 82% in 2021) now agree that the social security system should cover life's essentials.
- Public recognition of Trussell has risen from 40% in 2019 to 65% in 2024.





Top: Hugh Bonneville speaks at our Christmas Carol Concert. Bottom: Workshopping with lived experience partners

### **Grassroots voices**

### Local leadership, UK-wide influence

Real change begins in communities, and this year local voices have continued to drive UK-wide impact. Through storytelling, organising and training, people with lived experience of hardship have shaped Trussell's campaigns and helped change the narrative at every level.

- 12 strategy and advocacy training days were led by Trussell across the different regions of the UK.
- 90+ food bank charities
   have embedded inclusive,
   co-designed campaigning approaches.
- 30+ grassroots campaigns were led by people with lived experience.

33,426 actions were taken by our campaigners in 2024-2025

#### Campaigning alongside us

Over the last year, our supporters have come together with Trussell to call for **the solutions needed** to end hunger and hardship.

They have taken consistent actions to end hunger in the UK in a number of different ways, including emailing their MP to advocate for policy change, engaging in pre-election activities, and raising their voices in support of a more just social security system. In total, 33,426 actions were taken by our campaigners. Many supported multiple actions - reflecting our strategic work to deepen campaigners' connection with us through a diverse range of mobilisation opportunities.



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We're building a base of people who care deeply - and who are willing to step up, speak out, and demand better.



Regional Community Organiser

### The Hardship Times: Stories delivered to Westminster

To increase the visibility of hardship and hunger across the UK, Trussell joined food banks, charities, and campaigners at Parliament Square to launch The Hardship Times. This one-off newspaper included first-hand accounts of hunger and hardship from across the UK, articles on the causes of poverty, calls to action, and a selection of some of the 1,000+ messages we'd gathered from food bank staff, volunteers, MPs and people with lived experience.





The paper was brought to Parliament by a group of Trussell campaigners, including our Ambassadors Mark Hoyle (LadBaby) and **Levi Roots** (pictured left) – and was delivered alongside the announcement of **1.4 million parcels** having been distributed in just six months.

We also created tailored newspapers for Scotland, Wales

and Northern Ireland, which were distributed by **120 food banks** across the UK.

This powerful campaign – which centred the voices of people with lived experience and our food banks – cut through the noise to place the reality of hardship directly on the political agenda.

1,000+

messages were gathered from food bank staff, volunteers, MPs and people with lived experience

## A more accessible, inclusive Trussell

Our brand identity, created over 20 years ago, was no longer fit for purpose – and was unintentionally creating barriers for people needing help, and for people looking to support our mission.

So, in the autumn of 2024, we launched our refreshed brand-co-designed with people with lived experience and frontline food banks - to remove those barriers and amplify our collective vision.

#### Why we refreshed:

- Many of our fonts, colours, and digital tools didn't meet modern accessibility standards.
- Our research showed that while 14% of UK adults experienced hunger, only 7% accessed food support - indicating the need to break down barriers to access.
- The updated website helps people facing hardship access their local food bank quicker and easier.
- Visual updates are clearer, more accessible, and reduce financial and operational costs for food banks.

#### Why it matters:

- 75% of people who've used a food bank in the Trussell community say that someone in their household is disabled - so accessibility is essential.
- Awareness of our full mission was low. Fewer than half of the public understood what we do, and only a third knew about our campaigning and research.

Post-refresh, three quarters of people say they're more likely to support us.

Our refreshed brand shows that we're not just responding to crisis - we're working to end it. Together.





**75**%

of people say they're more likely to support Trussell following our brand refresh

### **Guarantee our Essentials**

### A simple idea. A powerful movement.

Our social security system, like our NHS, should be there for us all when we need it most, but right now it's not even providing enough to cover the cost of life's essentials – and it's pushing people to food banks.

That's why Trussell is working with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to call for an Essentials Guarantee within Universal Credit, which means that the basic rate of payment will at least cover life's essentials – including food, utilities and vital household items – and that support can never be pulled down below that level.

The Guarantee our Essentials (GoE) campaign has captured public attention, mobilised communities as part of a powerful movement for change, and influenced the political agenda, with a commitment to its aims being reflected in multiple party manifestos prior to the 2024 General Election.

Our approach continues to combine compelling storytelling, lived experience leadership, robust

research, and policy expertise all aimed at nurturing a public and political will to enact change.

During 2024-2025:

- 767,000 views of GoErelated video content were achieved.
- 25,000+ constituents across the UK contacted their local MP.
- 1,000+ people took part in 'hardship hustings' hosted by food banks across the UK.
- 85+ MPs met with food bank campaigners.
- 650 local advocacy events were held across the UK.



#### Building relationships and securing meaningful change to make our social security system fit for purpose

Influencing politicians and pushing for change at policy level is central to the Guarantee our Essentials campaign.

In 2024, the new UK government was elected on a manifesto that committed to end the high levels of need for emergency food parcels and to review Universal Credit – ensuring it tackles poverty as well as making work pay.

At the General Election, **50 MPs** were also elected who had signed our pledge to help build a social security social system that protects people from needing to turn to a food bank.



I was worried that speaking up wouldn't change anything. But seeing my MP listen and respond gave me hope.



Campaign participant Manchester



Since then, we have:

 Secured crucial policy wins, including the introduction of the Fair Repayment Rate, and a small increase in the basic rate of Universal Credit from April 2026 -putting more money in people's pockets and bringing us closer to an Essentials Guarantee. Engaged more than 110
 MPs from across the political spectrum through events, visits and meetings in support of the campaign.

Trussell representatives, including our Co-CEO, Emma Revie, talk to Jim Shannon, Democratic Unionist Party MP for Strangford, Northern Ireland

## Strategic partnerships and cultural influence

We've collaborated across sectors to amplify the call for an Essentials Guarantee – and build a **united call for action**. Activities included:

- More than 200 organisations joining us in calling on UK political leaders to set out their plan to urgently tackle hardship prior to the 2024 General Election.
- The Church of England passing a motion at its General Synod demonstrating their support of and commitment to engaging the Government on the Essentials Guarantee.

- Continuing to campaign alongside and mobilise the organisations that have endorsed an Essentials Guarantee - with strong alliances built across the health, education and community food organisation sectors.
- New partnerships being made with businesses and employers, raising awareness among staff and customers.
- The campaign seeing a steady increase in MPs willing to take action in Westminster, whether that's asking Parliamentary questions, speaking out in debates, or meeting to understand the issues better.



We know that awareness alone isn't enough. Action must follow. That's why Guarantee our Essentials is not just a campaign, but a growing movement of communities, charities, and constituents calling for a system that truly protects people from hunger and hardship.

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The Essentials Guarantee idea is great. It'll help people facing hardship by stopping a lot of the stress, a lot of the worry about how to pay their bills, how to buy bread and eggs just to eat. Because they'll have the money.



**Pam** lived experience partner



200+

organisations joined us in calling on politicians to tackle hardship

# The journey so far

# Our progress over the past five years

In 2020 we published our first ever strategy, **Together for Change** - co-produced with food
banks in the Trussell community and informed
by people with experience of using a food bank.

Covering 2020-2025, the strategy focused on three priority areas where action was needed to achieve our vision: **Changing Communities**, **Changing Policy**, and **Changing Minds**.

This was a period of unparalleled change and challenges – including food banks being on the first line of response during the Covid pandemic, the impact of the cost of living crisis, and an ongoing economic and political uncertainty that has disproportionate effects on people experiencing hunger and hardship. And, yet, in the face of all this, we were still able to drive significant impact over the past five years – as shown by the statistics on the following pages.



### Since 2020....

### Changing Communities

Between 2019-2020 and 2024-2025, the estimated number of people supported annually by Trussell's community of food banks rose from 800,000 to one million – a sharp increase of 29%.

This sustained rise over five years underscores the deepening scale of hunger and hardship across the UK, and reflects a growing need for support to meet basic needs. The data points to a systemic failure to protect people from poverty, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty and policy reform.

Despite significant efforts by food banks and their communities, the demand for emergency food remains unacceptably high. 13.8<sub>M</sub>

emergency food parcels were distributed by food banks in the Trussell community. In 2024–2025, 2.9 million emergency food parcels were provided across the UK, an increase of 980,000 parcels compared to 2019–2020. This represents a 51% rise over five years, highlighting the growing scale of need and the continued pressure on food banks to support people facing hunger and hardship.

**5.1**<sub>M</sub>

emergency food parcels were provided for children. In 2024–2025, over one million emergency food parcels were provided for children; a 41% increase compared to 2019–2020. This **sharp rise** reflects the growing number of families with children struggling to afford the essentials.

110,000

tonnes of stock were donated to food banks. That's the equivalent of 1.1 million fully loaded supermarket trolleys. In 2024–2025, food banks are also spending more than ever purchasing food to meet the increase in demand we've seen since 2019–2020, when community donations were more likely to cover need.

£90.5<sub>M</sub>

was provided in grants to food banks.

92%

of food banks in the Trusell community are now offering people access to **advice on money matters** – compared to 13% offering such support 2019–2020. £314m+

in income gains and debt managed was achieved for people facing hardship via our provision of access to advice on money matters, social security and debt. **Total financial gains** increased from £971,657 in 2021-2022 to £94.9m in 2024-2025, while **total debt managed** increased from £3,469,556 in 2021-2022 to £49.5m in 2024-2025. The number of people supported increased from 2,270 in 2021-2022 to 84,902 in 2024-2025.

### 166m+

in financial gains was identified by the award-winning Help through Hardship helpline, run by Trussell in partnership with Citizens Advice and Mind. Over five years, 558,496 calls were handled by the service. In 2024–2025, £64.4 million in financial gains was identified – compared to £7 million in 2020–2021.

23.8%

of people who accessed financial advice through a food bank in the Trussell community are estimated to no longer need to use a food bank (based on data from 2021-2022 to 2024-2025).

#### **Changing Policy**

150,000

people signed the **Essentials Guarantee petition** to MPs,
calling for social security
payments to cover essential
living costs.

2,326

references to food banks and 349 mentions of Trussell were made in the **House of Commons**.

Addressing food bank need has now been embedded in multiple political party manifestos, and we secured a manifesto commitment from the incoming Labour Government to end the need for emergency food.

The Scottish Government created a **formal strategy** to end the need for food banks.

#### **Changing Minds**

87%

of the UK public now believe the **social security system** should ensure that everyone can afford the essentials.

**65**%

of the public are now aware of Trussell - **up from 40%** in 2019.

126,887

mentions of Trussell were made in the media.

745м

impressions were achieved on our **social media** channels over the past five years.

# **Moving forward**

#### Our new strategy for 2025-2030

Since our first strategy launched in 2020, the landscape around hardship in the UK has shifted dramatically.

Our operating environment has grown more over the past five years, impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, economic uncertainty and escalating global tensions. Food banks have continued to respond to rising need, distributing more than 13 million emergency food parcels – a stark reminder of the scale of the challenge, and the resilience of the Trussell community.

But we've also seen what's possible when people come together. Over the past five years, we've supported communities with financial advice, influenced UK-wide policy, and changed the conversation around the need for food banks. These efforts, made possible by dedicated

volunteers, staff, and supporters, have moved us closer to our shared vision of ending the need for food banks in the UK.

Yet the need continues to grow. Our latest research shows that **9.3 million people, including three million children**, are experiencing severe hardship – a number that is set to rise unless urgent action is taken.

That's why we're launching a new strategy for 2025–2030: **Together for Change: Ending Hunger Together**. It sets out our renewed commitment and bold plan to address the root causes of hardship, and work towards a future where no one needs to rely on a food bank.



The new strategy connects the dots – from a warm welcome at the food bank door to wraparound support, community engagement, and influencing policy. It's holistic and hopeful.



Victor Oladele Basildon Foodbank



#### **Developing the strategy**

We named our strategy development process 'Travelling together' - reflecting our commitment to co-creating a vision in partnership with numerous groups of people and organisations.

We **consulted widely** (through workshops, forums, one-to-one meetings, and listening sessions across the UK), with people with lived experience of financial hardship, food banks within and beyond the Trussell community, politicians and civil servants, plus partners and experts from the charity, academic, faith, and public sectors. The process created space for deep listening, honest reflection, and co-design - ensuring our new direction is grounded in the real-world experiences and ambitions of the people we work with.

#### The key themes of our strategy

Our strategy is built around three **bold ambitions**:

# Ending hunger today

We will continue to support people facing hardship – through emergency food, a warm welcome, tailored support, and greater, more sustainable access to advice. Even as we work toward long-term change, we recognise the urgent need to meet people where they are.

### **Ending hunger** together

Food banks can't end hunger alone. They need to be able to reach effectively into local communities, working strategically and relationally with local people, groups and agencies. To enable this, we will build partnerships and coalitions that bring diverse voices to the table and shift public thinking.

### Ending hunger forever

We will challenge the structures that push people into hardship – advocating for long-term changes to policy, systems, and mindsets. Ending the need for food banks means redesigning the systems that cause them.



The strategy process showed a real commitment to listening to people with lived experience. Being part of it reminded me that my voice matters – and that sharing my story can help drive meaningful change.



Chika, a person with lived experience who contributed to the development of our new strategy

# Key funding partnerships

#### Working together for positive change

We're so grateful to the various organisations, trusts, foundations and food brands for the invaluable support they've provided during 2024-2025 – helping us to continue our work throughout the year.

#### **Barclays**

Throughout 2024-2025, Barclays continued to be a key strategic partner for our programmes offering people access to advice on money matters across the UK. This support enabled us to increase the provision of income advice services to people in financial hardship, with 92% of food banks in the Trussell community now offering these.

#### **Cadent Gas**

In addition to supporting our programmes offering people access to advice on money matters, Cadent Gas provided 16,000 leaflets on gas safety and energy efficiency, as well as 580 free carbon monoxide alarms, which have been distributed to people

facing hardship through food banks in the Trussell community.
Cadent Gas engineers have also supported Epping Forest Foodbank's Food in School Holidays initiative, by volunteering their time to pack and distribute food parcels for local families.

#### Tesco

In 2024-2025, Tesco once again demonstrated its unwavering commitment to our community of food banks. Through activities like the 12th annual Tesco Winter Food Collection, pick-up packs, and year-round in-store support, as well as providing routes for food banks to bulk purchase essential items, stock support from our partnership makes up a fifth of all stock in the Trussell food bank community.



Simultaneously, Tesco supports food banks with core costs through **top-up donations**, and last year Tesco donated an additional £500,000 - enabling food banks to be there for families accessing their support. Our partnership remains a true lifeline to food banks in communities across the UK.



The Tesco Winter Food Collection is really special. You get hit by a wave of generosity and humanity throughout the day.



**Bruce Gardiner-Crehan** South Belfast Foodbank

#### **Deliveroo**

Throughout the year, Deliveroo customers continued to support us through the in-app donation function. In total, over £900,000 was donated to support central Trussell operations, as well as direct grants supporting our community of food banks. This year, for the first time, Deliveroo hosted an impact day, where colleagues from across the business spent a day working on a Trussell challenge. This event helped our Impact and Evidence team think about ways to implement data collection and analysis systems - helping us to better support food banks going forward.

### Players of People's Postcode Lottery

The past year was particularly special for our partnership with People's Postcode Lottery – as we became a long-term partner of the **Postcode Care Trust**.

Through this partnership, players have supported our work with £500,000 of flexible funding. The unrestricted nature of this award makes a huge difference to the work we do and our ability to support people facing hunger and hardship in the here and now, while working towards ending the need for food banks in the UK.

In addition, we were delighted to be granted a **Happier Christmas award of £500,000** in December 2024 – enabling our community of food banks to support people facing financial hardship through winter, the most challenging time of year.

And the impact of players' support has extended even further, with 17 food banks having been awarded independent funding totalling over £500,000 through the Millionaire Street Award since it began. We are hugely grateful to Players of People's Postcode Lottery for all their support.

#### **Julia Rausing Trust**

Over 2022-2024, the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust made two significant grants to Trussell, with the impact of the second gift stretching into 2024-2025. Longterm philanthropic support from the Rausings has enabled us to remain responsive to the bespoke challenges faced day-to-day across our community of food banks at a time of continued high need for emergency food. Thanks to their support, food banks have been able to maintain their frontline services for people facing hardship, and we look forward to continuing our close partnership.



### Thank you

At the heart of every food parcel distributed, every income secured, every policy challenged, and every story shared, is *people*.

People who give their time, their energy, their voice. People who believe in dignity, justice, and a future where no one is forced to rely on charity to survive.

To our **volunteers**, who gave over seven million hours of their time: thank you. Your compassion, commitment, and strength have kept this movement going – and growing.

To our **staff and trustees** across the UK: thank you for your leadership, your dedication, and your belief that change is possible.

To the hundreds of thousands of individuals, churches, schools, businesses, and community groups who donated food, funds, or time: thank you for standing alongside us.

To our partners and funders, from local advice agencies to corporates, trusts and philanthropists supporters: thank you for investing not only in services, but in long-term change.

To policymakers and elected representatives who listened, engaged, and acted: thank you. We look forward to working with you to go further.

To every person who has shared their **lived experience** to shape campaigns, strategies, and solutions: thank you for your courage and trust. Your voices are changing hearts, minds, and policies.

And to all the food banks in our community, and to all food banks across the UK: thank you. You are not just providers of emergency food - you are community leaders, advocates, and catalysts for a better future.

Together, we are turning compassion into action, hardship into hope, and food parcels into a call for justice.

This year, we've seen what's possible when people come together - not just to ease the symptoms of poverty, but to challenge its causes. But the work is far from finished.



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We're hugely grateful to every person and organisation that donated, volunteered, advocated, organised, or offered a listening ear throughout 2024-2025. We truly couldn't do this without you.



# Looking ahead

#### A new chapter

As we reflect on everything achieved through our **Together for Change** strategy, one thing is clear: **real change is possible when we move together**.

In **2025-2026**, we begin a new chapter – one shaped by listening to the people most affected by hardship, learning from our network, and building on five years of progress.



Our new strategy will sharpen our focus, deepen our impact, and redouble our commitment to ending the need for food banks in the UK.

#### That means:

- Supporting people with dignity, compassion, and practical help.
- Strengthening local communities to prevent the need for emergency food.
- Shaping systems and shifting minds - to create a society where everyone has enough money for life's essentials.

It won't be easy. But it is possible.

And with your continued support
- and the incredible determination
of people across this movement
- we can build a future where no
one goes hungry, and everyone
is treated with the dignity they
deserve.

#### **Get involved**

Here are just some of the ways in which you can support our work.

#### **Donate food**

To find out how to donate food and other essential items to your local food bank, visit **trussell.org.uk/donate-food** 

#### **Donate money**

Your support is crucial in helping us achieve our vision. To make a financial donation, please visit **trussell.org.uk/donate** 

#### Volunteer

Can you spare some time to support people facing hardship in your local community? Find out more at trussell.org.uk/support-us/volunteer

#### Campaign for change

We're calling on the UK Government to implement an 'Essentials Guarantee' – making sure the basic rate of Universal Credit is enough to cover essentials such as food and household bills. For more info, see **trussell.org.uk/essentials** 

#### Raise funds

For fundraising ideas, events, tips and resources, visit trussell.org.uk/fundraise



















