

January 2026

Together



The power of conversation

How a simple food bank chat can start life-changing journeys

Welcome

40,000

volunteers

54,957

campaigners

2.9M

emergency food parcels
in 2024–2025

**Your support matters.
Together, we are many.**

All working to ensure
no one needs a food
bank to survive.

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**Ending hunger
together**

Time for a chat? You and me?

Here at Trussell, we know the power of a good chat. Especially over a cuppa. Or when someone feels alone.

Talking can bring us together, lift loneliness, spark ideas and give us courage to act.

And it's your kindness that makes space for these conversations in food banks and communities every day.

So, this issue is all about celebrating the power of conversation. Because every time we share stories, listen deeply and raise our voices for change, something incredible can happen.

Together, our conversations can shape people's lives; change communities. Even, one day, create a UK without food banks.

So, stick the kettle on – and enjoy reading!



Georgia Kenington
Stories Manager



The impact of a voice

A photograph of a man and a woman standing in a doorway. The woman on the left is wearing a green t-shirt and blue jeans. The man on the right is wearing a brown jacket over a white hoodie and dark trousers, and is using a walking stick. In the background, a sign for 'Foodbank Mission' is visible. The title 'The impact of a voice' is overlaid on the top left, with 'impact' underlined in green.

When David first stepped into a food bank, no one could imagine the incredible journey he would go on – sparked by a simple, human conversation

David will never forget his first chat with a volunteer at his local food bank.

The former sales manager was out of work due to a degenerative bone disease. Anxiety and depression had taken him to a dark place. David felt totally alone.

“When I got to the food bank, I was quite emotional. A bit overwhelmed,” he recalls. “But the volunteers sat me down, gave me a cup of tea, and asked: what do you need and how can we help?”

“

My first chat? Like a light at the end of the tunnel.

”

“There was nothing but empathy,” he adds. “And it was a lovely thing to experience. They saw I didn’t find it easy to ask for help. There was no judgement, they just understood, and we talked.”

The help David received from North Norfolk Foodbank, part of the Trussell community, was vital. He was directed towards support with heating costs. Another team helped him get a mattress for his seven-year-old son. And he received toiletries he couldn’t afford.

But while the practical support mattered, it was the connection David felt at the food bank that stayed with him. The power of a conversation was about to change everything...

From the heart

Not long after visiting a food bank, David sent a poem he’d written to *Together* (yes, the magazine in your hands right now!).

“It was a poem about what I’d been through, very much from the heart,” says David. “I hadn’t shared my writing with anyone up until then, but I thought if someone else can read this and not feel alone, maybe it would help.”

The poem went to our Stories team, who called David and talked with him. We made a recording of the poem and published it on Trussell’s Instagram. It sparked an amazing response online.

While chatting with David, we discovered he’d been media-trained in a previous job and regularly dealt with news outlets. We connected him with our Media team, and the opportunities snowballed.



“

Working with Trussell changed everything for me.

”

In the last year, David has been interviewed by *The Mirror* twice, he's appeared on the front page of *The Metro*, in London, and has featured on *LBC* and *Heart* radio. “I've been working with Trussell on everything I possibly can,” he says.

David shared how he skips meals and only puts the heating on when his son comes to stay at weekends. In the summer, he talked about his fears over the Government's proposed welfare cuts – which were eventually scrapped.

And in an interview with *The Mirror*, David admitted his situation made him want to “curl up and hope it's not there”.

Back on track

David's words have given readers and listeners a compelling insight into hardship in the UK today. But more than that, David's conversations in the last 12 months have changed him.

“Honestly, working with Trussell has changed everything,” says David. “That first chat was like a light at the end of the tunnel – and made me realise, I might be able to make a difference here. **All I want to do is help people.**”

“Without getting misty-eyed, I didn't see a reason to keep going at one stage,” he adds. “But doing this has got me back on track. It's given me a purpose.”

Today, David still needs a food bank from time to time, but he's hoping medical treatment might allow him to return to work. He's engaged in



local politics and will continue to speak out about his experiences. And he's still writing poetry.

Your compassion helped create the space for that first conversation, and it continues to ripple out through every person who hears David's story.

Finally, as David looks back on his first food bank chat more than a year ago, he has a clear message for other people facing hunger today.

"If you're sitting in a food bank waiting for emergency food, and you're reading this, you might be feeling desperately alone," says David. **"I just want to say: Reach out."**

"A lot of people are going through what you're going through."

Let's get together and help each other. If you share your story, that might be what someone else needs to hear today. Please, absolutely reach out and talk."

David's journey with Trussell

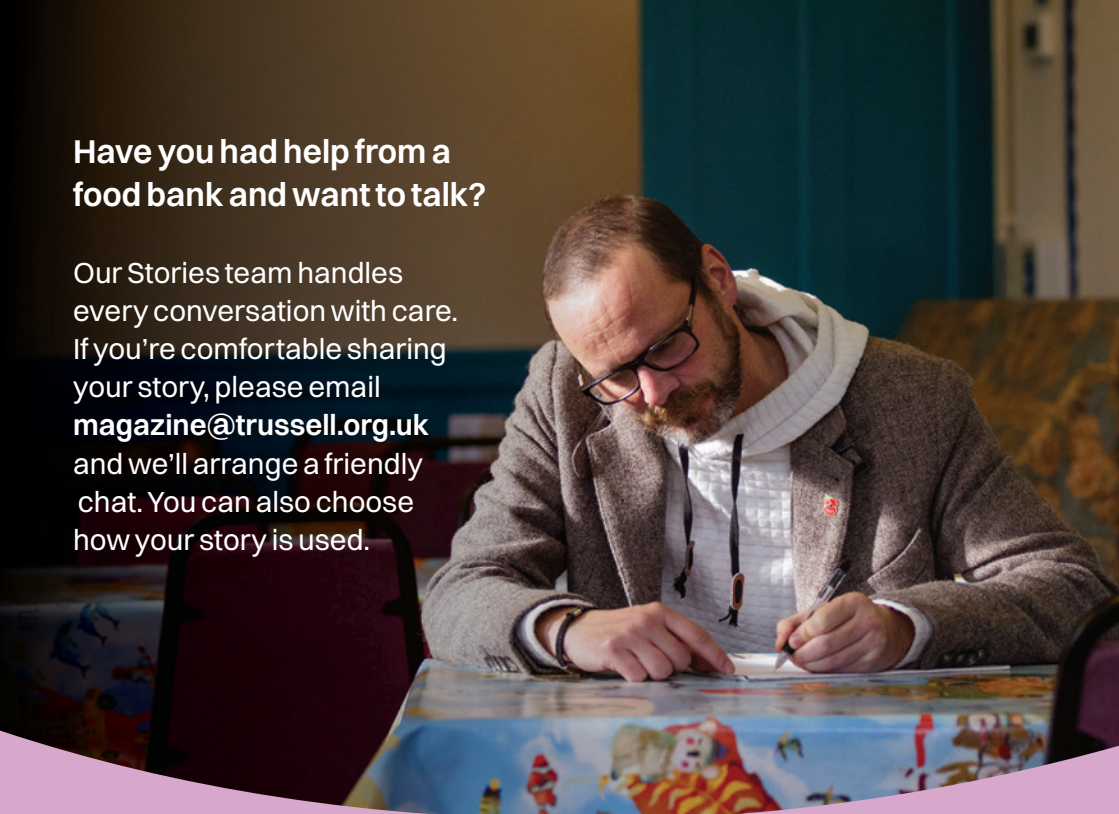
- August 2024: David reached out with his poem after reading *Together* magazine
- Nov 2024: Poem published on Trussell Instagram
- Jan 2025: First media interview
- Feb 2025: Interview with *The Mirror*
- March 2025: Media coverage on disability cuts, David in

The Metro (front page!), *Heart Radio*, and *The Mirror*

- May 2025: Interview with the *i* paper about food bank need
- June 2025: Features on *LBC Radio*
- Summer 2025: Shares his story in our fundraising appeal
- Aug 2025: Interview with *The Mirror*

Have you had help from a food bank and want to talk?

Our Stories team handles every conversation with care. If you're comfortable sharing your story, please email magazine@trussell.org.uk and we'll arrange a friendly chat. You can also choose how your story is used.



David's poem: Trussell

To put an end to food banks is the biggest aim.

Reaching out to our society, reassuring that there is no shame.

Upon asking for help and that you're not alone in your fight.

*Support, advice and guidance. Giving us some peace of mind
to sleep at night.*

Selfless in aims, application and deed,

Existing to end hunger in the UK so our families we can feed.

Lobbying, rallying and campaign all with a thought for you.

Let us not forget these efforts and take a moment to say thank you!

Change is happening

How a food bank shifted its focus – from emergency food to tailored support



Every day, local people come together, showing incredible dedication to being there for their neighbours – and we wanted to share one inspiring example.

Through local leadership and tailored support, Hollingdean Foodbank has been able to re-shape how they support their community, moving away from emergency food.

Assessing the need

Their amazing manager, Laurel, carefully listened to what people needed, and changed the food bank's approach, with everyone coming through the doors given personalised support alongside a food parcel. As people were connected with support that put money in their pockets, the number of people needing emergency food started to drop.

"Lots of people in the community are isolated and lonely. People were asking for support just so they could come into contact with other human beings," Laurel explains.

“

People were asking for support just for some contact with other human beings.

”

Laurel Nathan

Manager, Hollingdean Foodbank

Tailored support

The team have now closed their food bank and are focusing on a community café, offering both social connection and vital personalised support.

Food banks across the UK are having similar conversations about how to best support people out of severe hardship, calling for change as well as creating routes to tailored, timely advice and support.

It's thanks to your support that our community of food banks can do this vital work – adapting how we end hunger for someone today, while working towards a tomorrow where we can end hunger for good.

Together, we're building a future where everyone has enough money to afford essentials. **Thank you.**

Fundraiser focus

Catching up with our runners

Trussell has some amazing supporters who fundraise and push themselves to support our work.

In a chat with supporters Alex and Flora, they shared with us what they got up to – and why it is important to them to support Trussell.

Alex's daring North Down 50 Ultra Challenge (12 July)

How did you hear about Trussell?

I've always seen donation bins in supermarkets, and whenever we did the food shop as a family, we'd donate items. Since working with Savills in Petworth, I have volunteered at the food bank in Chichester, helping a lovely team sort through donations, reorganise their stock rooms and created kids' boxes for the holidays.

What inspired you to fundraise?

When volunteering with Chichester, the lady who showed us around explained how wonderful their volunteers were, and that it was money that they really needed.



Alex's 10-hour physical challenge raised £500 for Trussell

Seeing how far a small amount of money would go makes you realise how much a large amount could do for so many families.

What challenge did you take up?

We completed the Ultra 50K North Downs challenge. With a walking time of 10 hours, in the hot weather, we were out for about 12 hours in total.

It was very hard work as we did a lot of training leading up to the event, and no one can prepare for the heat we experienced! It was good fun; there were seven of us in total, all raising money for different charities.

Flora took on The Big Half (7 September)

What inspired you to fundraise?

I have wanted to run a half marathon for a few years but knew it would be a challenge for me, so I wanted to run for a worthwhile cause that would help motivate me.

Why did you choose to support Trussell?

The work Trussell does is truly life-changing for so many people, and sadly more and more families need their help. I wanted to raise money for Trussell so they can continue to be there for those in need, until hopefully we can end hunger together. I am so proud to be part of #TeamTrussell and contribute in a small way to the incredible work they do.



Trussell supporter Flora, who raised an amazing £848

We want to say a **huge** thank you to Alex and Flora, and all our #TeamTrussell supporters who are doing everything they can to help end hunger.

Do you want to be part of #TeamTrussell and make a difference?

Whether you hold a bake sale, a sponsored event or push your own limits – there is something that everyone can do to help.

Find out more at trussell.org.uk/fundraise, or email fundraising@trussell.org.uk. We're excited to help and support you on your fundraising journey!

A garden of our own

Our influence is growing in more ways than one this year...

We're so excited to share with you that we will be at RHS Chelsea Flower Show this May! We have been working with garden designer Rob Hardy, from Rob Hardy & Co, to create Trussell's Together Garden. Generously sponsored by Project Giving Back, the garden is inspired by people coming together through food banks to provide vital support, and symbolises how together we can end hunger.





Rob Hardy, designer of Trussell's Together Garden

The garden is also a space for connection. It symbolises the moment someone visits a food bank and feels really listened to for the first time. It starts with a cup of tea and a conversation and leads to connection to wider support.

The planting uses engaging combinations of texture and colour – such as *Verbascum*, *Thalictrum* and *Iris* – to reinforce that sense of togetherness and show what's possible when we all play our part.

“

Deciduous trees represent resilience, while a visitor-activated water feature shows how we can all create change.

”

Other design elements include multi-stem birches growing from a shared root, symbolising solidarity, while deciduous trees represent resilience during the harshest of seasons. A dynamic water feature can also be activated by visitors using a lever, illustrating how we can all unlock change.

After our garden features at London's Chelsea Flower Show, it will be relocated to Strabane Foodbank in Northern Ireland – so our community can enjoy this beautiful showpiece. This is the first time a Chelsea Flower Garden will be transported to Northern Ireland.

We look forward to sharing more with you from the Flower Show in your summer issue of *Together*. But, until then, here's a sneak peek at the design!



Iris add colour and texture to the planting scheme



It's good to talk

Talking advice with our podcast star, Angelle McCluskey

Together caught up with Angelle McCluskey, Advice Partnerships Coordinator at Trussell, to learn more about her journey into advice services, and her role in hosting our first ever podcast.

A journey rooted in experience

Angelle's path into advice work began with a deeply personal experience.

"I'd been informally providing advice to my mum for years – whether it was about immigration, social security, or other issues," she explains.

Volunteering at her local Citizens Advice Bureau sparked a passion that led her into the advice sector full-time. "I've always believed that knowledge is power," she adds. "When people are given the right information, it empowers them to take the first steps."

Advice as a gateway to change

Angelle is passionate about the role food banks play in connecting people to advice services. "Food banks are the perfect gateway for people to access advice – especially when they're in hardship."

She emphasises that food banks are not just places of emergency support. "We've seen that when food banks are well connected with advice partners, they can open up pathways to sustainable change."

Breaking down barriers to access

There are many places in the UK where there is no access to advice services. And, generally, there is a serious underfunding by government of existing advice services.

This is why your support for good, sustainable advice in food banks is so important. These services are a vital part of ending the need for food banks – and a key reason why Trussell's first podcast was born.



Advice opens doors – not just to financial support, but to mental health services, community networks, and more.



The podcast

Angelle hosts the *Cash First Approaches* podcast, exploring financial advice provision in Scotland via five diverse projects, in urban and rural communities.

“It’s a test-and-learn approach, asking: What does your community need?,” explains Angelle. “We talk openly about the challenges, not just the successes. That helps others learn and build better services.”

“Simply put, good advice works. It provides long-term solutions to financial hardship. Investment in the advice sector should be a priority.

If we get it right, we can build a future without food banks.”

Angelle’s podcast is a powerful reminder that advice is not just about information – it’s about empathy, connection, and empowerment. Whether through food banks, podcasts, or pilot projects, the journey begins with a conversation.

And, thanks to your support, those conversations are leading to real, lasting change.

Scan the QR code to listen to the podcast on Spotify.



Leading the conversation

How lived experience is inspiring change

Within our community of food banks, something powerful is happening. People with lived experience – who are already at the heart of everything we do – are leading the conversation on how to tackle hunger and hardship in their communities.

Two food banks who have been on this journey for a couple of years, Foyle and Abergele, wanted to share their journey with you. One in Northern Ireland, one in Wales. Separated by sea, but united in their approach.



Building trust, one conversation at a time

At Foyle Foodbank, their Swallows initiative is turning the tide on how support services engage with people in their community – and it all started through having chats over a cuppa.

In 2023, they launched a participation focus group of individuals who have experienced the food bank's support firsthand. These are not just beneficiaries – they are collaborators, advisors, and changemakers.

In Abergele Foodbank, a participation group was formed called the Worker Bees, who not only support operational development, but help call for action on changes that could affect people in their community's ability to afford life's essentials.

Both groups were carefully formed, with meetings beginning only when all members felt ready.

“

When you're dealing daily with people in crisis, taking time to hear from those we're helping is so important – so rewarding.

”

Karen, Foyle Foodbank Manager

Confidentiality and safety were paramount, creating a space where people could speak freely and support one another.

The power in these groups is their diversity, but all share lived experience and a connection to the food bank. Their insights are helping shape the future of the service.

From feedback to action

Since forming, these groups have made a tangible impact. From sharing advice on local concerns, to recommendations on improving services.

In Abergele, the Worker Bees highlighted that dating tins of food with marker pen can too easily identify them as coming from a food bank – at the risk of stigmatising recipients. To avoid this, they worked with the food bank to develop a more discreet and dignified process.



One of Foyle's Swallow group's first projects was reviewing the food bank's registration questionnaire. Their suggestions on wording and tone were not only heard – they were implemented.

Since then, the Swallows have helped with the food bank rebranding, and the language we use when we talk about tackling poverty.

A model for meaningful participation

The success of these focus groups is a testament to what's possible

when organisations move beyond service delivery and embrace genuine participation. It's not just about giving help – it's about empowering people.

As the groups continues to meet and grow, their confidence blossoms. Their stories, insights, and ideas are shaping a better, more responsive food bank.

These sorts of projects can only happen because of your support. You allow us to fund and empower food banks to increase their capacity and develop programmes that really are changing lives.

Abergele and Foyle have created a **special video**, where you can get to know them and the people participating in these groups. To watch, **scan the QR code**, or visit <https://bit.ly/trussellvideo>





Leave a gift. Change a future.

Writing a Will is one of the most powerful ways to support the people and causes you care about.

“

It's comforting to know my gift will help families long after I'm gone.

”

Betty, who's pledged a gift in her Will

We've partnered with Farewill to offer you a simple, secure and completely free way to write your Will online – in as little as 20 minutes.

Supporters like Betty, and volunteers in food banks across the UK, are helping to build hunger-free communities for generations to come.

Write your Will for free

farewill.com/together-with-trussell

Farewill is an independent Will writing service. There is no obligation to include a gift to Trussell. Fairwill is available to supporters aged 18+ living in the UK.

To learn more, visit: trussell.org.uk/gifts-in-wills

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.

With your support, we're ending hunger
– today, together, and forever.

trussell.org.uk

    **trussellUK**

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