



South Cotswolds

FoodbankNews

Together with Trussell



**Food bank
session
today**

In this Issue:

More than food

More than Cirencester

**A new name that reflects our reach - but the same
dedication to ending the need for foodbanks**



From Tetbury to Lechlade and Northleach to the Cerneys...

We're Now South Cotswolds Foodbank!

New name. Same mission of dignity, support and hope.

For more than a decade, Cirencester Foodbank has supported people across our communities in moments of need. And while many first hear about us because of food, our work reaches far beyond that — into households, villages and market towns right across the southern section of the Cotswold District.

As our support has grown, so has the area we serve. Today, people come to us not only from Cirencester, but from Northleach, Fairford, Lechlade, Tetbury and dozens of surrounding villages. In fact, over 210 square miles of the South Cotswolds now rely on our services, and our old name no longer reflected the scale or reach of this work.

That's why we've become South Cotswolds Foodbank.

Reflecting the community we serve

This change isn't about a new direction but about making sure everyone across the South Cotswolds feels that this support belongs to them, not just to one town.

Whether someone lives in a busy market town or a rural village with limited transport, we want them to know that help is available to all of our neighbours.

What's changing and what stays the same

Although our name and visual identity are evolving, everything important remains firmly in place:

Same mission: to work towards a future where no one needs a foodbank.

Same values: dignity, compassion, respect and choice.

Same services: food, household and hygiene items, baby supplies, pet food, energy vouchers, SIM cards and wrap-around support to build resilience.

Same team: the same volunteers, staff and partners who welcome people with warmth and understanding.

Same commitment: being here for people across the South Cotswolds when they need us most.

Why now?

With continued need across the district, this is the right moment to ensure our name matches who we are today and who we are for. It also supports our outreach, partnership work, advocacy and community resilience building across the whole area.

Thank you for standing with us as we continue to support people across the South Cotswolds with practical help, dignity and hope.

Your support makes this possible. Find out more



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More Than Food

At South Cotswolds Foodbank, we've always been committed to helping people in need. But today, our mission goes beyond emergency food parcels.

We know that food bank need is not about a lack of food, it's about a lack of income. On average, households referred to food banks are left with just £104 a week after housing costs to cover food, energy bills, travel, toiletries, and other essentials. This is only 17% of what the average UK household has left after paying their rent or mortgage.

Every week, our food bank volunteers talk with people who are being pushed to the brink and left exhausted, isolated and without enough money for the essentials.

That's why we've evolved to provide more than food: practical essentials, holistic support and dedicated advice that helps people address financial challenges that have led them to need to use food banks and help them move forward.

Together, with your support, we can tackle the root causes of hardship and create a future where no one needs a food bank.

What's in a Foodbank Parcel?

Foodbanks are well known for providing long-life food, to support people when they face the unexpected challenges that life can present. However, our parcels provide much more than just food.

We recognise that households who don't have enough money to afford food, and are facing food poverty, will also be struggling with hygiene poverty, struggling to keep their households clean, feed their pets and buy essentials for their babies. That's why our parcels have evolved and, where we have had items donated, we can also provide:

- Household essentials - i.e. laundry detergent, washing-up liquid, cleaning products
- Hygiene items - i.e. shower gel, shampoo, toothpaste
- Baby supplies - i.e. nappies, wipes, baby food (however **not** baby formula)
- Pet food - because pets are family too
- Sanitary products

These additions mean households don't have to choose between feeding themselves, or those they love, and buying essentials like shower gel, sanitary items and shampoo.

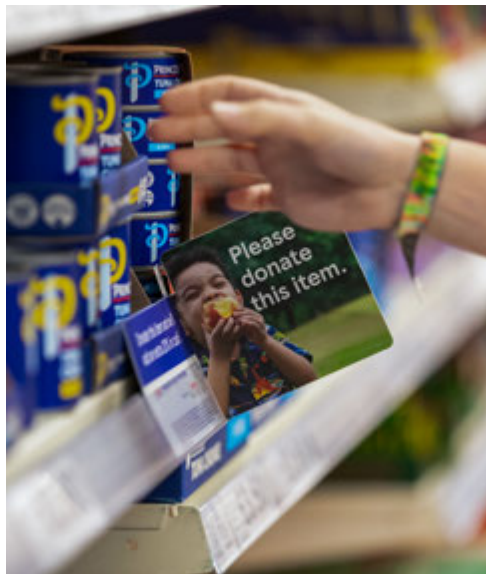
Could You Become a Signposting Volunteer?

We're looking for compassionate volunteers to join our resilience building team, working at our centres and on the phone from home. This is a meaningful, people-focused role within a small, friendly team. **Find out more on our website.**



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Help Us Keep Donations on Track



Our supporters make everything we do possible – from the volunteers who give their time, to the generous donors who contribute food and non-food items and funds.

Every donation makes a real difference to local people in need across the South Cotswolds.

For supporters who donate food and other essentials, making sure we have the right items at the right time isn't always easy, which is why we work hard to share what's most needed.

Alongside updates on our website and the posters you'll see at our permanent collection points (including at Tesco Tetbury and Tesco Extra Cirencester, Co-op Food Fairford, Co-op South Cerney, Co-op Lechlade, One Stop South Cerney and Waitrose Cirencester), we also use the BanktheFood app.

This simple, free app allows us to share real-time updates on the items we currently need most, whether that's food, toiletries or household, baby supplies or even pet items.

If you'd like to help in this way, please download the BanktheFood app and select South Cotswolds Foodbank.

Once you've done that, you'll be able to see our most up-to-date needs whenever it suits you, especially helpful if you're already planning a shop.

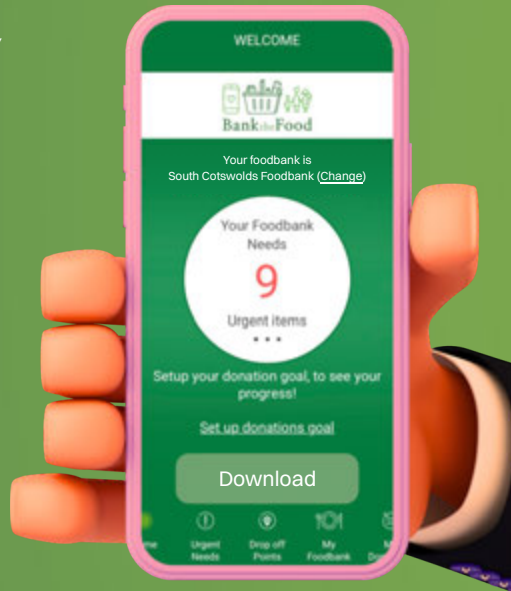
If you choose to enable notifications, it can also send a helpful reminder when you're near one of our local drop-off points, making it even easier to donate while you're out and about.

Of course, there's no obligation and many of our supporters prefer to give in other ways, and all support is equally valued.

But for those who want a quick and easy way to respond to our most urgent needs, the app is a really helpful tool, both for you and for us.

HELP OUR FOOD BANK

- ✓ We are proud to be working with the charity BanktheFood to support our food bank.
- ✓ Download the BanktheFood app for FREE using the QR code below.
- ✓ Search for us using the postcode finder and follow us.
- ✓ You'll get regular updates of the items that we urgently require.



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 South Cotswolds
Foodbank
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BanktheFood

FIND OUT MORE!

WWW.BANKTHEFOOD.COM

South Cotswolds Food Poverty Report 2026

On 17th June, South Cotswolds Foodbank will publish its latest Food Poverty Report (2025-26), offering a detailed picture of food insecurity across our communities.

The report brings together data from the past year to help us better understand both the progress being made and the challenges that remain.

At first glance, the data shows some encouraging trends. The number of emergency food parcels distributed has reduced compared to the previous year, and overall referrals have continued a downward trend seen over recent years.

This reflects the impact of sustained work across the community: improved access to advice, stronger partnership working, and growing investment in financial resilience support. These efforts are helping some households stabilise more quickly and reduce the need for repeat emergency support.

However, the report is clear that this headline reduction does not mean the problem has gone away.

Behind these figures sits a more complex picture. The total number of unique households supported has remained high, indicating that food insecurity continues to affect a significant number of people locally.

What has changed is the pattern of need:

Households are less likely to return repeatedly for support, but more are reaching a point where they need help for the first time.

This is reflected in the proportion of first-time users referred, rising from 36% to 38% over the past year.

This shift matters. It suggests that while some households are being supported to move forward more sustainably, new households are continuing to be pulled into hardship. Food insecurity in the South Cotswolds is not simply a shrinking issue, it is one that is evolving.



South Cotswolds Food Poverty Report

April 2025 - March 2026



In Numbers

1 April 25 - 31 Mar 26



3,257

emergency food parcels provided



1,441

food parcels provided for children



Over

£850,000

in Financial Resilience Building Support to restructure debt, write off debt and provide other financial gains delivered

The report also highlights that many of those accessing support are **not** out of work.

Around a third of households referred to the Foodbank have some form of income, but still struggle to afford the essentials. Rising living costs remain the most significant driver, with 62% of referrals linked to increased costs or unexpected expenses.

Health challenges, disability, debt, and the additional pressures of living in a rural area all combine to create financial strain that can quickly lead to crisis.

Additionally, the findings point to the importance of access. In rural communities, need can often be hidden. Lower referral numbers in some areas do not necessarily mean lower levels of hardship, but may instead reflect barriers such as transport, fewer local services, or limited awareness of available support.

A key driver in reducing repeat food bank use lies in the fact that South Cotswolds Foodbank has delivered over £850,000 in financial gains and support alongside emergency food provision. This has helped households address underlying issues and build greater resilience for the future.

Anton Wynn, Head of the Foodbank, shares “While fewer repeat visits are a positive sign, the overall level of need across the South Cotswolds remains significant.

“Tackling food poverty is not just about responding to immediate crises, it requires long-term, joined-up action to address the root causes, including income insecurity, health inequalities, and the rising cost of living.

We look forward to sharing the full report on 17th June and continuing to work alongside our community, partners and supporters to build a future where everyone has enough to afford the essentials, and where foodbanks are no longer needed.”

Helen Barnard, Director of Policy and Research at Trussell, said:

“Every day, staff and volunteers at food banks do an incredible job of supporting people facing hunger – but the truth is that food banks shouldn’t need to exist in the first place. We know the solutions to ending the need for food banks. That’s why the government must acknowledge the challenges facing people from the South Cotswolds and commit to delivering meaningful, lasting change so that everyone can afford the essentials and we can end the need for food banks for good.”

You can read the full report on our website following its release on the 17th June 2026



38%

of people used our Foodbank for the first time



2.8%

Reduction on previous year's number of households needing food aid



68%

of referrals show that rising costs were a contributing factor



19969kg

of donations received



Running for Resilience

Local runners have made a powerful difference this year, taking on events near and far to raise vital funds for South Cotswolds Foodbank. Their efforts have helped us go beyond emergency support, empowering people to address the challenges behind foodbank use and build a more stable future.

This year, our community has shown what it truly means to stand together.

From the streets of London to right here in Cirencester, incredible supporters have laced up their running shoes and gone the extra mile for South Cotswolds Foodbank. Whether taking on the London Landmarks Half Marathon, the Great Bristol Run, the Cirencester 10k or the Cirencester Half Marathon, every step taken has helped change lives.

These efforts have raised essential funds that go far beyond providing emergency food. Because of you, we've been able to support people in tackling the underlying challenges that led them to need a foodbank in the first place. From accessing advice and support services, to building resilience and confidence, your fundraising is helping individuals and families move forward in a stronger, more hopeful place.

Could you be part of the next chapter?

This November, the Cirencester Half Marathon is a fantastic opportunity to challenge yourself while making a real impact in your local community. Whether you're a seasoned runner or taking on your first half marathon, we would love you to join Team South Cotswolds Foodbank. With every step, you'll be helping to build a future where fewer people need a foodbank at all.



Friends of South Cotswolds Foodbank

Friends of South Cotswolds Foodbank is a new, flexible volunteer group supporting our fundraising and community engagement.

Get involved in ways that suit you: helping at local events, supporting one-off projects, identifying new opportunities and partnerships, or speaking to community groups.

Visit our website for more information on Friends of South Cotswolds and our other volunteering roles



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South Cotswolds Foodbank

Together with Trussell



Run against food poverty in the South Cotswolds!

Supporting a charity that helps those most in need and who are experiencing food poverty doesn't have to be a chore, how about a challenge instead?



Cirencester Half Marathon

1st November 2026

Fundraising Target: £100

Location: Cirencester

A friendly local race, perfect for all abilities.



We're making meaningful change, not just by supplying food, but with financial advice and guidance, helping people break their cycle of hardship!



"We would of had to have gone without food for my husband and I as we could only feed the children with what we had left"

- Foodbank user.

To help us and your community,
register your interest today! Email:
info@southcotswolds.foodbank.org.uk





When life changed suddenly, it didn't take away Emma's* determination to keep moving forward.

In summer 2024, Emma's life shifted overnight following a serious brain injury.

Until then, she had been working, raising her son, and living independently. "I had worked all my adult life and had a well paid job," she says. "I had my own company car, holidays abroad, a good social life. I was enjoying my best life, and so was my son."

In the months that followed, everything changed. Emma spent weeks in hospital, during which time her son had to live with his father while she recovered.

While she was still regaining her strength, her workplace restructured and she was made redundant. Financial pressures quickly mounted, and like many people facing sudden crisis, she tried to manage by using credit.

As her health began to improve, Emma took brave steps to rebuild her life.

She started going out again and met a partner who had also been through a difficult time. Together, they formed a blended family, with their children coming to live under one roof.

"We understood each other and gave each other support," Emma says. For a time, this felt like a turning point. A chance to rebuild stability together.

But beneath the surface, financial challenges were growing.

"I was very broken financially and in debt up to my eyeballs," she admits. "I hid it... hoping it would go away. Of course it didn't."

Eventually, the pressure became unavoidable:

"Bailiffs at the door, no money, very little food."

It was at this point that South Cotswolds Foodbank became a vital source of support, not just for food, but for the long-term help needed to move forward.

In early 2025, Emma began working with Sharon, the foodbank's Family Engagement Worker.

From completing benefit applications to preparing for assessments and negotiating with creditors, Sharon walked alongside her every step of the way.

"Sharon was really good at prompting me, helping me to word answers," Emma says. "What might take someone two weeks can take me four—but she understands that."

This steady, relational support made a real difference. Sharon attended key appointments, helped Emma manage overwhelming processes, and provided consistent encouragement.

"She tells me what I need to do next... always smiling, never judgemental."

There were important breakthroughs.

A successful benefits assessment and later tribunal decision brought vital financial stability.

“This is life-changing for us,” Emma says.
“We can finally breathe.”

The backdated payment meant the family could reduce debts, replace broken essentials, and properly stock their cupboards.

With that stability, things began to shift. The family could plan again, keeping up with bills, keeping warm, and supporting their children.

Emma describes one moment with pride: ensuring a child could attend a school residential trip “with everything they needed... that felt like a huge achievement.”

There have still been challenges. Emma's health continues to fluctuate, and there have been difficult periods. But she has gained perspective too:

“We have a home, each other and support around us.”

Today, the family is rebuilding with renewed confidence.

“We're not hiding anymore,” Emma says.

They are creating a home together, rebuilding routines, and looking ahead.

Emma is even beginning to explore retraining, hoping to use her skills to support local organisations in the future.

“We will manage,” she says. “We will keep going, and we will succeed.”

Emma's story is one of determination, but also of what is possible when people are met with the right support at the right time.

Through South Cotswolds Foodbank's ongoing, relational work, this family has not only come through crisis, but is building a more stable and hopeful future.

Scan the QR Code
or visit our YouTube
channel to hear
more about Emma's
Journey



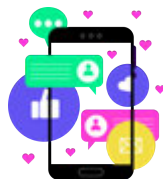
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Ways to Help or Get Involved

Our Foodbank is always very encouraged and grateful for the goodwill shown and help provided to so many people in our community. If you would like to support our work, you can do so in the following ways:

Sign up for our Newsletter and Follow us on Social Media

Keep up to date with the latest news and issues affecting the people we work with, like and share our messages on social media and help raise awareness of the issues that cause food poverty as we work to make it a thing of the past..



southcotswolds.foodbank.org.uk/contact-us/subscribe-to-our-newsletter



southcotswolds.foodbank.org.uk



facebook.com/southcotsfoodbank



instagram.com/southcotsfoodbank



search South Cotswolds Foodbank

Donate Financially

There are several ways to donate financially to support our work:

Via our Just Giving Page at justgiving.com/southcotswolds-foodbank or **scan the QR code below**.

Make a one-off gift by writing a cheque to **South Cotswolds Foodbank**, and sending it to: Unit 15, Whiteway Court, Cirencester, GL7 7BA, or via bank transfer.

A/C Name: South Cotswolds Foodbank

A/C number: 41183760

Sort Code: 30-54-66

Make a regular donation with a standing order: southcotswolds.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money.

Donate Food

The easiest way to keep informed about what we need is to download the free 'BANKTHEFOOD' app.

BanktheFood is a charity that allows people to know what their local food bank needs on an ongoing basis. Please download the app and check what is needed next time you go shopping.



Volunteer

Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, offering time, care and compassion to our community. If you'd like to be part of a supportive team making a real impact, we'd love to hear from you. Find out more and register your interest at:

<https://southcotswolds.foodbank.org.uk/support-us/volunteer>

