



IMPACT REPORT 2023-24



CONTENTS

WELCOME	4
From our Chief Executive Officer	
THE YEAR AT A GLANCE	5
THE YEAR IN NUMBERS	6
Emergency food parcels	
Influence and advocacy	
People and support	
LOW INCOME AND POVERTY	8
People on the lowest incomes are struggling to pay for the essentials	
OUR STRATEGY	12
Our vision is for a UK without the need for food banks	
CHANGING COMMUNITIES	14
Financial inclusion	
Pathfinders	
Volunteer and trustee development grant	
Strategic resources grant	
Strengthening systems and building evidence	
CHANGING POLICY	22
Policy evidence	
Policy influencing	
Local policy partnerships	
CHANGING MINDS	28
Attitudes, perceptions and influence	
Organising programme	
GUARANTEE OUR ESSENTIALS	32
WORKING WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE PARTNERS	36
CHURCH ENGAGEMENT	38
THANK YOU	40



WELCOME

From our Chief Executive Officer

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I present to you our 2023-2024 Impact Report. This report (covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) is not just a reflection of what we have achieved together over the past year; it is a testament to the unwavering commitment, generosity, and spirit of collaboration that each one of you has brought to helping us progress towards our mission: to end the need for food banks in the UK. On behalf of everyone here at the Trussell Trust, a heartfelt thank you!

People on the lowest incomes continue to struggle to pay for the essentials we all need to live, with food bank need at an all-time high. The Trussell Trust network is working hard to respond to the level and nature of hardship and distress people are experiencing, providing over 3.1 million emergency food parcels last year. This is the most parcels the network has ever distributed in a single year. Our food banks work tirelessly to try to maintain their vital services and support in local communities; however, the network is stretched and struggling to cope, with more of our food banks needing to buy food for their parcels, recruit more volunteers and expand their spaces. While food bank need is at an historic high, we cannot let it become the new normal. We know what needs to happen to make sure people have enough money for the essentials - and it starts with making our social security system fit for purpose.

Despite these challenges, this report will present stories of resilience, hope, and transformation – showing the difference we have made and charting our progress towards our vision over the past year. We’ve awarded £22.7 million in grants to ensure food banks can keep their doors open and offer a range of support to their local communities. 132 organisations joined the call for our UK social security system to include an Essentials Guarantee (so that everyone has enough money to cover the bills for everyday items, such as energy and food), and more than 150,000 people stood with us by signing the Guarantee our Essentials petition –

which was delivered to leaders of the main UK political parties in February 2024. Overall, we have continued to make great strides building our movement for change.

Your support has been the cornerstone of our success, allowing us to reach new heights and touch more lives than ever before. As we turn the pages of this report, let us celebrate the milestones we have crossed and the barriers we have broken. But let us also use this opportunity to double down on our vision for a UK without the need for food banks.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Together, we are making a difference, as we continue to work towards dignified and sustainable solutions to hunger, hardship and poverty.

Warmest wishes,



Emma Revie
Chief Executive Officer



THE YEAR AT A GLANCE



3.1 MILLION
emergency food parcels provided.



99% OF MPS
across the House of Commons have received at least one email about the Guarantee our Essentials campaign from our food banks and supporters.



110 MENTIONS
of the Trussell Trust and 450 mentions of food banks were made in the House of Commons.



428,916
supporters are actively giving (financially) and supporting (non-financially) our work.



OVER 50
high-profile public figures have supported campaigns raising awareness and funds for people facing hardship.



About this report

Our Impact Report will tell the story of the work we've been doing over the past year (April 2023 - March 2024), the difference it has made, and the changes we have begun creating together with our network and partners.

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

EMERGENCY FOOD PARCELS



3.1 MILLION emergency food parcels provided. (3,121,404).



69% INCREASE in the number of children supported compared to five years ago.



1.14 MILLION parcels provided for children.



179,000 parcels were provided for households with someone aged 65+, a 27% increase compared to last year.

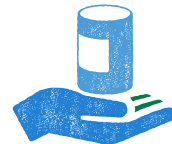


94% RISE in parcels provided compared to five years ago.

INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY



87% OF THE UK public now think the benefits system should ensure everyone can afford the essentials.



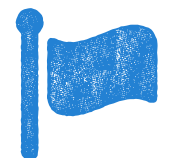
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT is the first in the UK to announce a plan to end the need for food banks – as called for by the Trussell Trust.



MORE THAN 150,000 people have signed our Essentials Guarantee petition.



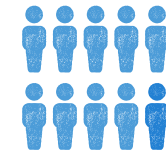
132 ORGANISATIONS have joined the call for our UK social security system to include an Essentials Guarantee.



20 MPS and 7 Peers have spoken in Parliament in support of our Essentials Guarantee proposal.



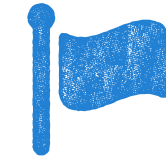
110 MENTIONS of the Trussell Trust and 450 mentions of food banks were made in the House of Commons.



99% OF MPS across the House of Commons have received at least one email about the Essentials Guarantee from our food banks and supporters. We've managed to reach 644 out of 650 MPs.



13 PEERS & 34 MPS from across the political spectrum supported the extension of the Household Support Fund – albeit not necessarily with direct reference to the Trussell Trust.



20 MPS and seven Peers have spoken in Parliament in support of our Essentials Guarantee proposal.

PEOPLE AND SUPPORT



£22.7 MILLION was awarded in grants to food banks, compared to just over £20 million the year before.



50 CORPORATE PARTNERS are collaborating with us.



36,000 volunteers gave their time and expertise.



OVER 250 GRANT-MAKING TRUSTS supported our work.



44 YOUNG ADULTS from often-overlooked demographics such as care leavers, single parents, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, LGBTQ+ and disabled people shared their experiences and ideas for change



428,916 supporters are actively giving (financially) and supporting (non-financially) our work, with 160,376 of our supporters actively campaigning for us – more than double the number doing so in the previous year.¹



50 HIGH-PROFILE FIGURES from sport, social media, TV, film and music have supported campaigns raising awareness and funds for people facing hardship.

LOW INCOME AND POVERTY

People on the lowest incomes are struggling to pay for the essentials

Despite inflation starting to fall, people on the lowest incomes continue to struggle to afford the essentials like energy, fuel, and food, with food bank need at an historic high. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, 1.2 million people needed to turn to Trussell Trust food banks, with our network distributing more than 3.12 million (3,121,404) emergency food parcels: a 4% increase since 2022-23, which comes on top of the record increase of 37% in 2021-22. This is the highest number of parcels the network has ever distributed in a single year, and nearly double the number distributed just five years ago (a 94% increase). Our network received over 1.3 million referrals and supported more than 655,000 first time users, a 40% increase compared to five years ago.² Overall:

- 1,144,096 emergency food parcels were distributed for children by food banks in the Trussell Trust network.
- 453,000 children and 745,000 adults were supported by food banks in the Trussell Trust network in the last year.
- Overall, nearly two thirds (65%) of the support provided by food banks in the previous year was for families with children.
- We have seen a concerning increase in parcels going to pension age households. 179,000 parcels were provided for households with someone aged 65+ – a 27% increase compared to last year.

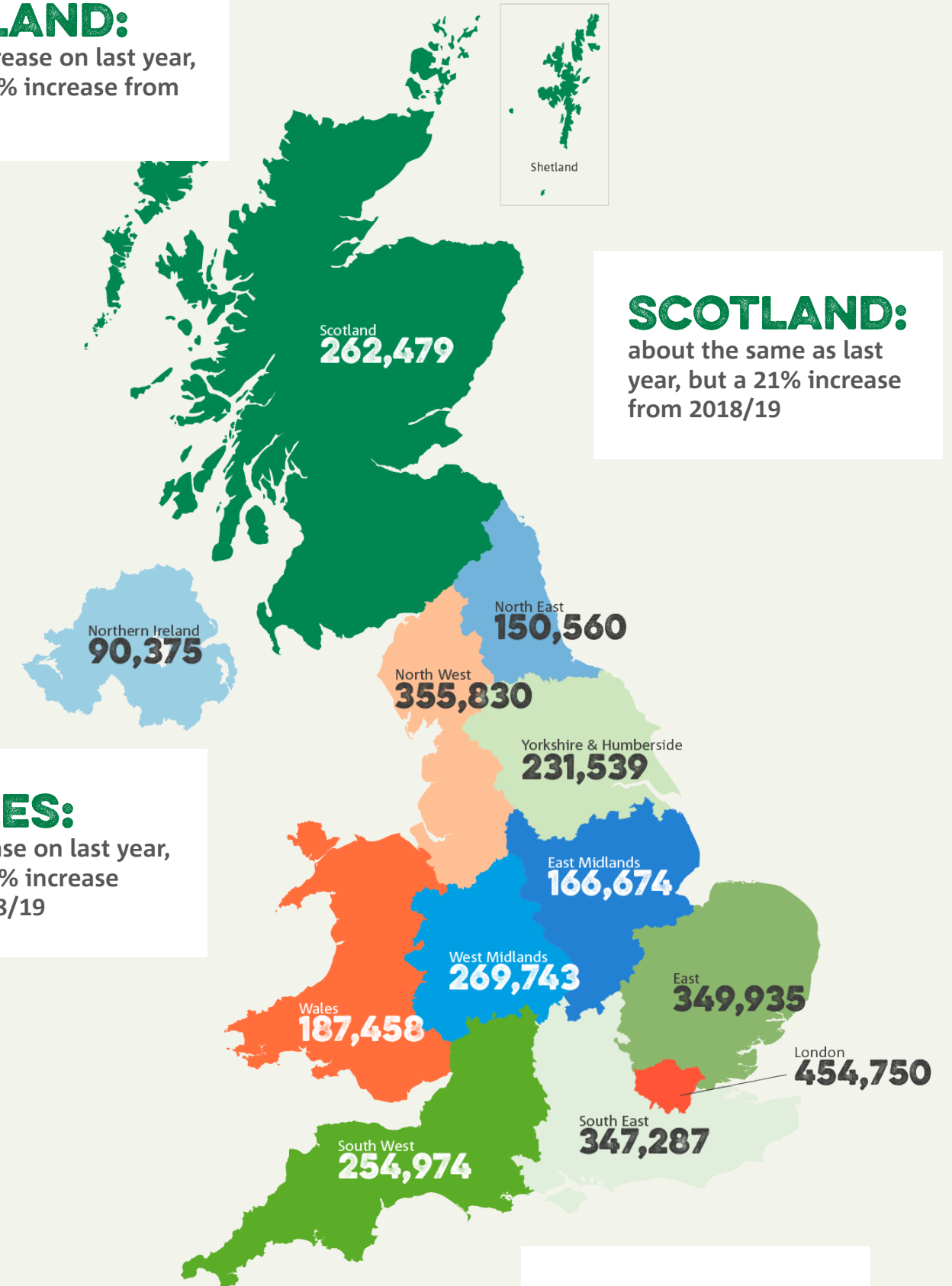
While our UK-wide network of 1,699 distribution centres across 292 local authorities² continues to respond to need, providing virtual support remains challenging as our network is stretched to its limits. Food banks are tenacious in their provision of critical services, often having to adapt operational practices to support the level of need and nature of people facing deepening hardship

and distress in their communities. However, they are struggling to maintain the breadth and depth of support required as the needs of people being forced to turn to food banks are becoming more complex and deep-seated. We have continued to work with our network to help food banks keep their doors open, by providing £2.78 million in emergency funding (as part of the £22.7 million total given out as grants) and working closely with our UK-wide supermarket partnerships to bolster our food supply.

Despite the continuing rise in need, there are reasons to be hopeful. Our work is making a difference – whether it be supporting people through our Financial Inclusion programmes (providing advice on money matters, debt and social security entitlements), mobilising communities to advocate for change, or winning the hearts and minds of the public to better understand our mission. Our push for an Essentials Guarantee is also gathering real momentum. We know that introducing an Essentials Guarantee into Universal Credit would help to ensure everyone has a protected minimum amount of support to afford the essentials – and would drastically reduce the need for food banks.

NORTHERN IRELAND:

11% increase on last year, but a 61% increase from 2018/19



WALES:

1% increase on last year, but a 143% increase from 2018/19

ENGLAND:

5% increase on last year, but a 109% increase from 2018/19

SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OF THE TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS SUPPORTING OUR WORK

We are so grateful to all of the Trusts and Foundations who have and continue to support our work. Below is a spotlight showcasing the work of two of our funders:

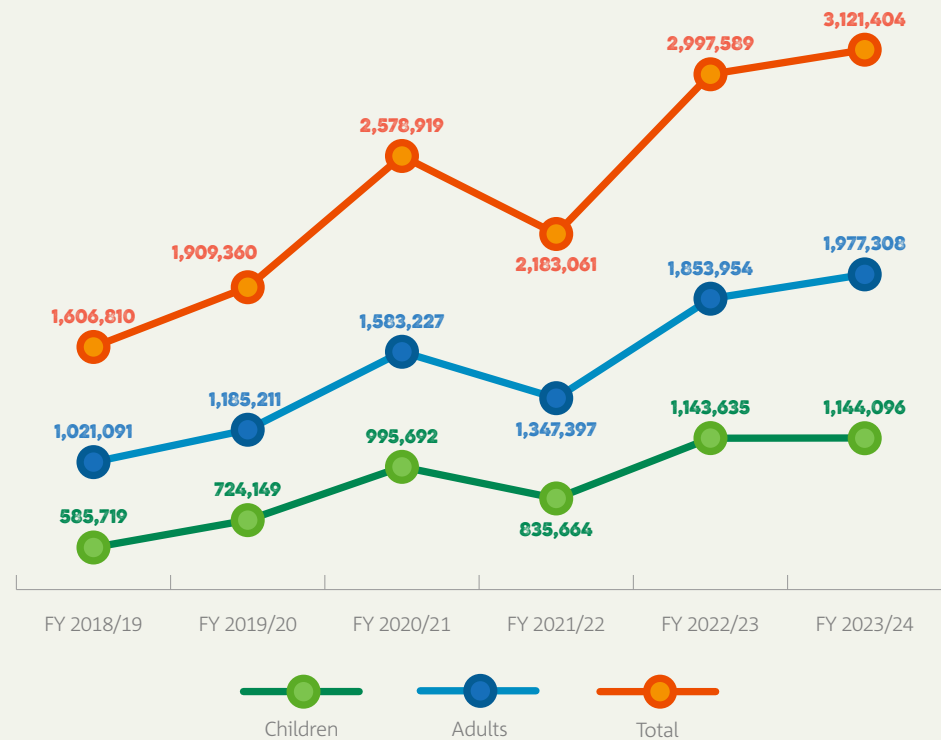
Julia and Hans Rausing Trust

Supporting us for an unprecedented second year as a transformative catalyst funder for our emergency appeal, the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust responded again with enormous generosity. Their funding enabled us to provide a tailored and responsive level of support to our network who were facing unprecedented need for their services throughout the winter months and beyond. The impact of their support has been enormous and our food banks and those they support have benefitted enormously. We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to the Trust for their support.

People's Postcode Lottery

We have continued to work closely with People's Postcode Lottery, whose commitment to our work has been deeply valued. Their flexible funding model allowed us to deliver resources where they have been most needed, and this has been especially important in such turbulent times. As part of 'A Happier Christmas', People's Postcode Lottery made an additional and very generous grant for which we are extremely grateful. They have also supported our food banks with direct grants, showing their truly holistic partnership work in action.

Number of emergency food parcels given by food banks in the Trussell Trust network in recent years



SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OF OUR FOOD BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

We are so grateful to all of our food partners who have enabled us to provide emergency parcels to people who needed to use a food bank this year. Below is a spotlight showcasing the work of two of our biggest partners from the retail and takeaway sectors:

Tesco: Over the last year we received continued unwavering support from Tesco. Through our partnership, we launched a project in response to the needs of our network that enabled a group of food banks to order significant deliveries of food in bulk. This initiative addressed logistical challenges faced by the network, while providing an efficient and reliable source of stock to keep up with the record need in their communities. The partnership also directed vast amounts of donated essential items to food banks in our network, through permanent, year-round instore collection points, and a summer campaign where customers could donate pre-packed parcels of essentials or donate by rounding up the cost of their shopping at the till. The annual Winter Food Collection provided an additional 1.5 million meals across our food bank network alongside customer donations, while attracting strong media coverage – helping to raise awareness of the items that food banks needed most that winter.

Deliveroo: In the second year of partnership with Deliveroo, we have built on the great work of the previous year and received over £2 million in total customer donations since April 2022. This has helped us to provide on-the-ground support and grants to food banks across our network. Deliveroo has continued to support our Changing Minds agenda through social-first campaigns such as Not So Silent Night, which featured the influencers Honey G and Shaun Williamson. This campaign helped us to share our mission to end the need for food banks in the UK and brought our work to a new, younger audience. Over 100 Deliveroo

colleagues have also spent time volunteering in food banks across the UK, supporting on the ground in their local communities.

“I skip meals and eat once a day, in the evening. I cannot afford personal grooming items. I’m constantly cold and hungry. I get ill with colds and headaches etc. I run out of money two weeks before pay day. I exist day to day, and hope I can continue to be able to work to stay afloat. Life is a constant struggle... I’m starting to give up on the daily battle.”
YouGov survey participant, England

“I’m worried that I will end up destitute with no one to help me out. I’m also worried about taking my own life because of my financial struggles.”
YouGov survey participant, Scotland

“I do not have ANY heating or hot water. My children and I go without hot water 365 days a year. I skip meals.”
YouGov survey participant, Wales

“Every household bill has increased. I am now out of my five-year fixed mortgage deal, and it’s been extremely worrying as to where I will find the extra money.”
YouGov survey participant, Northern Ireland



Our vision is for a UK without the need for food banks

We support a UK-wide network of food banks to provide emergency support to people facing deepening hardship and distress – and who are often locked in destitution. We work collaboratively with our network and other partners to create the change needed to build a future where all of us have enough money for the essentials.

We are working towards a future without the need for food banks in three main ways:

CHANGING POLICY



We're working with our network and other partners to identify the policies that will reduce the need for food banks and push for the changes we need to see in society. We're influencing policy and practice at UK, devolved and local levels, to address the drivers of hunger and hardship. The data we gather from the frontline work of food banks, as well as through our research activities, helps us to advocate for effective solutions and to push for the change we want to see in society.

CHANGING COMMUNITIES

We're helping unlock even more of the potential of communities to become places where the underlying drivers of acute poverty are addressed, as well as supporting food banks to develop strategies to reduce the need for emergency food locally.



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 greater numbers of people to take action.



FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Our Hunger in the UK research³ found that most people referred to food banks have very low incomes, high debt, and minimal savings. While more than half (52%) of people across the UK were found to be in some type of debt (including borrowing, household bills arrears, and benefit debt owed to UK, national and local government), the occurrence of debt was considerably higher for people who were food insecure (82%), and the highest levels of debt were seen among people referred to food banks in the Trussell Trust network, with nine in 10 (90%) being in debt.

People referred to food banks in the Trussell Trust network were highly likely to be facing multiple forms of debt and arrears, with the majority (78%) managing two or more arrears or debts, and nearly two in three (65%) with three or more. In addition, Policy in Practice estimates that the total amount of unclaimed income-related benefits and social tariffs is now £23 billion a year. This means that millions of people are not receiving the income they should have from social security, creating unnecessary additional hardship and debt.⁴

The links between poverty, health, and public services are well established. Managing debt and maximising income through the take-up of benefits is essential to help both people on low incomes and public services cope in the face of rising living costs and increasing demand.

Debt management and income maximisation alone are not enough to end hunger, especially since Universal Credit does not cover the cost of the essentials. But these services can make a big difference to the depth of hardship people face. While we campaign for change, we are connecting people on the lowest incomes with the kind of money advice and support that makes a positive difference to people's lives – making it less likely that someone will need to use a food bank in the future. Our ambition is to ensure pathways into advice where it is required for as many people as possible, through advisers working with food banks as part of our Income Maximisation programme, or through the Help through Hardship helpline (England and Wales), our helpline service in partnership with Advice NI (Northern Ireland), or Pathways to Advice and Cash Scotland (PACS). More broadly, our goal is to change the wider sector so that people at risk of destitution can access the right support before they reach crisis, or ever have to turn to a food bank.

Income maximisation

Our Income Maximisation programme seeks to put in place local advice and support, connected to food banks, enabling people to access tailored provision to address the underlying causes of crisis. These services have a primary focus on advice on maximising income via the social security system, supporting people to access their full entitlements, and helping them manage unaffordable debt. We work to support food banks to deliver these services in partnership with established and quality-assured advice agencies, or in some cases to deliver them directly with appropriate infrastructure in place.

Between April 2023 and March 2024:

- Nearly £8.52 million financial inclusion grants were awarded to food banks.
- Around 75% of food banks offered high-quality financial inclusion advice – up from 65% the previous year, and 28% in 2020-21.
- Over 65,000 people were supported, with 38,396 people receiving financial (income) gains – a 145% increase compared to 2022-23.
- Around £66.5 million of financial gains were either expected or confirmed, up from £25 million in 2022-23.
- Over £47.2 million of debt was managed for almost 10,300 people, of which around 1,700 people had £12.5 million written off – that's a 183% increase in the amount of debt written off since 2022-23.
- Among people whose income we helped to increase, the average financial gain per person was £1,719 – up from £1,430 in 2022-23, and £787 in 2021-22.
- 80 food banks accessed the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) support service for food bank-based advisers, including advice for complex cases, and access to training and resources to equip advisers to resolve welfare rights issues. The service is closely linked to other initiatives within CPAG, including the early warning system and social policy work.
- 117 Food banks attended financial inclusion forums, and 105 attended benefits training.

Currently, our Income Maximisation programme is being independently evaluated by the University of Bristol, with findings due to be released in the 2024-25 reporting period.



As an example of how our programme is having a real impact on the lives of individuals, Alex came to the food bank after their life had changed overnight. Formerly a healthy and financially independent person who was in work, Alex was suddenly incapacitated due to an undiagnosed underlying condition.

They were no longer able to work, and had to apply for Universal Credit to try to make ends meet for themselves and their child. However, this was made particularly difficult as Alex needed to travel long distances to access medical treatment. The food bank advice service supported Alex to apply for and secure Adult Disability Payment, increasing their household income by almost £500 per month.

Thanks to this successful application, an adviser was then able to secure a disabled person's bus pass, meaning Alex could travel for treatment without eating into their disposable income (something they were hugely relieved by).

As a result, Alex now no longer needs to use the food bank and has been able to meet essential day-to-day costs. As the backdated benefit award was received in December, they were also able to treat their child at Christmas – something that had been worrying Alex since first coming to the food bank the summer.

Pears Foundation

Pears Foundation was a catalyst funder for our visionary financial inclusion work almost five years ago. Their support since then has enabled us to embed financial inclusion projects into communities right across the UK. Never has the value of this work been greater. We thank Pears for their vision and support in the spirit of partnership and mutual benefit and look forward to continuing to work with them.

Help through Hardship Helpline – England and Wales

Launched in April 2020, our Help through Hardship helpline, run in partnership with Citizens Advice, is a free, confidential phone service for people living in England and Wales who are worried about money and can't afford the essentials. Citizens Advice advisers provide personalised support to maximise a person's income through social security benefits and grant support, identify wider advice needs (including debt, housing and immigration) and direct people to specialist onward support. For those with a mental health need, a referral to Mind's Infoline is also available, providing information on mental health issues as well as how to get support.



135,713 calls were handled⁵, a similar level to 2022-23 and an increase of 40% since 2021-22.



43,622 people received high-quality advice through the helpline – broadly the same figures as 2022-23, but a 37% increase on 2021-22.



£40,655,061 financial (income) gains were identified, up by 17% since the same period the previous year, and an increase of 112% since 2021-22.



Among people whose income we helped increase, the average financial gain was £3,179 – a slight reduction of 5%, compared to £3,363 last year.



2,238 referrals were made to Mind's Infoline.

Barclays partnership

Throughout the year, Barclays has continued to be a key strategic partner for our Financial Inclusion programme across the UK. This support has enabled us to increase the provision of income advice services to people in financial hardship, with over 310 food banks now offering the services, representing 75% of the network. Barclays' support has also helped with the development of a Financial Inclusion Forum. This acts as a community of practice for staff and volunteers in food banks, to develop their approach to the design and delivery of Financial Inclusion services.

Here's what just a few of the people we helped said:



"Thank you so much for all your support and time you spent with me yesterday on the phone. I believe you are an angel sent."

"After years of not knowing what to do, you have made me feel very reassured and made me aware that there is actually a lot of support out there. We were never aware that this form of support is available, so me and my husband both say thank you. I don't know how to express my joy. I don't know how to express how happy you've made me today. Thank you so much. My children will be so happy to receive this food parcel tomorrow."

"Thank you very much for all the assistance you've given. Yourself and the assistance you gave are very helpful. You helped me in full not only with the access to the food bank service which I had called regarding but also with things I had not even contemplated, so that just goes to show how helpful. Very much appreciated. It was lovely to speak to you and I sincerely hope you have a wonderful and prosperous evening, week and many more to come in future."

Advice NI Helpline – Northern Ireland

For people in Northern Ireland who are worried about money and struggling to afford the essentials, our free and confidential helpline, run in partnership with Advice NI, is available to provide personalised support. Advice NI advisers support people to maximise their income, help them navigate the benefits system, identify any additional grants they could be entitled to, and provide specialist debt and budgeting advice.



3,774 calls were answered, slightly lower than the 4,231 answered in 2022-23.



1,958 people were helped through the helpline with high quality advice, broadly the same as 2022-23.



£1,130,020 financial (income) gains were identified, down slightly from last year's figure of £1,262,321.

Pathways to Advice and Cash Scotland - Scotland

The most effective way to help those experiencing financial insecurity and prevent the need for a food parcel is to get cash in their pockets in the short term – and to complement this by providing holistic advice to increase someone's income and support in the medium and long term. Since June 2023 we have been running the Pathways to Advice and Cash Scotland (PACS) project, to find out more about what works well in Scotland. PACS supports people to access emergency income – for example, through the Scottish Welfare Fund, for when someone has no money for food – and prevents future hardship by delivering it alongside advice and support on welfare rights and income maximisation. PACS is a partnership with community-based organisations working alongside a set of local stakeholders. It began midway through the year, and is being delivered across six areas – covering a range of urban, rural, mixed and island communities.

So far:



Around 1,800 people have been supported through the pilot services.



Around 1,070 have achieved a total of £482,000 financial gains.



490 people are estimated to no longer need to use a food bank.

PACS is being independently evaluated to find out 'what works' and to share learning, with a final impact evaluation report due to be published in spring 2025. However, an interim update covering the design phase and the first six months of delivery found that:

- Having a well-articulated scope and aim has helped PACS make steady progress.
- Leadership is an important enabler to maintain progress. This is a complex policy area, with local leadership and commitment being critical success factors.
- The Trussell Trust has been empathetic towards the different rates of progress across the local pilot sites, and this flexible and relational approach to funding appears important.
- Connections and connectivity have supported implementation, including meeting challenges arising from geography and rurality.
- Existing relationships, and a shared vision across the partnerships, are important to ensure that partners work constructively and effectively together.
- Recognising and being sensitive to the organisational constraints of the slowest moving partner organisations, including local authorities, is beneficial.
- Relationships, connectedness and alignment are key enablers of successful implementation.
- Using professional connections and networks to develop services that prioritise a humane and compassionate approach to providing crisis support was working well.

PATHFINDERS

Transforming communities

We work with food banks to stop people falling through the cracks in local services, bringing partners together to build strong communities that find solutions to local issues hitting people on the lowest incomes hardest. Our Pathfinder programme supports 55 food banks across the UK, as they develop and pilot innovative, localised strategies that are aligned with our shared vision to end the need for food banks. Together, we are learning and gathering evidence about ‘what works’ and how to best support food banks to deliver strategic change in their communities.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, we:

- Scoped the support needed by our food banks and awarded flexible funding, with 53 food banks being awarded a total of £4.4 million.
- Provided intensive support, focusing on strategic development.
- Facilitated peer connection and support.
- Provided support to strengthen reflective practices and impact measurement.
- Hosted a range of targeted events and training to support Pathfinder food banks in delivering their strategic plans.

Key areas of activity across Pathfinder food banks include:

- Strengthening local referral pathway: All 55 food banks are seeking to strengthen the local system of support through engagement with local partners.
- Enhancing the support offered at the food bank: 51 food banks are providing financial inclusion support.
- Engaging with and co-designing initiatives alongside people who have lived experience of financial hardship: 93% of Pathfinder food banks who completed our Pulse Check survey (43 of our 55 Pathfinder food banks) are involving people with lived experience of poverty. Eight food banks have now employed someone to lead participation work, while 15 food banks have developed lived experience advisory groups.
- Strengthening the support available to people at risk of needing to use a food bank:

18 food banks are running community hub style projects, bringing a range of services together and helping to connect people with appropriate support.

- Building consensus and action toward our vision – internally, with partners and with the community: Many food banks are playing an active role in advocating for our shared vision within local anti-poverty and third sector forums. Over 30 food banks are focusing on activity related to changing policy.



[Watch our video of Norwich Foodbank](#) sharing how they have enhanced the support offered at their food bank centres.



[Watch our video of Edinburgh Food Project](#) sharing how they have developed a new three-year strategy, and the impact this is making.

Pathfinder Gathering

In March 2024, we hosted our third Pathfinder Gathering, based on the theme of Shaping the Future Together. This three-day event provided an opportunity for Pathfinder food banks around the UK to connect, share learning, and be inspired. Representatives from 48 Pathfinder food banks attended the event, sharing the creative and innovative ways in which they are seeking to reduce the need for the food banks in their communities.

Food banks were supported to reflect on the role of their projects and organisations – both now and in a future when the need for mass emergency food aid has ended. Through interactive workshops, food bank leaders increased their skills and expertise in leadership development, while focusing on how to build a culture of wellbeing, how to shape the future in partnership with people with lived experience, and how to create effective internal communications.

[Watch a video of Pathfinder Gathering](#) attendees responding to the event.

Here’s what some of the attendees said:



“Hearing about the great work of others and sharing that learning, it gives us the confidence to go back and implement changes.”

“Being at the Pathfinder Gathering has been great, to chat to lots of different people, from loads of different food banks, that I wouldn’t have necessarily connected with. Finding things out that we are doing in a similar way, that are succeeding, or not, and just getting some ideas and inspiration”

“I’ve learned so much! Prioritising activities that align with our vision, being clear with our comms to all stakeholders and building resilience/sustainability.”

“I feel very encouraged to develop our current activities to continue reaching our goal to reduce the need for food banks.”



VOLUNTEER AND TRUSTEE DEVELOPMENT GRANT

We offer grants to fund activities that develop volunteers and trustees as part of a commitment to excellence in volunteer management and in working towards a food bank's strategic goals. This may include hiring a new Volunteer Coordinator or Manager, recruiting specialist volunteers that can drive food banks forward, or investing in training for volunteers and/or trustees.

We have over 36,000 volunteers that support the Trussell Trust food bank network and, between 2023 and 2024, we awarded around £375,000 in grant funding. Our Volunteering team at the Trussell Trust also provided a range of wider support activities covering areas such as recruitment, management, training, campaigning and advocacy.

Many food banks feel the volunteer experience, morale and sense of unity has improved. Here's what some of them told us:



"Sometimes people contact us who have been previously helped by the food bank and are now doing well. Seven years ago, a man was helped and now he has his own business restoring vintage cars! He returned to thank us." Volunteer, Change Makers Survey 2023

"I really value being a food bank volunteer as it has opened my eyes to poverty – but it has also given me a new purpose." Volunteer, Change Makers Survey 2023

"I love my volunteering role at the food bank. I work with lovely people and the role has made me more socially aware of people's problems." Volunteer, Change Makers Survey 2023



Our annual Volunteer and Trustee Development Grant Reports highlighted that:

- 83% of food banks agree that the grant has increased their strategic capacity.
- 83% of food banks agree their volunteers are better able to deliver more informed and effective signposting.
- 77% of food banks agree their volunteers are better able to support people who are facing difficulties.
- Most food banks have improved training, resources, equipment, or information to support volunteers carry out their roles.

STRATEGIC RESOURCES GRANT

We provide grants to enable food banks to release existing capacity or bring in new capacity to:

- Develop their strategic plan and orient their services towards an end for the need for their services locally.
- Implement and embed key strategic priorities such as (but not limited to) e-referral, referral pathway reviews, systematic signposting or the Assemble volunteer management system.
- Engage locally in the strategic priority areas of Changing Communities, Changing Minds, and Changing Policy.

From April 2023 to March 2024, we awarded nearly £1.3 million in grant funding for strategic resources.

Our annual Strategic Resource Grant Reports highlighted that:

- On average the grant allowed for 863 additional hours to be dedicated to strategic objectives – that's equivalent to one person per food bank working full-time for four months on strategy.
- 87% food banks agree that they have strengthened strategic referral pathways.
- 65% of food banks have updated existing – or developed new – signposting services and/or resources.

STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS AND BUILDING EVIDENCE

Together, the Trussell Trust and our network are strengthening our systems and building strong evidence to underpin effective policy recommendations. Between April 2023 and March 2024:

- 87% of our vouchers have been issued electronically, a 13% increase on 2022-23 and a 73% increase on 2021-22.
- Over 50% of our food banks are now using Assemble, our volunteer management software.
- We developed data packs for our food banks to better understand their local contexts building on our end of year statistics report.
- We developed a modelling tool designed to help food banks forecast and prepare for the demands over winter.

- Trust Advice, our specialist charity governance partners, delivered 12 training sessions/webinars over the year, with 304 attendances. Topics ranged from trustee recruitment to charity finances and accounts for non-accountants.
- Our Area teams hosted Trustee Cluster meetings, reaching 237 food banks. These meetings offer trustees the opportunity to access specialist support, training and updates, alongside invaluable time with other trustees.
- We hosted our first Treasurer and Chair Forum, hosted by the Trussell Trust's Chair of Trustees, and Head of Finance. 60 attendees joined us to discuss the principles of financial sustainability, how to best support trustees, and to participate in a Q&A session.
- We launched a partnership with the Association of Chairs (AoC), offering free 12-month membership to Chairs and Vice Chairs of food bank governing bodies across the network. 85 food banks took up this offer.



POLICY EVIDENCE

Generating robust evidence to inform effective policy solutions.

From April 2023 to March 2024:

- Our Hunger in the UK research report was published.
- We published findings from two YouGov surveys of people claiming Universal Credit, tracking the financial situation of people claiming Universal Credit.
- We published research into the drivers of financial hardship faced by disabled people and their experiences of the social security system.
- We published our mid-year and end of year statistics.
- We commissioned independent evaluations of our UK wide Income Maximisation programme and Pathways to Advice and Cash Scotland programme.

Hunger in the UK

In 2023, we published our [Hunger in the UK](#) research, our most in-depth study to date on the scale and drivers of hunger across the UK. This found that one in seven (14%) of people in the UK had faced hunger – an estimated 11.3 million people. The research uncovered the scale of hunger across the UK, the groups most affected and the underlying drivers trapping so many people in severe hardship.

This landmark research was also the first time we'd been able to dive more deeply into the experience of hunger in the different nations and regions of the UK, with reports on Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. We encourage you to read the detailed findings of our UK report, along with reports on Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales.

Our research underpinned a major programme of policy development. We identified eight 'building blocks' – changes to policy across eight key areas that would enable us to end the need for food banks. These were published in a series of briefings in February 2024. We know what's pushing people to food banks, so we know the building blocks needed to end hunger for good.

To end the need for food banks, we need to make sure that:

1. We have a **supportive social security system**, which ensures everyone can afford the essentials.
2. Everyone can get the right support at the right time, especially when things are hard. We can do this with **easy access to advice and support on money matters** and **readily available mental health and trauma-informed support**.
3. People are supported in a way that reflects the reality of their lives, especially if they're facing higher costs and barriers. We can do this with **dignified support for disabled people and people with health conditions**, and **greater support and value for care and caring**.
4. Everyone has the security we all need to access opportunities and have hope for the future. We can do this with **decent, secure and rewarding work, safe secure and affordable housing**, and **strong and inclusive communities**.

Surveys of people claiming Universal Credit

In September 2023, we published the findings of [our YouGov survey](#) of people claiming Universal Credit. This revealed the devastating consequences of the inadequacy of Universal Credit, with millions of families across the country facing severe financial hardship – including working households and disabled people.

In January 2024, we commissioned YouGov to carry out a [second survey](#) – exploring the financial situation of people claiming Universal Credit, and their experiences over winter. More than half (55%) of those claiming Universal Credit had run out of food in the previous month and couldn't afford to buy more, while 780,000 people (12%) claiming Universal Credit had been forced to use a food bank in the previous month (Dec 23/Jan 24).

Disability and Financial Hardship

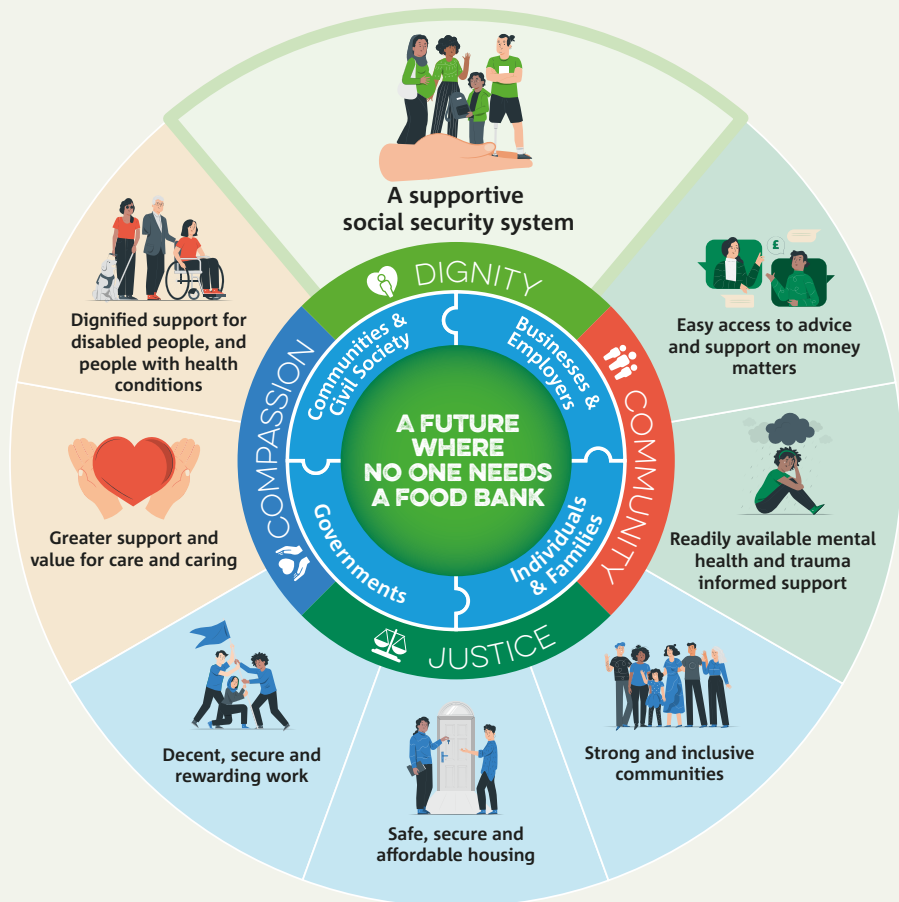
We commissioned the Scottish Centre for Social Research to conduct a study to understand the drivers of hunger among disabled people and the reasons behind the significant overrepresentation of disabled people referred to food banks. We specifically wanted to explore if the new Adult Disability Payment in Scotland, replacing the

Personal Independent Payment (PIP), was making a positive difference. [Our Disability and Financial Hardship \(2023\) report](#), published in October 2023, proposes evidence-based policy changes to help bring about a more compassionate, person-centred, and fairer disability benefits system that prevents disabled people from falling into financial hardship and needing to turn to a food bank.

All-Island Social Security Network - Ireland

We joined the steering group for the All-Island Social Security Network, a network bringing together researchers to imagine a new future for social security on the island of Ireland. It brings together researchers from academia and civil society to examine, understand, map out, explore, disseminate, consider, share and promote knowledge and understanding about the social security system in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The first event in December, [Social Security on the Island of Ireland: Challenges and Opportunities](#), featured a presentation from the Trussell Trust's Director of Policy, Research and Impact.



Read more about our [Building Blocks strategy](#).

POLICY INFLUENCING

Using our voice to campaign for change

From April 2023 to March 2024:

- 110 mentions of the Trussell Trust were made in the House of Commons.
- 450 mentions of food banks were made in the House of Commons.
- 13 Peers and 34 MPs from across the political spectrum supported the extension of the Household Support Fund.
- The Trussell trust met with representatives of eight political parties.
- In May 2023, we submitted written evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee’s Cost of Living Support Payments inquiry, and – in June 2023 – were called to give oral evidence on the design, delivery, success and adequacy of Department for Work and Pensions cost of living payments. [The Trussell Trust’s evidence](#) was cited throughout the [committee’s report](#).

- In partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, we submitted written evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee: Benefit Levels in the UK inquiry, on the adequacy of social security in the UK, the benefit system rules which pull people deeper into poverty, and recommendations for a more logical approach, underpinned by an Essentials Guarantee. [The committee’s final report](#) notes show that our Essentials Guarantee recommendation received widespread support in written and oral evidence.
- We responded to the Department for Work and Pensions consultation on Work Capability Assessment (WCA) reforms, which would increase job-seeking requirements and reduce eligibility for additional financial support for disabled and sick people. Along with others, our response helped shape the WCA consultation outcome, which rowed back from some of the changes to eligibility for support. We are building on this by developing partnerships to develop proposals for improvements to disability benefits and advocate for them in the coming year.
- The UK government responded to our on-going policy advocacy by making some changes in the Chancellor’s Spring Budget.

This included a six-month extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) and a reduction in the burden of some debt deductions through extending the repayment period for budgeting advances. In his speech, the Chancellor mentioned the Trussell Trust’s role in achieving these changes.

- The Chancellor announced a six-month extension of HSF support, mentioning responding to calls from the Trussell Trust in his Budget speech. The burden of debt deductions from benefits was also reduced through extending the repayment period of budgeting advances.
- In June 2023, the Scottish Government became the first in the UK to form a plan to end the need for food banks – as called for by the Trussell Trust. Both the Scottish and Welsh governments supported our call for an Essentials Guarantee to be introduced into the UK social security system
- The launch of our regional Hunger in the UK report, Hunger in Northern Ireland, provided plenty of opportunities for conversation with elected representatives at Stormont.
- Together with the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN), we co/hosted our second Cash First Futures Conference in Scotland

We have also contributed to:



- The Poverty Strategy Commission.
- The Scottish Government’s steering group on ending the need for food banks.
- The Scottish Welfare Fund Review.
- The Scottish Parliament’s Social Justice committee on Lone Parents and the Cost of Living.
- The Poverty Alliance Annual Conference.
- The Scottish First Minister’s Anti-Poverty Conference.
- The Scottish Labour Conference.
- The Coalition of Christian Voices Against Poverty.

The Poverty Strategy Commission

The Poverty Strategy Commission was established by Baroness Philippa Stroud in 2023. Bringing together experts and thinkers from across the political spectrum, it aims to develop consensus around a strategy for tackling poverty in the UK – and includes both the Trussell Trust’s Chief Executive Officer and its Director of Policy, Research and Impact.

The Trussell Trust has also worked closely with the Commission to facilitate the involvement of lived experience experts in its work.

The Commission will publish its final report in 2024, and has already forged a consensus amongst its diverse membership about the central importance of tackling deep poverty, including through measures such as a ‘benefit floor’ to improve the adequacy of social security. Many of Trussell’s other priorities and proposals are also likely to be reflected in the Commission’s recommendations, giving them new weight and reach within policy and political audiences.

A Cash First Futures Conference: Ending the need for charitable food aid in Scotland together.

In March 2023, the Trussell Trust and Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) hosted a first-of-its-kind in-person conference in Glasgow. The conference brought together, under one roof, some of the people and frontline teams most avidly anticipating the development of a Cash First⁶ plan that would end the need for charitable food aid in Scotland.

The conference came about as a result of our campaign at the 2021 Scottish parliamentary elections, that secured a commitment from the Scottish Government to publish a plan to end the need for food banks – becoming the first government in the UK, or anywhere in the world, to do this. The plan was published on 5 June 2023, with a cash-first approach to food insecurity being central to the plan.

In March 2024, the Trussell Trust and Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) hosted the second Cash First Futures Communities conference.

Household Support Fund (HSF)

The Trussell Trust, alongside other charities, campaigners and local authorities, campaigned intensively prior to the 2024 spring budget, to persuade the Chancellor of the Exchequer to extend investment in the Household Support Fund (HSF) beyond its planned closure at the end of the financial year.

Our collective action resulted in a six-month extension to HSF, which will help to fund support for low-income families facing hardship, hunger, or unexpected costs to get the help they need in their communities. Although welcome, the extension only provides a temporary fix, and we continue to advocate for a long-term approach to local crisis support, with multi-year funding to give certainty to local authorities and other local organisations and allow them to plan and sustain services.



LOCAL POLICY PARTNERSHIPS

Influencing decision-makers to make changes to policy and practice

From April 2023 to March 2024, we have supported:



- Ending Destitution Locally and Network Research Community projects.
- The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) pilot improvements in Orkney.
- Eight Cash First partnership pilots across Scotland.
- Stand up to Poverty Event in Fermanagh.
- The Balmoral Show 2023.
- Love Your Food 2024.

Ending Destitution Locally and Network Research Community projects

These projects involved providing direct and bespoke support to individual or small groups of food banks to help them deliver their own policy research and policy influencing work at a local level. Support was delivered in a tailored way dependent on each food bank's needs, capacity and context – and ranged from providing one-off briefings or advice to working together over time to deliver on a particular objective.

One food bank was supported with the design and delivery of a survey of people referred to the food bank. They hope to use the results to influence local decision-makers around the support provided for different demographic groups in the area. We also worked with a group of food banks from across a combined authority area over several months to design a set of policy principles for Local Crisis Support, and to plan influencing activity to call for these principles. In total, 38 food banks received bespoke support through the projects in 2023/2024.

Scottish Welfare Fund

In partnership with the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), we have been piloting improvements to the delivery of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) on Orkney. The SWF supports low-income households facing hardship, hunger, or unexpected costs. The pilot has created new partnerships, with delivery being scaled up to more areas across Scotland in 2024-25.

Securing funding for Cash First partnerships

We have been instrumental in securing the delivery of eight funded Cash First partnerships involving local authorities, health and social care partnerships, food banks, advice services and wider third sector organisations in Scotland. This is the first time these partnerships have been established and funded in the UK. Delivery started at the end of 2023-24 and is continuing into 2024-25.

Stand up to Poverty Event in Fermanagh

We organised an anti-poverty event in November 2023 in partnership with the Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network, other local charities and Enniskillen food bank. The event was covered extensively in the local press.

Balmoral Show 2023

For the third year in a row, we were represented at the Balmoral Show – Northern Ireland's largest agricultural exhibition, attracting 100,000 people through its doors. Our stall was based in the Northern Ireland Food and Drink Pavilion, from 10 to 13 May 2023. Food and drink is a £5.4 billion industry in Northern Ireland and the region's largest sector – but, despite this success, one in six people in Northern Ireland face hunger due to a lack of money. Food bank volunteers carried the message to visitors to the pavilion that our social security system should support anyone in need of help, but right now it's not providing enough income to cover the cost of life's essentials, with most people at food banks in receipt of Universal Credit.

Love Your Food 2024

In March 2024, we represented the 23 food banks that are part of the Trussell Trust Network in Northern Ireland at the Love Your Food Show. Over three days, our volunteers spoke with hundreds of people attending the show, raising awareness about the vital work of food banks in local communities, and our wider vision of ending the need for emergency food in Northern Ireland. It was an amazing opportunity to encourage people to support their local food bank by donating food and volunteering, as well as sharing information about our Guarantee our Essentials campaign.





ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS AND INFLUENCE

To achieve our vision to the end for food banks it is vital that we raise awareness of who uses food banks and the drivers of food bank need, including the role of the social security system, to increase our collective will for action in supporting positive and sustainable solutions for change.

As in previous years, we have worked to win hearts and minds through a variety of communications and high-profile activity locally and nationally. Each year we conduct research among the general public with our partner YouGov to understand how our efforts are working. Our 2023-24 public attitudes survey shows that:

- 87% think the benefits system should ensure that everyone in the UK can afford the essentials, consistent with 2022-23 (88%) and up from 82% in 2021-22.
- 79% think poverty is a big problem in the UK, similar to 2022-23 (80%).

- 79% think food banks should not be needed in the UK, up slightly from 77% in 2022-23 and 73% in 2021-22 and 2019-20.
- 78% agree that hunger in the UK can be ended, up slightly from 76% in 2022-23 and 73% in 2021-22.
- 67% say they would support an Essentials Guarantee when given a description of the suggested policy change.
- 66% of the public think that hunger is a big problem in the UK, up from 61% in 2019.

Influencers

In recent years, the Trussell Trust has attracted many celebrities and influencers to support campaigns raising awareness and funds for people facing hardship. In 2023/24, we were fortunate to work with over 50 high-profile figures from sport, social media, TV, film, and music. This included collaborations with Ed Sheeran, Stanley Tucci, Charlotte Ritchie, Levi Roots, Stephen Fry, Brian Cox, Dame Arlene Phillips, Dame Emma Thompson, AJ Odudu, Aisling Bea, Jools Holland, continued support from Trussell Trust founding Ambassadors, Mark and Roxanne Hoyle (aka LadBaby), and many more.

We also announced musician and Squeeze frontman, Glenn Tilbrook, as our Ambassador in our flagship Ambassador programme. Glenn and the band have supported us for many years, regularly raising funds, food and awareness on their UK tours, supporting food banks in our network.

In January 2024, our high-profile supporters and Ambassadors signed an open letter to political leaders addressing the growing levels of poverty in the UK and directing the public to sign our Guarantee our Essentials petition. Their support led to coverage in 95 media titles with a media audience reach of 353 million, helping us secure more than 150,000 petition signatures.

Using their voice, reach and platform, our Ambassadors, influencers and celebrity supporters have helped us in many ways – from shining a light on our latest stats on food bank use, to signing our ‘Guarantee our Essentials’ petition, or taking part in our carol service. Their support is hugely appreciated.

Workshops

As part of our strategic project aimed at shifting the cultural narrative, staff delivered two workshops that brought together UK journalists with people who have experienced poverty to explore the challenges and constraints each group faces when sharing stories of lived experience in the media. The workshops, which included eight lived experience partners and seven journalists from outlets such as the BBC, the Guardian, the Independent and the Mirror, provided an opportunity to collaborate, identify new ways of working and input into guidelines for how the media should work with people who have lived experience of poverty.

A week of sharing stories online

To help build a deeper understanding about what drives people to food banks, and increase empathy, we delivered a week of digital activity. The digital content took a people-focused, stories-first approach, and was underpinned by data from our Hunger in the UK research. This was driven through three videos from people with lived experience – featuring single mum Lowri, full-time carer Siobhan and Steve, who has a disability. They each recorded a voiceover telling their story, with actors bringing their story to life, to protect their identity. The videos were shared across Trussell Trust’s digital channels, plus our network of food banks, influencers and partners.

We received over 800,000 impressions in organic social media content (primarily on our main target channel, Instagram), attaining 832,772 impressions and 14,313 engagements in total across social media channels. Most comments we received were of a positive sentiment and in support for the people in the stories. Our website’s landing page received a good number of views (12,231) and we saw a high percentage (70%) of people watching through to the end. In paid ads on Meta, we exceeded our forecasts (of 4 million impressions and 3 million video views) and in fact saw 20 million impressions, 13 million video views and an average watchthrough rate of 53% overall. Our best performing video on Meta had a watchthrough rate of 70% – a high attainment for social media.

Social media and media



Between April 2023 and March 2024:

- Across our social media channels, our content has been seen over 230 million times.
- We had over 250,000 social media followers, up from around 230,000 the previous year.
- We have been mentioned in UK media over 19,000 times, compared to 33,488 in 2022/23. A large number of our mentions in 2022/23 came from coverage of Jason Manford and Trussell Trust founding Ambassadors Mark and Roxanne Hoyle’s (aka LadBaby) Christmas singles, and we did not have an opportunity like that in 2023/24.

Over the last year, our focus has been more on quality and depth of coverage, and as result we have seen an increase in the proportion of:

- Articles including spokesperson quotes (14%, compared to 12% in 2022-23).
- Mentions that are high impact? (3.9%, compared to 3.3% in 2022-23).
- Key message mentions (7.2%, compared to 3.3% in 2022-23).

ORGANISING PROGRAMME

Building a society where none of us needs a food bank, because none of us will allow it

Our Organising Programme contributes to the Trussell Trust vision of creating a future where no one needs a food bank by building power in communities to address local structural issues causing poverty. The programme provides a package of grant funding, training, and ongoing support for food banks to recruit Local Organisers, who build power with food bank clients and others with lived experience of destitution, as well as campaigning for change on local issues driving poverty and food bank use. By the end of March 2024, around 100 food banks were part of our organising programme, and we awarded £2.8 million in grant funding, to:

- Identify and develop leaders in a community.
- Bring people together to act collectively, take action and create change.
- Build collective power.
- Empower people to use their voice.

Food banks have delivered around 400 organising and local influence activities covering a range of themes aligned to our building blocks:



- Financial support
- Council tax
- School costs
- Housing and homelessness
- Mental health
- Poverty
- Migrant and asylum seeker communities
- Wages and employment
- Transport
- Community hubs
- Food waste amnesty
- Voter registration

Almost all our food banks involved in the programme employ or are looking to employ or collaborate with a local organiser to bring their communities together and campaign for change.

Lives changed: Devizes and District Foodbank

Alex is the local organiser at Devizes and District Foodbank, which has a significant boating community in the local area. Alex helped to win a change in UK policy for boaters after a year-long campaign – working together with a coalition of campaigners, including those with lived experience of the issue.

Alex started by looking at food bank usage data, and noticed that the food bank had begun to see an increase in the number of boaters across Wiltshire needing to access food parcels in Winter 2022 – when energy costs skyrocketed.

After carrying out a series of one-to-ones with boaters turning to the food bank for support, Alex recognised that they were excluded from the Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme.

Alex worked to support local boaters to speak out and call for action, including drawing media attention to the issue and meeting with the local MP at a marina, to show the impact of the lack of cost of living support on people living off grid, or who are part of the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) community.

After the meeting, their MP wrote to the Government's Energy Department, reinforcing campaigners' calls for the Government to implement a new support scheme. As a result, a scheme for some boaters was announced in August 2023, with £600 vouchers being distributed. Some boaters remain excluded, however, so the campaign continues.

Lives changed: Rhondda Cynon Taff food banks

As local organiser for Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT), Natalie works across four food banks: Rhondda, Pontypridd, Taff Ely and Merthyr Cynon. Through one-to-one conversations, Natalie spent time with people with lived experience of using food banks locally, to understand what issues are affecting them, their values and motivations, what can be done to address issues being faced and what they might be willing to do.

The food banks are located near a University of South Wales campus, and what emerged from these conversations is that many of the people that Natalie spoke to are international students and/or their dependents, who have strict visa conditions. The food banks' locations are near a University of South Wales campus.

Natalie identified key gaps in support, particularly for those families and individuals unable to access benefits due to their immigration status (No Recourse to Public Funds - NRPF). Working with current and former university students, Natalie learned that they're often apprehensive to ask for help for fear of being deported if they aren't meeting their visa conditions.

As a result, Natalie has developed a local campaign strategy to address the local issues related to No Recourse to Public Funds. This includes engaging with her local authority, asking them to extend free school meals and the pupil development grant to children with NRPF.

Natalie has also already directly engaged with Mark Drakeford, First Minister of Wales, to advocate for a system that is fair for everyone, and secured support for the campaign from the Children's Commissioner of Wales.





Working together with the sector for social security reform

The social security system should provide support to any of us facing tough times, but right now Universal Credit is not enough to cover the cost of life's essentials such as food, household bills and travel costs – with around five in six low-income households who receive Universal Credit having to go without.

That's why we're working with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) to call for an Essentials Guarantee within Universal Credit – to ensure everyone has a protected, set minimum amount of support to afford the essentials.

Campaign progress (April 2023 to March 2024)

- More than 150,000 people across the UK signed our petition calling for an Essentials Guarantee. In February 2024 we, along with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), handed in the petition to the leaders of UK political parties.
- 132 organisations within the anti-poverty and wider charity sector publicly endorsed the Essentials Guarantee. Many of these organisations are now regularly calling for the Essentials Guarantee in their own advocacy work.

- 30 health bodies and health focused-organisations – including the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Nursing, the Association of Medical Royal Colleges, the Royal College of Physicians and the NHS Confederation – added their names to a joint letter urging the Prime Minister to back an Essentials Guarantee. This action was covered in the Daily Mirror, Politico's London Playbook, and was the subject of an opinion piece in the Guardian.
- We secured the signatures of more than a dozen celebrities – including Ed Sheeran, Jodie Whittaker and Liam Gallagher – to an [open letter](#) demanding politicians address the growing levels of poverty in the UK and backing the call for an Essentials Guarantee. The letter was covered in [the Express](#) and [the Mirror](#), and some of the famous signatories shared that they had signed it on social media, encouraging their followers to show their support too via signing our campaign petition.
- Many faith-based charities, including a number of Christian organisations, are supporting the Essentials Guarantee, including Baptists Together, The Joint Public Issues Team, The Methodist Church, and The United Reformed Church.
- Over 6,800 emails about the Essentials Guarantee have been sent to MPs by food banks in the Trussell Trust network and supporters.

Building cross-party consensus for an Essentials Guarantee

- A range of MPs and Peers from across all of the major political parties have now publicly endorsed the policy and advocated for it in Parliament through debates, written and oral questions and speaking engagements. The campaign has been supported by Parliamentarians across a wide range of political parties, including Labour (such as [Sir Stephen Timms MP](#), [Baroness Lister](#), [Debbie Abrahams MP](#), [Beth Winter MP](#) and [Rachael Maskell MP](#)), Liberal Democrats ([Baroness Thornhill](#), [Christine Jardine MP](#)), SNP (such as [David Linden MP](#) and [Chris Stephens MP](#)), Green Party ([Baroness Bennett](#)) and DUP ([Jim Shannon MP](#)). Bishops, including the [Bishop of Durham](#) and the [Lord Bishop of Manchester](#) have also been promoting it. Conservative MPs such as Nigel Mills, who sits on the cross-party Work and Pensions Committee, have indicated strong support, and Stephen Crabb MP spoke at our launch event.
- In total, 20 MPs and seven Peers have spoken in Parliament in support of our Essentials Guarantee proposal.
- The cross-party Work and Pensions Committee called for a new approach to setting benefit levels, based on people's real living costs, in its report on benefit levels in the UK. Its recommendation for an 'upratings guarantee' shared many of the principles of an Essentials Guarantee, and our proposal was highlighted throughout the report.
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Poverty adopted the Essentials Guarantee as a key recommendation in its [report on the \(in\) adequacy of social security](#).
- Conservative Peer, Baroness Stroud, has warmly welcomed the Essentials Guarantee, and at a recent event expressed support for its proposal of a protected minimum level of support, in line with her view that no one should be in deep poverty.
- The Scottish Government announced support for the Essentials Guarantee in its Programme for Government, calling on the UK Government to use their reserved powers to implement it.
- The Welsh Government announced its support for the Essentials Guarantee in response to calls by the Senedd Cross-Party Group on Poverty.
- Northern Ireland parties at Westminster have responded positively to the Essentials Guarantee.
- We hosted a Parliamentary reception, attended by 75 Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum, featuring a Guarantee our Essentials station for attendees to learn more about the campaign. Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, Liz Kendall MP, spoke at the event, stressing Labour's commitment to tackle the root causes of poverty so that no one needs to rely on emergency food aid.
- Several local authorities have either already backed the Essentials Guarantee or expressed interest in doing so.
- 99% of MPs (644 of 650 MPs) across the Commons have received at least one email about the proposal, including 99% of Conservative MPs and 98% of Labour MPs.
- More than 100 food banks (over 70% of food banks involved in the organising programme) took part in days of action, holding street stalls or community events to talk to local people about the campaign. In four key cities (Leeds, Belfast, Glasgow and Cardiff) there were also billboards to bolster the days of action. A number of the events were covered by local media and attended by local politicians.

Until we get an Essentials Guarantee, let's stand with food banks

Food banks across the UK are doing all they can to support their communities, but low levels of Universal Credit are pushing more and more people to their doors. We know the solution is for our social security system to be fit for purpose. So while we work together to make sure Universal Credit protects people from going without the essentials, we stand with our food banks who are doing everything they can to support people on the lowest incomes in their communities.



CHRIS AND SHANNON'S WEEK:

WEEKLY SHOP.....	£70
ENERGY.....	£44
WATER.....	£7
PHONE AND INTERNET.....	£11
CAR.....	£33
SHOES.....	£35
TOTAL.....	£200

BASIC RATE OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT..... £134

IT DOESN'T ADD UP.

is in calling on the government to guarantee essentials at trusselltrust.org/essentials





We ensure that people with direct experience of financial hardship have opportunities to shape, lead and influence how we end the need for food banks. That's why we build relationships with people with lived experience of financial hardship, and work alongside them as partners – unlocking new ways of thinking, generating ideas to drive change together and seeking shared solutions. Over the past year (April 2023 to March 2024), we've worked collaboratively on numerous projects, embedding lived experience knowledge across the charity. Overall, we have worked in partnership with around 150 people with lived experience of financial hardship.

Advisory groups

We worked with young adults (aged 16 to 24) from often over-looked demographics (care leavers, single parents, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, LGBTQ+ and disabled people) to run round tables, listening to their experiences and ideas for change.

Transforming Together

Our Transforming Together team is an anti-poverty group of 16 people with a diverse range of lived experiences who meet monthly to inform and challenge our work.

"As a 16-year-old, I shouldn't have to worry about the basics"
– Round table participant

"Break down stigma and stereotyping through positive representation – and allow for people with lived experience to educate" – Round table participant

"Continually empowering community and young people is key" – Round table participant

External collaboration

- We connected 40 lived experience partners with the Poverty Strategy Commission, helping them to shape their policy solutions.
- The Help through Hardship (HtH) partnership, between the Trussell Trust, Citizens Advice and Mind, is committed to working with people who have had lived experience of financial hardship to shape the programme of activity. Insights, perspectives and recommendations from two lived experience panels have shaped the development of the HtH helpline and other projects within the programme. Two panels were established:

- One, hosted by the Trussell Trust and Citizens Advice, is made up of helpline advisers with their own lived experience of financial hardship.
- The other, hosted by Mind, is made up of people who have lived experience of financial hardship and of mental health problems.
- We engaged with five young people from the Abergele Youth Shed, with links to their local food bank, on a weekend residential to learn more about what young people need in terms of financial education.

Digital development

- Lived experience partners are helping to shape development of the Trussell Trust website through in-depth interviews involving interactive tasks.
- 12 young people from our Stand for Change project met our social media and copywriting managers, to support the development of content for our website and social channels.

Policy, public affairs and research

- We developed a Policy Advocates programme, giving training and peer support to 13 lived experience partners, who advocate alongside us at party conferences and Parliamentary events.
- 40 people with lived experience are working closely with the research teams to shape the scope and focus of our policy research project Cost of Destitution, exploring the impacts of 'deep poverty' at an individual, societal, and economic level.
- For our Hunger in the UK project, lived experience partners joined policy development workshops in food banks around the UK.
- Young people from low-income families helped shape a digital assembly and teachers' pack for secondary schools, aiming to have open conversations and reduce stigma.
- We ensured the voices of our youth participation group, Stand for Change: Young People Against Poverty, were enshrined in our [Youth Perceptions of Poverty in the UK report](#), co-created with Ipsos. Young people used their lived experience of financial hardship to guide the entire research project, which resulted in over 1,000 young people aged 11 to 17 taking part in a survey and qualitative interviews.

Strategic influence and brand evolution

- We set up a Strategic Advisory Group of lived experience partners, to help inform our next strategic plan.
- A panel of lived experience partners were also part of the selection process for the new Chair of the Trussell Trust.

"The training sessions were really insightful and empowering; it actually showcased invaluable tools and strategies for effective advocacy in today's complex policy landscape. I was particularly intrigued by the practical guidance and real-world examples, and this equipped me with the skills and confidence needed to drive meaningful change and influence policy decisions. I'm looking forward to making the most of them." – Chika, Policy Advocate

"I'm passionate about making a difference, making a change for the better so our children don't have to deal with the kind of stuff I've had to" – Andrew, Policy Advocate

"I want to be a policy advocate because I like challenging the Government's policies to make changes to make things inclusive for everybody. I want to see changes that will benefit the society that we live in so people can like happy, fulfilled, and peaceful lives." – Nikki, Policy Advocate

"Since living through needing a food bank and coming out the other side I am so empowered to tell my story to anyone that will listen" – Amie, Policy Advocate



Churches are at the heart of our work to provide emergency food and support to people facing hardship across the UK. Many churches support or run food banks in our network, generously providing venues, volunteers, leadership, donations and more. They are also vital to our campaign to end the need for food banks in the UK. The Church Engagement team supports food banks to connect with churches as well as reaching out to Christians generally to raise awareness of the work and vision of the Trussell Trust.

Between April 2023 and March 2024:

- More than 300 food banks in our network are based in a church.
- We developed and launched our Church Ambassador toolkit in partnership with a Christian Lived Experience Panel (who share their experience of being part of a church community when experiencing financial hardship) and Jubilee Plus (a charity working with churches to combat poverty and champion healthy living initiatives).
- 70 Church Ambassador volunteers were signed up, and we distributed ambassador packs to over 2,000 people on our mailing list.
- The Bishop of Manchester was a spokesperson for the Trussell Trust and chaired the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on ending the need for food banks.

- The Archbishop of York posed key questions in the House of Lords.
 - We shared briefings and End of Year Statistics with Bishops.
- At the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, one of our partners hosted:
- Two round tables of food bank leaders, church leaders and MPs
 - A seminar with a panel, including MPs and lived experience partners and church leaders on 'Where do we go from here? A conversation about the role of churches in responding to the cost of living crisis.'
 - We developed seasonal resources for festival periods such as Harvest and Lent. Our Lent resource, A Shared Journey, was accessed by more than 1,200 people.

Events

We attended a range of key events including:

- Big Church Festival
- Greenbelt festival
- Guarantee our Essentials round table with Bishops and Church leaders
- National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast
- Conservative Party prayer breakfast
- Dignity conference
- Gather Movement Summit Sheffield
- Gather Movement Summit London
- Churchworks conference
- New Wine festival

Carol concert

Around 550 guests attended our second carol concert in London's Southwark Cathedral, including supporters, food bank representatives, lived experiences partners, influencers, corporate partners, policy makers and major donors. The event built understanding and empathy among guests and invited action towards the Guarantee our Essentials campaign by ensuring that the messaging of 'everyone should be able to afford the essentials' came through in the talks.

Partnerships



We partnered with a range of organisations including:

- Jubilee+
- Churchworks
- Gather Movement
- Lets End Poverty coalition (including Methodist, URC and Baptist churches, Christians Against Poverty and Unison)
- Act on Poverty coalition (Christian Aid, CAFOD, Church Action on Poverty)
- Lambeth/Church of England Policy Team
- New Wine
- Big Church Festival
- Greenbelt
- Methodist Church of Ireland
- Diocese of Bath and Wells
- Churches Together in England
- Evangelical Alliance (Northern Ireland)



THANK YOU

Food banks in our network are there to provide compassionate, practical support to everyone who comes through their doors. But this kind of support should not be needed. Everyone should have enough to afford the essentials.

We know that there is a future without the need for food banks in the UK, but we cannot reach it without the support of people like you. Your support is enabling food banks to provide vital services and helping us to consign food banks to the history books for good.

Thank you so much.

APPENDIX

¹ The number of financial and non-financial supporters is not mutually exclusive, with a small proportion of supporters (around 15,000) being both financial and non-financial supporters.

² Trussell Trust End of Year Stats 2024.

³ Trussell Trust Hunger in the UK report 2023.

⁴ Missing out 2024: £23 billion of support is unclaimed each year.

⁵ A count of the total number of answered calls both inbound and outbound. Note: outbound 'answered' calls will include calls answered by a voicemail facility.

⁶ The term 'cash first' refers to food insecurity responses made by a range of different actors at local, national and UK level. Its aim is to ensure that, whenever possible, everyone has enough money to afford food and other essentials.

⁷ Pieces of content that are in publications which reach a large audience or where we are the focus.



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