

A moment to pause, reflect and refocus.



We must be one of the few organisations that are pleased when we see a decrease in 'customers'. At the end of 2025, that is what we are happy to announce. While the full data will be released in our 2026 Annual Report, we can see a decrease of approximately 16% this year. We can allow ourselves a moment to celebrate this statistic. This truly is good news.

This 16% has taken a lot of work to achieve. It does not mean that people are finding the economic situation better. It does not mean fewer people are struggling. It does not mean we have less work to do. In many ways, we are busier than we have ever been; your support is more vital than ever. The work that is needed to help clients with debt, benefit issues, utility costs and budgeting is extensive. Our Advice & Support Work is busier than ever. However because of all of these efforts, the average number of visits made to Exeter Foodbank by clients this year stands at 2.39. Most people come in a couple of times for emergency food while we give signposting and support to find a way forward. That is the aim of foodbanks across the country.

The work of Exeter Foodbank is so multi-faceted and complicated that it is difficult to explain! To begin some sort of explanation, we would probably say that in 2025 we have received donations from 127 supermarkets, churches, schools and community groups. We have taken referrals from 140 agencies. Our 170 volunteers have shaken buckets, taken donations at shops, made cups of tea for clients, sorted and given food - and they have listened to some truly heartbreaking stories.

Sadly, we have seen an increase in the number of clients who have no place to call 'home' and live in temporary accommodation. Life is difficult. We have also noticed a dramatic increase in the number of issues that our clients are facing by the time that they reach our door.

One thing that was very evident on a collection day at a local supermarket recently was that people really do appreciate the situation, the complexity, the hardship and they support what we are trying to do. Their support was tangible. It was humbling and we are so grateful. We saw one lady donate 10 of every item on our list. Another man, who had been a previous client, donated more than 40 tins of food.

This year we plan to press ahead and develop our work. We do need both food donations to give to households and financial donations to help us sustain our vital work. To everyone who helps us in any way; thank you. Your support for this life-changing work is essential.

We wish you a happy and healthy 2026.

A job well done!

We were very sad to hear that our wonderful Operations Manager, Teresa, will be leaving Exeter Foodbank in December as she takes on a new role in a charity which is nearer to home. When you walk in to our venues you will find them well organised with a team of volunteers who are happy and know their roles; Teresa has done a brilliant job, especially as it involved setting up our new venue in Cowick Street and overseeing such a large amount of change. Teresa goes with our love and very best wishes, and we asked her to share a few thoughts on her time with us.

“Working at the food bank has been even better than I expected. I love that every day is different, you never know who is going to walk through the door or how the day will unfold. I also love the team that I work with, they come from diverse backgrounds and bring varied life experiences, yet they unite with one purpose: to give our clients the very best service and support.

This might sound really cliché, but it’s the people that have inspired me the most. This is the people that use the foodbank, the volunteers and the people of Exeter. There is so much sadness and negativity in the world, but in the food bank you see empathy, compassion, kindness and love. You see a community coming together to lift one another up and care for people when they are quite possibly at their lowest.

Volunteers go above and beyond, the public always show up when we put out an urgent appeal, and the people that access the food bank are thoughtful, not wanting to take too much as they want to make sure there is enough food for the next person or they want to volunteer to give back. There is so much good in the world—when you step into the food bank, you see it shining through in every act of generosity, every shared smile, and every moment of community spirit.

I have seen clients come through the door in tears, worried about feeding their children or themselves, and then watched them leave with bags of food, a smile on their face and a huge weight lifted. This is what gets me out of bed every morning.”



Teresa (right) receives a donation made to Exeter Foodbank

“My partner came in last time. Its my first time. I was made a fantastic cup of tea. I broke when I was given food for my dogs, they are my life. The staff are absolutely fantastic. The experience was so calm. Angels. xxx”

“With rising food prices, if it wasn’t for my local foodbank.. I would starve”

Two extracts from our ‘Tell your story’ book in Cowick Street

HUGE thanks to Fraser

We do get a lot of donations - but this one was extra special. When it was Fraser’s birthday, he decided to ask his parents to donate the money that they would have spent on gifts to Exeter Foodbank.

His mum bought him into our centre to meet our team.

Thank you, Fraser, we were so grateful and inspired by your kindness!



Welcome to Karen as she joins our team!

In September we were delighted to welcome Karen as she joined our team in a part-time role as Advice Support Coordinator.

When people visit foodbank they are often facing multiple issues and Karen's role is to help them begin to find sources of support to work through their difficulties. Karen works closely with Liz, our worker from Citizens Advice Exeter - and with the other agencies who attend our sessions to support our clients.

We asked Karen a few questions about what brought her to join our team and how she sees the role.

Q: Why did you want to work for a foodbank / Exeter Foodbank?

A: I've worked in advice and support roles for many years. The Foodbank felt like a place where my skills could be used directly to support people in a practical way.

I wanted to join a service that supports and enables people to access support and to feel part of a supportive community.

Q: Have you learned anything already at Exeter Foodbank that you didn't know before?

A: I've learned more about the wide range of circumstances that lead people to using a foodbank, and how quickly things can change for individuals and families. I've also gained a better understanding of the many partnerships we have with other agencies.

Q: What would you like to achieve while you are at the Foodbank?

A: I'd like to continue improving access to advice, supporting people to navigate sometimes complex systems, and strengthening our links with local organisations so people can get the right support as early as possible. I'm also keen to support the user-led forum where lived experience can shape services.

Q: If you are not at work, what would you like to be doing?

A: I enjoy spending time with my children, swimming, listening to music, and being outdoors when I can. I also like reading, learning new things, and creative projects.



Look who we met at the shop..

Gary, our Chair of Trustees, recently attended the collection at Tesco.

Not only was the collection a success which brought in many much needed donations - but he also met Steve Race MP there. Steve is always keen to learn about our work and support Exeter Foodbank.

However, we forgot to ask why Steve had brought a life-size ketchup bottle and hot dog with him! I guess we will never know!

Thank you, Steve, for your support. We really appreciate it.

Food donations

Remarkably, our food donations are currently meeting demand. We are so grateful for your support and the generosity of the people of Exeter never ceases to amaze us.

The items on our December Priority List are below.

Thank you to all of you who donate. Please share this list for us.

Can you help by donating any of the following items?



Tinned Meat

Tinned Vegetables

Vegetarian Meals

Rice

Noodle Snacks

Rice Pudding

Small coffee

Tea bags (packs of 40)



Thank you very much for your support!

Please note: We do not need pasta, soup or baked beans

“Came in with my brother to get him a food parcel - he ain't doing well. Its such a relief to see him being helped by people and it restores my ailing faith in humanity somewhat. Folks here are good folks”

Extract from our 'Tell your story' book in Cowick Street

“A chuffin great bunch of folk and a good service, I was made to feel really welcome. Thank you”

Extract from our 'Tell your story' book in Cowick Street

Your financial donations.

We are often asked about financial donations and why we need money; it is true, we get a lot of food donated and we have over 150 volunteers who do a huge amount of hours with us to help the community.

To give an idea, we operate across four venues and have six part-time staff and two vans. Currently we have invested much of our resource into Advice Work and our partnership with Citizens Advice Exeter. We believe that the more we can help people with the causes of their financial issues, the less donated food that they will need.

Foodbanks now offer so much more than food. While ensuring that dinner is on the table for many households is our core service, the holistic nature of what we do continues to grow and be much needed.



EFB receives no statutory funding and relies on the generosity of local people to meet our ongoing running costs. You can help by visiting www.exeter.foodbank.org.uk to download a standing order form or set up regular giving online. Or contact us on 07818 226524 to request a form in the post.

- **By debit/credit card** at www.exeter.foodbank.org.uk

- **By sending cheques** (payable to Exeter Foodbank) to:
Exeter Foodbank, 174/175 Cowick Street, Exeter, EX41AA

- **By online bank transfer**

Sort Code: 08-92-99 Account No: 65314566





Tesco Collection

Over the last weekend of November our volunteers were present at Tesco Exe Vale to collect donations from shoppers. We were amazed at the kindness that we received.

In two and a half days, we received donations of 1296kg - that amounts to 96 crates full of food.

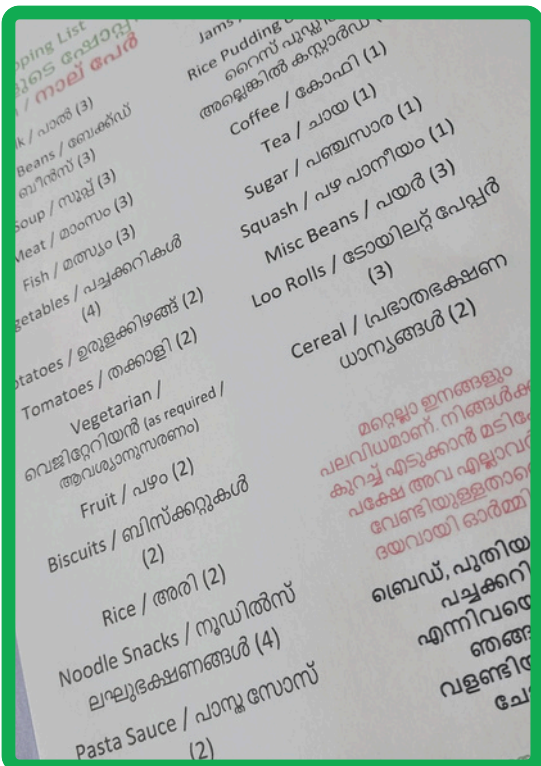
Our huge thanks to the Tesco staff, particularly Community Champion, Louise, who is seen in the photo here with Mark from Exeter Foodbank.

Two DCC Appeals

We have recently supported two initiatives by the team at Devon County Council Children's Services.

Thanks to your generosity, we have funded Christmas Dinners for approximately 125 care-experiend young people around the county. Many of these young people do not have family to share the festive season with, so this project does mean a lot to us. We are so grateful for your support.

Secondly, we have also contributed towards their Christmas Hamper Project. We were really amazed at the generosity of our donors. We recently asked for 250 selection boxes, and in 4 days we received more than 350 donations! Thank you. This gives us the confidence to take on new projects in the knowledge that Exeter really is behind us!



Welcome to you... all..

We were very grateful to one of our team who recently translated all of our shopping lists into the languages that are most commonly requested by support agencies across the city. Sometimes it can make a huge difference for our clients to see something familiar in a time of crisis and while this is a very small detail it can have a significant impact.

We are a charity that likes to develop and learn.

We do our very best to accommodate people who need help and this has included us making translated versions of our shopping lists and doing our best to ensure that halal options are available to clients.

The support of the Exeter community in editing this has been most appreciated. Thank you.



A special visit to Cowick Street

We were delighted to welcome The Lord Mayor of Exeter to our main Distribution Venue recently.

Our team were able to share some of our news, updates and our strategic plan for 2026-2028, and it was very affirming to have this time with our Lord Mayor who was so supportive and interested in our work.

Our shopping system hits the screens!

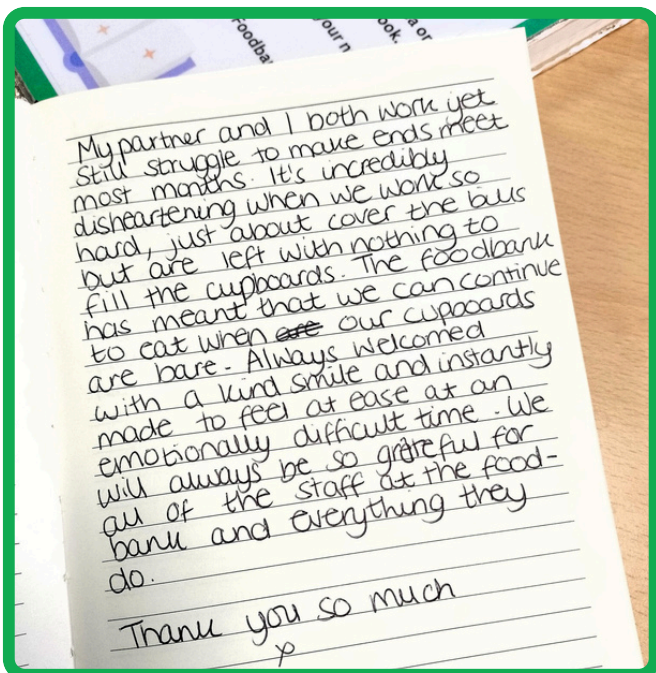
Okay, so it is not the 'big' screen or the 'silver' screen... and most people will not have the chance to see it!

However, we were really pleased recently when Trussell contacted us to talk about coming in to record an interview with us about how our 'Shopping System' works, so that this idea can be shared with other foodbanks in the UK network.

Back in 2021 we stopped giving foodbank 'parcels'. We felt that people should have choice and that coming to foodbank should be a more dignified experience.

Many people told us that this would never work - they told us that people would take far too much. The reality is quite different. People take what they need and want. They often leave special items (like a nice tin of biscuits or tub of chocolates) for 'some who might need it more', 'for someone with kids' or 'someone who deserves it'.

The short film is being made to show an example of 'dignity' in a foodbank. 'Dignity' is one of the Core Values of both Exeter Foodbank and Trussell.



The EFB Client Forum

At the end of November we held the first meeting of the Exeter Foodbank Client Forum. It is important to us that the voice of the clients is heard and reflected in all that we do. Nobody understands the needs of our 'customers' more than those with lived experience.

During the session we discussed a range of issues including things like the questions that are asked at referral, how welcoming our sessions are and whether there was any further advice and support that we could offer.

We will be holding these events quarterly and, as we get to know our forum members, we hope to include their suggestions to make every single aspect of our charity as helpful as we can for the service users.