

# FOOD BANK

## THE PRESSURE CONTINUES BEYOND WINTER FOOD SUPPORT IS ONLY PART OF THE STORY

The start of the year is often assumed to bring some relief after Christmas. For households already stretched by rising costs, low incomes and ongoing uncertainty, that pressure doesn't lift when the season changes. Energy costs remain high, budgets are still tight, and many people are carrying the effects of months of trying to make too little go far enough.

For many, this means trying to manage for as long as possible before reaching out for support. We continue to see people contacting us who have never needed help before. Around a third of those reaching out are new callers, and that figure hasn't shifted. It matters because it shows that need is not only continuing, but widening. More people across West Northumberland are reaching a point where they can no longer absorb the pressure on their own.

### TARGETED ENERGY SUPPORT

**264**  
HOUSEHOLDS  
SUPPORTED

#### WINTER WARMTH SCHEME

Through our Winter Warmth Scheme we supported 264 households, many accessing energy advice for the first time.

**55**  
HOUSEHOLDS  
PROVIDED WITH  
ADDITIONAL  
SUPPORT

#### ENERGY SUPPORT SCHEME

Through our Energy Support Scheme, we provided additional, targeted support to households most at risk, including energy vouchers, support to engage with suppliers, and solid fuel.

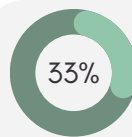
Our Winter Warmth Scheme, funded by Northern Gas Networks and delivered with the Centre for Sustainable Energy, enabled us to respond earlier to rising energy pressures.

Through this work, we identified those facing the greatest challenges, including people living in rural areas, those with disabilities, single parents and pensioners, and continue that support through our Energy Support Scheme.

For many, this came at a critical moment, when even small additional costs could tip an already fragile situation into crisis.

### UNDERSTANDING VULNERABILITY

The challenges people face are rarely isolated. They are shaped by income, health, location and access to support, and often make day-to-day life harder to manage.



ONE IN THREE CALLERS ARE  
REACHING OUT FOR SUPPORT  
FOR THE FIRST TIME

We continue to see high levels of vulnerability among single parents, people with disabilities or long-term health conditions, pensioners, and those experiencing isolation, particularly in rural areas where access to support is more limited.

For many, this means managing multiple pressures at once, often with limited support and few options available.



Panel discussion during the Northumberland evidence session of the UK Parliamentary Right to Food Commission

What we see locally is also shaping wider conversations about how poverty is understood and addressed. This quarter, our CEO, Sam Gilchrist, was invited to contribute evidence to the UK Parliamentary Right to Food Commission, bringing rural perspectives into a national conversation about food insecurity.

### SUPPORT IN PRACTICE



**2,757**  
CALLS FOR SUPPORT



**4,699**  
FOOD PARCELS DELIVERED



**622**  
ADULTS SUPPORTED



**384**  
CHILDREN SUPPORTED

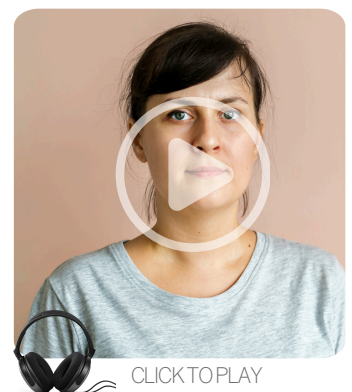


**12**  
HARDSHIP AWARDS



**20**  
HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORTED VIA  
OUTREACH

\*YTD DATA: OCTOBER 2025 - MARCH 2026



CLICK TO PLAY

Annie's experience reflects how quickly pressure can build. With reduced income, an unwell child and a broken boiler, her family faced a sudden loss of heating during winter, forcing them to rely on a single heated room while costs continued to rise. Through our Energy Support Scheme, we were able to provide practical support, advice and reassurance, helping ease immediate pressure while supporting the family to manage longer term.

# FOOD BANK

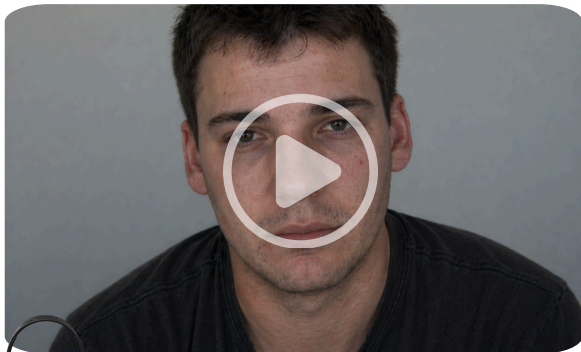
## WHEN SUPPORT NEEDS TO GO FURTHER

The support we provide often goes beyond a single issue. Many of the people we work with are facing multiple challenges at once, including housing instability, poor health, and barriers to accessing the support they need.

This is reflected in the range of people we are supporting, including those experiencing homelessness, individuals in treatment for physical or mental health, and people facing ongoing financial and personal pressures.

Responding to this requires more than immediate support. It means working alongside people over time, helping them navigate systems, access the right support, and begin to move forward. Jimmy's story shows how, through our helpline and outreach, our support is going further, helping people navigate systems and prevent situations from becoming more difficult

## NAVIGATING SUPPORT: JIMMY'S STORY



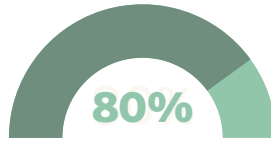
CLICK TO PLAY

Jimmy contacted us after a 90-day sanction to his Universal Credit left him with no income. What followed was not just emergency food provision, but ongoing support to navigate the appeals process, working alongside our outreach team to rebuild confidence and take action. The outcome was successful, with payments reinstated, but the impact of that support went beyond the financial, enabling Jimmy to feel able to engage with the system again.

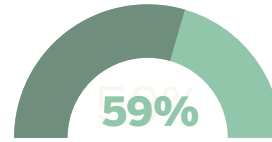
**90+**

HOURS OF VOLUNTEER TRAINING DELIVERED

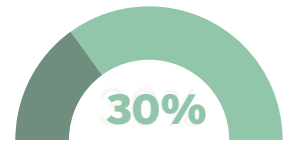
We continue to invest in training for our team. Recently, this has included work with organisations such as Papyrus and Escape, strengthening our ability to respond to people in crisis and support individuals and families facing a range of complex situations.



80% OF CALLERS ARE WORRIED ABOUT PAYING THEIR ENERGY BILLS



59% OF CALLERS ARE IN TREATMENT FOR THEIR MENTAL HEALTH



30% OF CALLERS LIVE IN RURAL OR ISOLATED AREAS

## HOW THIS WORK IS MADE POSSIBLE

The support we have been able to provide so far this year is made possible through long-standing partnerships and continued investment in our work.

This includes funding that enables early intervention, training that strengthens how we respond, and partnership working that allows for more joined-up support as people's situations become more complex.

Ongoing support from the community, through food and financial contributions, also plays a vital role, helping ensure we can continue to respond quickly and provide practical support where it is needed most.

Together, this support enables us not only to respond to immediate need, but to continue building the kind of support that helps people move forward.



Left: Donation from Channel 5 Forever Home production team Centre: Hexham Town Council visiting the food bank Right: Community support through the Waitrose Green Token Scheme

### POWERED BY THE COMMUNITY



**£131,752**  
FINANCIAL DONATIONS



**£34,098**  
FOOD DONATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY



**178**  
LOCAL BUSINESSES PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT



**656**  
LOCAL PEOPLE MAKING FINANCIAL DONATIONS



**15**  
GRANT GIVING TRUSTS

\*YTD DATA: OCTOBER 2025 - MARCH 2026

### OUR STRENGTH LIES IN THE COMMUNITY THAT SUSTAINS IT

None of this work happens in isolation. It's made possible by volunteers who give their time each week; individuals who add items to their shopping or make financial donations; local businesses who champion and support our work; funders who invest in early intervention; and partners who work alongside us to find lasting solutions. The strength of the food bank continues to lie in the community that sustains it.

Ways you can get involved:

- Follow us on social media to stay up to date with our work
- Donate food to keep our shelves stocked
- Donate funds to help us respond quickly and flexibly

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

SCAN ME!

