



Social Impact Report

2025



Meet Norma

“I have been enjoying FoodCycle community meals since the summer of 2024, and it’s now become my regular weekly outing. It gives me company, friendship and a sense of purpose, it’s just wonderful.

I love the surprise of not knowing what I’ll eat until I get there, I get up on a Tuesday and wonder what I’m going to eat that day. I’m not vegetarian but all I can say is they do miracles with vegetables, I haven’t had a bad meal yet.

I have made so many friends and I would miss everybody if it wasn’t here. I like the volunteers. I like the diversity of the people who are there. We’ve got a few homeless people who come, some guys who live in hostels, lots of different people.

Everybody’s struggling at the moment and FoodCycle helps so many, for me it helps supplement my pension, as a normal pensioner, we do struggle. It’s lovely. I would be very sad if there was no FoodCycle.”



Our guests are the reason we exist and Norma, who attends the FoodCycle community meal in Sunderland, explains why they are so important.



Round up of 2025

2025 was a year of both change and growth. We continued to expand our school community meals programme, updated our brand, and most importantly we served a record number of community meals, a huge 177,062!

The year didn't come without its challenges, however, and like many others in the charity sector we felt the impact of rising operational costs, difficulties in sourcing surplus food and a decrease in public and corporate donations.

With the incredible help of our volunteers, staff, supporters, funders, trustees and partners, we have made adaptations to minimize the impact on the people we support and continue to provide an average of 3,500 community meals every week.

Our annual guest survey highlights how much they depend on our service, with guests telling us that they



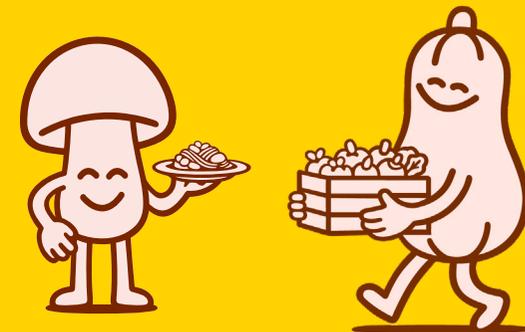
would 'find it difficult to survive', 'feel lonely' and 'be very hungry' if FoodCycle didn't exist.

Looking ahead we have firm plans in place to be recognised as leaders in community dining, provide further support for thousands more people, and strengthen our financial sustainability so we can continue to nourish communities for years to come.

We hope you enjoy reading this report which is filled with all the amazing things we achieved last year and peppered with quotes and stories from our guests and volunteers.

**Together we can nourish communities
– plate by plate, chat by chat.**

Key stats



349 tonnes

of food saved from going to waste, which equates to 832,042 portions of food*

297,630

hours spent engaging with our guests

177,062

community meals dished up**

8,266

volunteers donated 180,764 hours of their time

219,068 kg

of CO₂e would have been released into the atmosphere if the food we saved had gone to landfill

3,500

people a week enjoyed a community meal (weekly average)

*equivalent meals, based on the assumption an average meal weighs 420g (FSA 2008).

**A community meal is a two or three-course meal cooked and served by FoodCycle volunteers and eaten by our community of guests and volunteers.

Why community meals are vital

14.2 million

people in the UK (**21%**) are in poverty. Of these, **7.9 million** are working-age adults, **4.5 million** are children and **1.9 million** are pensioners. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2026)

53%

of low-income households said the cost-of-living crisis had very or somewhat negative impacts on their mental health, **43%** reported the same for physical health. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2026)

78%

of FoodCycle guests have less than £35 a week to spend on food and according to the Food Foundation it costs £63 a week to eat a healthy diet.

1 in 4

adults in the UK (**24%**) feel lonely 'often, always or some of the time'. (ONS, 2025)

10.2 million

tonnes of food is wasted every year in the UK. (WRAP, 2025)





Why we're needed

Results from our annual survey show the challenges our guests face and why FoodCycle is so important.

Cooking equipment

30%

don't have a fridge

25%

don't have a kettle

54%

don't have a hob

Finances

67%

can't afford the food they need

11%

have borrowed money or gone into debt to buy food

Mental Health

74%

feel lonely

67%

of guests eat meals outside of FoodCycle, alone

Mission and Aims

Our mission

To bring people together through community dining. To stop loneliness and hunger, food poverty and food waste.

Our aims



Connect communities

Help strengthen and build resilient communities by bringing people together to share healthy, delicious meals.



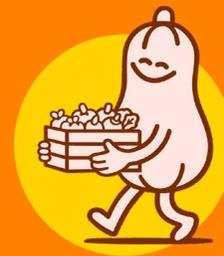
Support mental health and wellbeing

Enhance the health and mental wellbeing of all by creating welcoming spaces for people from all backgrounds and walks of life to have conversations together.



Reduce hunger

Improve nutrition and access to food by providing free and nutritious meals, leading to greater food knowledge and positive changes in behaviour.



Promote sustainability

Change attitudes to food and society's impact on the environment by cooking vegetarian meals, with surplus ingredients and championing sustainable food choices.



Inspire change

Getting more people to recognise the importance of community dining by sharing and reporting on their impact alongside listening to, and sharing, the voices of our guests.

Connect communities

Bev first joined as a volunteer in 2023 as she wanted to help alleviate loneliness in her community.

“Volunteering has been a welcome distraction from my daily pain due to a life-changing injury I got in my early twenties. It just brings happiness to me! Our volunteers are of all ages, from 18 upwards and it’s great to mix with younger people who you might not usually speak with on the street. It’s great to meet such a range of people from different cultures and backgrounds too, and you learn about different cultures and foods.”



Bev
FoodCycle volunteer

“I feel happier and confident because I am part of a community and society. I get to meet new people and feel more social, this is my only social activity in the week.”

FoodCycle guest

“I chat to people I would not usually have anything in common with, older and from a mixed background.”

FoodCycle guest

“You are valued as a normal person regardless of your social status.”

FoodCycle guest

84% have made new friends

67% of guests come every week

78% feel more connected to their community

Support mental health

Gwyn is a regular guest at FoodCycle in Hull and Sheffield.

“I have a serious mental health condition which is managed with medication but means I am unable to work. I’m on benefits and do struggle with money. It’s a wonderful thing. It’s been completely life-changing for me. I struggle to socialise with people. I didn’t have any friends at all, and now I’ve got loads of friends. If I’m having a bad week, I look forward to FoodCycle. My health trainer thinks it’s helped improve my cholesterol levels as well. There’s all sorts of benefits. I think it’s a wonderful thing and long may it continue.”



Gwyn
FoodCycle guest

“FoodCycle has kept me alive. It has given me a routine, has helped with my mental health and so much more. I get emotional just thinking about it.”
FoodCycle guest

“FoodCycle has honestly saved my life. I was struggling a lot with my mental health when I first signed up and it has given me such a boost. I love the connections I am making with guests and volunteers and how wholesome and supportive the environment is.” FoodCycle guest

73% feel less lonely after coming to FoodCycle

92% say eating with other people is good for wellbeing and mental health

79% feel happier

Reduce hunger

Younis has been attending FoodCycle community meals in Wales for the last 5 years.

“When I first found out about FoodCycle I had no gas or electricity, so I couldn’t cook and my place was freezing cold. I remember the first soup I had, it was 10/10. Honestly, you’d pay £15 for something like that in a restaurant and I knew straight away that this place was special. I still don’t have a fridge, so eating fresh food is a real challenge for me. FoodCycle has helped me eat healthily every week, which I wouldn’t have been able to do otherwise. With food prices going up, it’s been a lifeline for my budget too.”



Younis
FoodCycle
guest



“The meals give me a chance to eat out and socialise with other people and a chance to feed my children healthy meals.”

FoodCycle guest

“It gives me a hot meal every week and it’s one more meal I don’t have to worry about.”

FoodCycle guest

“It keeps me well fed, otherwise I might be very hungry and malnourished.”

FoodCycle guest

87% said they felt well fed after attending a FoodCycle community meal

81% said that FoodCycle helps them eat more fruit and veg during the week

Promote sustainability

Meet Angela, a champion of sustainability at FoodCycle's Falcon Lodge community meal in Birmingham.

"I'm obsessive about sustainability, it's what led me to FoodCycle in the first place. Not only are we cooking with food that would have gone into the bin, as a team we don't leave a trace, I take home anything that can be composted and all cardboard, tins etc are recycled. We try not to waste anything and that gives us a sense of achievement.

FoodCycle gives me a place to do the things I believe in, out in the community rather than just at home. We're helping people who are hungry and lonely, and we're also helping the planet."



Angela
FoodCycle
volunteer

"It's good that I get to eat food that would be thrown away otherwise, I hate waste, especially waste food."

FoodCycle guest

"Because I am well fed I can manage to do part-time work. It's also a reliable, effective and good use of food that would have otherwise been wasted."

FoodCycle guest

"The food is excellent, I am having very healthy meals without meat and trying food I would never have tried before. The volunteers make the vegetables very tasty, I don't need the meat."

FoodCycle guest

76% said they eat more pulses

58% eat less meat

Inspire change

Sam has cerebral palsy and autism and started volunteering after he found out that FoodCycle is a Disability Confident charity. He travels around the country and has volunteered at 15 different FoodCycle community meals.

“FoodCycle has been brilliant in terms of giving me an opportunity to learn how my autism works in the real world. I almost feel able-bodied when I am volunteering with FoodCycle, I feel like I can go to a session and my disabilities don’t matter. It’s also helped me find other volunteering opportunities in my hometown as well.”



Sam
FoodCycle
volunteer

“I’ve made friends here and met neighbours so it feels like I’m going out for dinner with friends (something I would never be able to afford to do!). It’s also taught me how to make more vegetarian dishes! I’ve even given up meat!”
FoodCycle guest

“It gives me something to look forward to and it has given me the opportunity to eat/experience food that I have never eaten before. My life has been enriched by coming to FoodCycle.”
FoodCycle guest

64% said FoodCycle has encouraged them to make changes to eat more healthily

85% have tried new or different foods

Schools programme

Our school community meals continue to be very popular with pupils and their families.

We opened in 3 schools in 2024 and now have meals operating in 6 locations across London and the West Midlands. Some of the meals were even featured on [Newsround](#) and [ITV](#).

We're most grateful to Sainsbury's for supporting our School community meals through their Nourish the Nation programme with Comic Relief.



91%

of children tried
new foods

78%

said they now eat more
healthily at home

84%

said their family have more
quality time together

84%

said they feel more
connected to their school

“FoodCycle provides the opportunity to socialise and have some adult company during meals which is a rare occurrence as a single parent.”

“My children can have their dinner earlier and hence sleep earlier, which is good for their health. We have tried a lot of new foods at FoodCycle, which introduced us to new recipes too.”

Celebrating volunteers

FoodCycle's Regional Volunteer of the Year Awards, in partnership with the Marsh Charitable Trust, ran for its second year in 2025.

Nominated by their peers, 12 volunteers received the award, one for each region, and they all went home with a certificate, £300 and a commemorative badge.

One of the winners, Jan from Liverpool said:
"I feel a little overwhelmed actually, so proud. I see it as an award for all of the volunteers in Dingle, we work as a team, we have such a loyal, caring core group of volunteers. We all put our heart and soul into it."

Congratulations to all the winners and a huge thank you to everyone who made a nomination.

Volunteer celebration events

Every year we bring our volunteers together to celebrate their achievements, share learnings and skills and enjoy a delicious meal together.



Our partners



Danone

We're thrilled that our partnership with Danone won the Community Partner Award at the Food and Drink Federation Awards. Other highlights include our Community Breakfast Event hosted at Danone's HQ and nutritional training for our school projects.



Wagamama

Our new partnership has seen wagamama's chefs provide skills-sharing sessions for volunteering teams in every region, offering FoodCycle guests a free meal at their restaurants, gifting goody bags for volunteers as well as staff volunteering.



Just Eat

This year saw an intrepid team of Just Eat Takeaway cyclists ride 125 miles from their London to Bristol offices, the 6th edition of this fundraising challenge.



Pip & Nut

We're grateful to Pip & Nut for funding our work through their newly-launched foundation. Staff volunteered and participated in Food Invention Challenges to mark the launch.

Our partners



Compass Group

Our partnership continued with funding from their Foundation for volunteer training. Staff volunteered at meals, they hosted recognition meals for volunteers, and they held a bespoke team-building Food Invention Challenge.



Overbury

Overbury chose FoodCycle as one of 20 charities supported by their 2025 charity quiz. Held in February, the event saw 100 teams from across the construction industry competing and raised a staggering £500,000 for the charities.



Fortem Capital

We were delighted to join staff and clients at Fortem Capital's annual Flight Night darts event in June. Raising awareness and money for our community meals.



Quorn

In addition to financial support, they donated Quorn products and vouchers to be used at community meals. Colleagues helped out at FoodCycle projects, including the Executive team who volunteered at the Leeds Seacroft meal.

Our partners



Bel UK

We were thrilled to be selected by Bel UK as their Charity of the Year for a third year in a row. In addition to financial support, Bel colleagues regularly volunteer at their local community meals.



Protiviti

We're grateful to Protiviti for their continued support, they raised money through a variety of events, but the highlight was their challenging 20 mile trek across the Surrey Downs.

Other corporate support:

We also had fantastic support from many other companies this year, including restaurants that encouraged customer donations – Cubitt House pubs and Copper Chimney, whose donations were generously matched by the Mithu Chanrai Homeless Project. ProCook also collected customer donations at the checkout as part of our Charity of the Year partnership.



Fundraising

From physical challenges such as runs, swims and triathlons to lunches, quizzes and bake sales, our volunteers, supporters and corporate partners have done an incredible job of raising money for FoodCycle.

The Witch Way Round Motorbike Women kindly fundraised for FoodCycle to give back to their local community. **They raised over £2,500.**

In May, some of our fantastic London volunteers completed The Huntsman Triathlon in the New Forest, **raising £880.**

FoodCycle Salford Angel Centre volunteers, Ashliegh Lovett and Francisca van Kampen, hosted a fantastic quiz night. **Raising over £500** with questions on food, films, literature and FoodCycle trivia.



The team from Liverpool University Press **raised over £1,700** by collectively walking 2,409 miles, the equivalent of walking from Dublin to Krakow.

Guy Riddell completed his 'Running into Christmas' challenge, running 56 miles overnight on Christmas Eve, **raising an incredible £2,400.**

Volunteers across the country hosted Big Lunch events, inviting friends and family to dine together in support of FoodCycle.

Food Invention Challenges

Our corporate cooking challenges continue to be a popular team-building activity with 28 companies taking part in 2025.

Held in London and Birmingham, the sessions see teams pitted against each other to create the best three-course meal. All meals are then given to local community partners for their service users to enjoy.

4,539kg

of surplus food saved

3,326

three-course meals
cooked and donated



“This was a really well organised event - the host was lovely, the instructions were clear, we had ample time and guidance if needed and it felt like we were really making a difference to those experiencing homelessness”

Executive Director, Goldman Sachs

“The food we receive from FoodCycle means that the homeless people we support get to enjoy a tasty and nutritious meal, their generosity has really eased the burden on our community and we are so thankful.”

Ace of Clubs, community partner, London

Sustainability

In 2025 we set up a Sustainability Working Group and created an Environmental policy and action plan with the ambition **“To continually improve sustainability in every action we take as an organisation.”**

During the first year the working group collected data through staff surveys, energy reports, milage data and procurement information and used the SSEcarbon impact tool to measure the organisations emissions. They have also spoken with guests and volunteers to understand what matters to them and will use their responses to help shape the ongoing work in this area.

The group will continue to work towards the aims of:

- Reducing the environmental impact of our operational activities
- Providing communities with access to environmentally sustainable food and promoting sustainable practices
- Increasing awareness of environmental issues among staff, volunteers, and the communities we serve



Our annual operations produce

56,710 kg of CO₂e

The food we rescued stopped

219,068 kg of CO₂e being emitted

Our work also delivers against seven of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

Table talks and branding update



Table talks

Our table talks continue to be a great way to hear first-hand from our guests about their experience with FoodCycle. Across the country, we hold short sessions with up to 10 guests to find out about the impact the meals have on them. In 2025 we held table talks in all 12 of our regions and they've given us lots of ideas and suggestions, including helping shape our new branding.



Fresh ingredients for the FoodCycle brand

Over the past two years we have spoken to volunteers, guests, trustees, supporters and other charities to help us understand what improvements we can make to the way that FoodCycle looks and communicates as a brand.

After analysing the feedback, we updated our brand guidelines and strategy, and with generous pro-bono support from the creative agency Turner Duckworth, we were able to start 2026 with a fresh new logo, more accessible fonts, a bright new colour pallet and some cheery characters. Helping us bring joy to our communications, just like our meals.





What's next?

2026 is the second year of our three-year strategy. After a period of rapid growth we now shift our focus to deepening our impact, doing more to support our guests and creating a sustainable future.

Our strategic aims are to:

Be recognised as leaders in community dining

Delivering meals to the highest standards, expanding partner meals, sharing stories from guests and volunteers and reporting on the positive impact of community dining on both people and the planet.

Focus on people centred growth

Setting up a volunteer steering group, conducting guest feedback sessions (Table talks) and listening and acting on feedback.

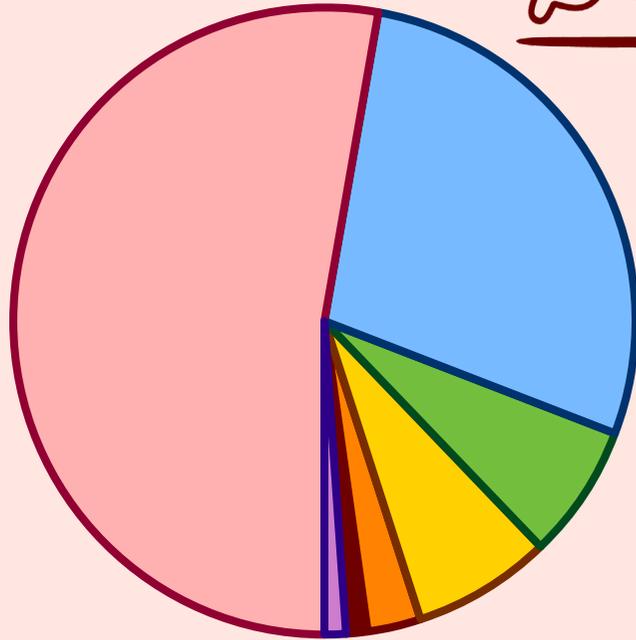
Strengthen our sustainability

Promote and share the benefits of sustainable diets, monitor our operational emissions outputs and build diverse fundraising streams.

Support more families and children

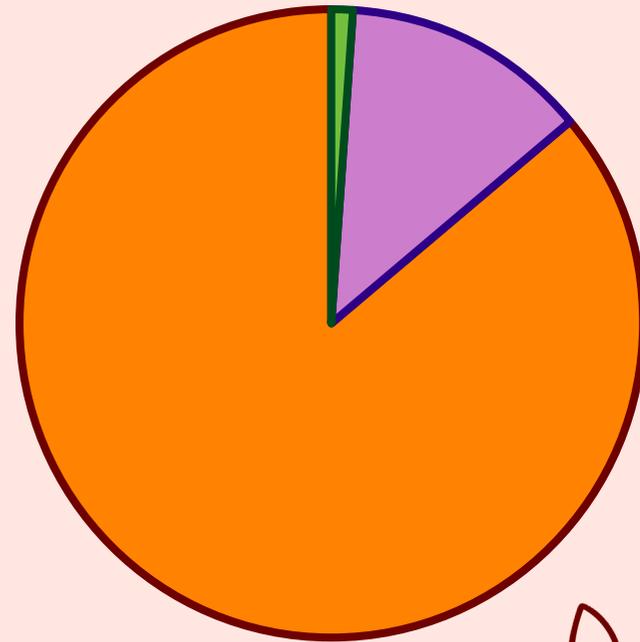
Working with more schools to open further meals for pupils and their families.

Income



- 53% Grants
- 28% Corporate
- 7% Trading
- 7% Individual Giving
- 3% Gift in Kind
- 1% Community
- 1% Other

Where your money goes



- 86% Charitable activities
- 13% Fundraising
- 1% Governance



Fundraise

There are loads of ways you can help raise money, you could host your own event, take part in a challenge event, enter the FoodCycle lottery or leave a gift to us in your will. We have plenty of ideas and information on our [website](#).

Upcoming challenge events

Sunday 5th July

Great North Run

Sunday 6th September

Birmingham Half Marathon

Sunday 11th October

Royal Parks Half Marathon

[See all our challenge events](#)



Get involved

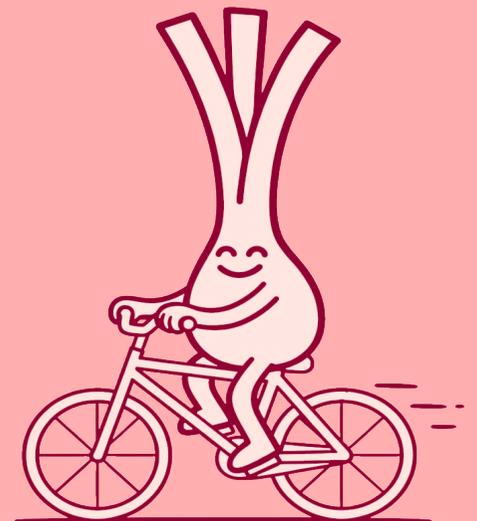
Volunteer

Whether you love cooking, chatting, making a cuppa, washing the dishes or just pitching in. Join our volunteer team for fun, friendship and helping your community.

[Sign up now](#)

Corporate partnerships

We work with companies of all sizes to offer flexible partnerships including employee volunteering, corporate team-building, team fundraising, awareness campaigns, cause related marketing or pro-bono support - we've got plenty of ideas, [get in touch](#) to find out how to join us.



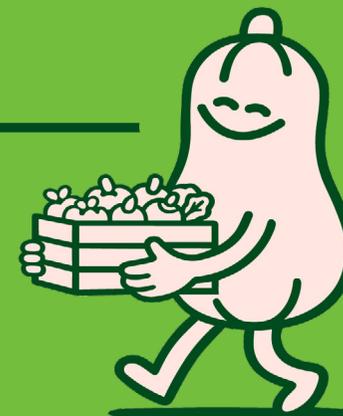
Thank you

With many thanks to all our supporters during 2025, including:

Corporates: Adyen, Bel UK, Compass Group, Cubitt House, Danone, Fortem Capital, ICG, Just Eat, Overbury, ProCook, Quorn, Sainsbury's, The Guinness Partnership and wagamama.

Trusts and Foundations: Acts20:35, Adint Charitable Trust, The City Bridge Trust, Comic Relief, Compass Group Foundation, The Eveson Trust, Dulverton Trust, The Fishmongers Company, Garfield Weston Foundation, HandSpark Charitable Trust, The Health Lottery Foundation, John Horseman Charitable Trust, Julia Rausing Trust, Moondance Foundation, Rothschild Foundation, ShareGift, Sir James Knott Trust, Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities and Zurich Community Trust.

Food Suppliers: Aldi, Asda, Better Food, Booker Wholesale, Incredible Surplus, Iceland Warehouse, City Harvest, Co-op, Dons Local Action Group, Exeter Food Action, Kanon Foodshare, Lidl, Makro, M&S, Morrisons, Purple Carrot, Riverford Organic Farmers, Sainsbury's, Tesco, The Big Difference, The Bread and Butter Thing, The Felix Project, Waitrose, Windmill Wholefoods and all our local independent retailers.



And a special thank you to all the other amazing companies, trusts, individuals, independent shops, restaurants, chefs and organisations across the country who have either made a donation, donated food or staff time – there are just too many of you to fit on to the page.



Let's nourish communities together

 /foodcycle

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foodcycle.org.uk

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