

FareShare Slices

A healthy slice of FareShare volunteer news

Issue 8

Winter 2020/2021



Help us stay
Covid-19 safe
Take me
home, don't
share me



FareShare

fighting hunger,
tackling food waste

Hello...

As we enter 2021, I want to thank each of you for your hard work during a period of unprecedented challenges. I'd like to share a message from someone who donated over the Christmas period:

"I appreciate the time your volunteers give to supporting the distribution of food... I cannot give the time but hope this small donation recognises their efforts and works towards supporting those most in need."

The past year was difficult in many ways, but we can be proud of what we have achieved as the FareShare Network: doubling the amount of food we redistribute and raising more awareness of our cause than ever before. Thanks to all of you we've risen to the challenges of the past year, and will be better able to navigate those still to come.

This issue, we'll look at how the FareShare Network has grown in 2020 – including our new partnership with London based food redistribution charity the Felix Project, and a government grant which is helping us to reach more people than ever before.

Thank you once again for all the time and effort you have given to FareShare throughout 2020.

Hannah Feld

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Hannah Feld

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Keeping safe at FareShare

At FareShare we take the wellbeing and safety of our volunteers very seriously. You will notice that there are rules in place in the warehouse about how we operate, particularly around deliveries and collection, and that you'll now be working in smaller teams than before.

In line with the increased lockdown measures, we have put in place extra safety protocols to reduce the risk of transmitting Covid-19 and help halt the spread of the new, more contagious Coronavirus strain. We are asking our staff and volunteers to please do the following:

- Wear a face mask. This is mandatory except in cases of medical exemption.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin immediately
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly and often. Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.

When you come into the warehouse you will now see:

- Information about local safety measures
- Information on how to clean your hands properly and when they should be cleaned
- Suitable soaps and hand sanitisers that kill the virus.

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback about these procedures please talk to your shift lead or regional volunteer manager. You can also email volunteering@fareshare.org.uk

How FareShare helped Give a Little Love to families in need at Christmas

Over the Christmas period, the Give a Little Love Campaign – a collaboration between John Lewis, Waitrose, FareShare, and homelessness charity Homestart – helped raise £3m for FareShare, Homestart and other local charities. The campaign was highlighted in this year's John Lewis Christmas advert and gave people a variety of ways to donate.



FareShare Cymru recognised at Volunteer Awards

FareShare Cymru was honoured at the 2020 Cardiff Third Sector Council Volunteer Awards as the biggest provider of volunteering hours. They were also nominated for volunteering group of the year. The award is a credit to the incredible volunteers at FareShare Cymru, and across

the network, who have supported their communities through the pandemic. Phil Pinder, Volunteering Officer & Project Officer at FareShare Cymru remarked that "it's always great for our volunteers to get recognition from C3SC, who have many of our local CFMs as members."

New FareShare Northern Ireland warehouse mural pays tribute to volunteers

FareShare Northern Ireland now boasts a striking Volunteer Appreciation Mural. The artwork was created by local street artist Visual Waste at the request of Volunteer Manager Siobhan

Rocks. The captivating mural incorporates FareShare's iconic green apple into an apple tree, with volunteer names written along the roots to highlight their vital support.



FareShare Greater Manchester gets a Royal visit

FareShare Greater Manchester hosted a Royal visit from the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on 7 December. Their Royal Highnesses praised FareShare's commitment to fighting food waste and hunger throughout the coronavirus pandemic and met with volunteers, staff, and representatives from FareShare's partners such



as John Lewis, Waitrose, Asda and Kelloggs. The evening was capped off with a stirring musical performance by Wayne Ellington and Manchester Inspirational Voices, which

was broadcast to a zoom audience of FareShare staff across the UK. CEO Lindsay Boswell remarked that the visit will help "motivate all of us at FareShare to continue to tackle the issues head on, [and] continue to shine

a light on the lack of access to healthy food faced by many millions of our citizens in this country."

No one should go hungry this Christmas

After a really tough year for many families, FareShare launched its own Christmas Appeal to raise funds and keep helping people in need over the winter. Sir Alex Ferguson and Sir Michael Moritz, who have joined FareShare and Marcus Rashford's fight to tackle hunger in the most vulnerable



communities, generously agreed to match donations to the campaign. We will provide an

update on the impact of the campaign in due course.

How Footprints is making a mark in Belfast

Eileen Wilson tells us how surplus food is helping women and families in crisis

For nearly 30 years, Footprints Women's Centre in Belfast has been helping support women and families in crisis. "We always say that our youngest member is six weeks and our oldest is 92," says Eileen Wilson, Food Services Manager at Footprints.

FareShare has been helping Footprints provide food for over 8 years. "The food from FareShare is such an immense support," attests Eileen, "Our Daycare provides meals for 55 children every day. Before Covid, our Community Café was visited by 200 women a week, including youth and seniors' groups, and our Social Supermarket is used by 80 women each week. FareShare helps us save approximately 30% on our food budget, and that money can then go to our overheads – paying our bills and

reducing the overall cost of our service."

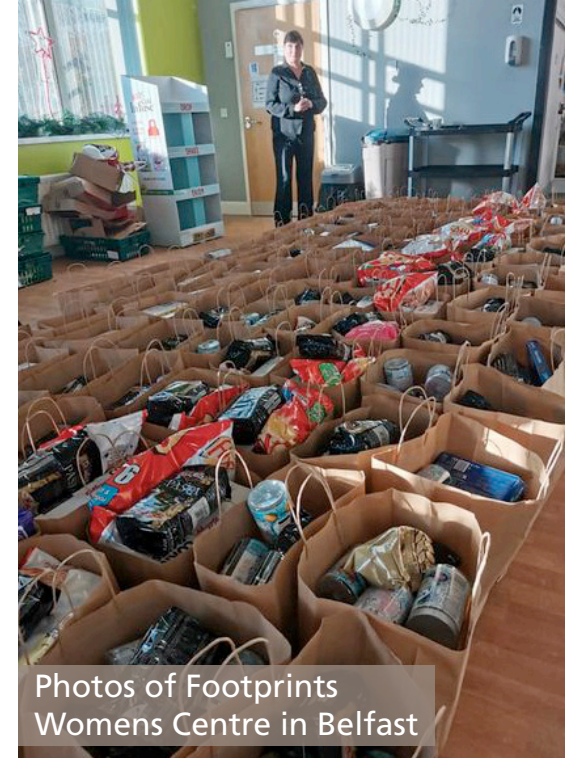
Footprints is the only daycare of its kind in the area and works to ensure that children are being supported at a critical stage in their

"The variety of food and the fresh fruit and veg we get from FareShare is fabulous and really helps us provide [the children] with healthy meals"

development, providing a light breakfast and snack as well as a hot main meal. "We get all kinds of breads, pancakes, fresh fruit and veg, ambient food like pasta and lentils. Today the main meal was roast chicken and veg, but we also do curries, stews, pies," says Eileen, "the variety of food and the fresh fruit and veg

we get from FareShare is fabulous and really helps us provide them with healthy meals. For young children nutrition is vitally important. It has a huge impact on their brain development, their growth, even their sleep patterns. For some of the babies that come in we're actually helping wean them onto solid food for the first time."

Like many community groups, Footprints had to adjust to a new reality during the pandemic: "I have to say, FareShare were really amazing when Covid hit. They helped us deliver ten kilos of food a week to 50 vulnerable families, over 200 individuals. We did that for 22 weeks while we modified our Social Supermarket so we could reopen with appropriate social distancing measures. We also ran another ready-made meal delivery



Photos of Footprints Womens Centre in Belfast

service for an additional 20 families to replace our Community Café."

Footprints' Covid response, for which Eileen was nominated for an Aisling Award, made a huge difference for families hit hard by the pandemic. "People have told us it really improved what their family would have eaten," says Eileen, "as well as their sense of connection to the community and their mental health. It was a really important way of staying in touch."

Footprints' community faces challenges ranging from domestic violence to isolation. For many, food is a gateway to getting help: "We always

say that providing healthy nutritious food is a route into the Centre for people in need. It provides immediate support to people in poverty, but it also gives

"We always say that providing healthy nutritious food is a route into the Centre for people in need."

people a non-threatening way to get in contact with us and feel safe opening up about other problems we can support them with."

When we spoke with Eileen, Footprints was just gearing up for the busy Christmas season:

"Christmas brings extra challenges for people close to poverty or struggling with mental health. We've had a lot of new requests come in since November – people who've been furloughed or lost jobs. We've got food hampers ready to go, with activity packs for kids and seniors. We're also getting turkeys, gammons, all kinds of lovely food in from FareShare at the Social Supermarket, so people will be able to have a good holiday shop."

Through the busyness, Eileen sees the bright side: "It's positive in a way because we know we're reaching people in need."

Introducing The Felix Project

Our new delivery partner in London helps us reach more people in need

The Felix Project is a London food redistribution waste charity set up in 2016. Like FareShare, the organisation redistributes good quality surplus food to charities and community groups across the capital with the help of volunteers.

The Felix Project is the latest organisation to join the FareShare network, as a delivery partner for London. The charity has taken over the operation of FareShare's warehouse in Depford, south London, and has expanded FareShare's reach by connecting its existing two warehouses in North and West London to our network.

FareShare and The Felix Project both seek to combat hunger and food waste in the UK, working closely with the food industry, the voluntary sector and regional and

national government. The two organisations were already working closely together before the Felix Project became a delivery partner; through the collaborative work of the London Food Alliance, which was

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launched to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, since the start of the pandemic they have worked together to reach as many people in need as possible across the city – with volunteers at the Deptford warehouse having more than doubled the amount of food distributed each

week since March last year.

Becoming part of the FareShare network means that the Felix Project will benefit from FareShare's links with the food industry, in addition to the food that the Felix Project sources itself. For FareShare, the partnership enables us to reach even more people in need, at a time when the economic impact of the pandemic affects more organisations and households across the UK.

London isn't the only region where the FareShare network is expanding, either. Across the UK, 11 Regional Centres took on additional warehouse units to respond to growing demand due to the Covid-19 crisis. One example is FareShare Greater Manchester – operated by EMERGE – which

has secured a second warehouse unit that, when refurbishments are completed, will enable the Regional Centre to more than triple the amount of food it distributes to local charities and community groups. This development has been made possible thanks to support from Marcus Rashford and funding from Asda through the Fight Hunger Create Change partnership.

Elsewhere in the network, FareShare South West and FareShare Scotland have also expanded into new regions. Last year, FareShare South West partnered with Exeter Food Action to grow its reach for the first time across Devon and Cornwall, with charities from both counties now regularly collecting food orders. Whereas in Scotland, CFINE - which runs FareShare's

operation in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray - has also extended deliveries into the Highlands as part of its response to the Covid-19 crisis and growing demand for food in the area.

If you have a story you'd like to see in the magazine, please send it in to volunteering@fareshare.org.uk



Father-son Felix Project volunteers John and Matt get ready for their delivery route.

Catching up with Roger and Ann from The Felix Project

Roger and Ann were volunteers before their retirement, but stepped things up as they moved away from full-time work. In 2018 Roger began volunteering as a delivery driver with the Felix Project, FareShare's new delivery partner in London. Ann soon joined him in the van as his "glamorous assistant", as she puts it laughingly.

The couple's volunteering gives them an opportunity to work on a range of tasks such as gleaning, in addition to their delivery routes. "It certainly gets us out and about, and has been a great motivator," Roger says, "it's good to get on the road and meet people at charities, warehouses, farms, and supermarkets. They work so hard under difficult circumstances, we admire them hugely."

Both Roger and Ann



strongly recommend volunteering: "We tell friends they need to be flexible and ready to do mundane tasks as well as the more interesting jobs, but that it's rewarding work that keeps us on our toes. The team at Felix Park Royal are amazing – supportive, committed, always positive and friendly. And the craic in the volunteers' room usually brightens the day."

Days at Felix are filled with work as well as special moments. Roger recalls a woman who spotted their van knocking at their window with a box of cakes: "She told me she had gone through a difficult time a couple of years before and the Felix food had helped her through, she insisted I take the cakes back to the warehouse."

"It helps us feel that we're making a positive contribution," continues Ann, "we're using existing skills and learning new ones, it keeps us fit and active, we meet people and see bits of London and the country we didn't know before – especially through gleaning. All these things have been doubly valuable during the testing times of the last 12 months. We are tired but happy after a shift!"

FareShare grant from Defra

In December FareShare received a second grant from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The grant will be used to purchase food between December 2020 and February 2021.

What is it?

The winter grant is a £16m scheme which aims to ensure vulnerable people, who are most impacted by Covid-19, access to food across England this winter. The government-funded scheme will enable FareShare to distribute over 7,600 tonnes of vital food supplies - the equivalent of around 18 million meals - to over 4,000 charities and community groups.

Why was FareShare chosen for this?

FareShare is the largest operation of its kind in the UK, with 25 years' experience safely redistributing food. We have a robust infrastructure and, thanks to the support of our volunteers, more capacity than ever before to accept and redistribute food. The winter grant follows from the success of the similar grant given to FareShare in the summer of 2020 to support charities through the Covid-19 crisis.

How are we going to do it?

FareShare is purchasing food from across the food industry using the grant, and working with suppliers to redistribute stock through our Regional Centres and onto frontline charities nationwide.

Who is it going to help?

The grant is intended to support the charity sector through the pandemic. Many organisations have experienced higher demand for their services, whilst being placed under increasing financial pressures due to the economic impact of the pandemic. The grant will help support the charity sector by enabling FareShare to distribute more food through our network and onto frontline charities across England.

We know that with these high volumes of food being redistributed, volunteers in our warehouses are busier than ever. We can't thank you enough for your support during this difficult time, helping us reach more people with more food than ever before.



Two minutes with... Sam

Each issue, we'll be finding out more about one of our amazing volunteers. This time, we've got Sam from FareShare Northern Ireland.

Who has been the greatest influence on your life?
My mum, who was so loving and giving and good to me.

What do you consider your greatest achievement and why?
Becoming a volunteer. First at the City hospital, helping in the mobile library, and then joining FareShare 5 years ago.

Where would you most like to go on holiday and why?
Disneyland, Florida, to meet Mickey and Minnie mouse.

What's your favourite thing to have on toast?
Cheese and tomato.

What is the most important object you own?
My most precious object is photographs of my mum and dad.

Tea or coffee? How do you take it?
Milky tea!