

FareShare Slices

A healthy slice of FareShare volunteer news

Issue 13

Summer 2022



**Celebrating
Volunteers'
Week across
our network**

 **FareShare**
fighting hunger,
tackling food waste

Hello...

Summer is finally here, and I hope you are enjoying the warm sunshine with your family and friends. We recently celebrated our friends – you and your fellow volunteers for Volunteers' Week. Shared with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, this year's Volunteers' Week was extra special. It was an opportunity for us to pause and celebrate your incredible contribution. You are the heart of what we do, and the entire FareShare team is grateful for your support. For all the excitement shared, see pages 4 and 5.

In this issue, we're excited to share stories from our Community Food Members who are on the frontline and receive the food that you help pack and deliver. We also meet volunteers Laura and Sean who share their own stories about volunteering, plus more news and stories from across the network.

In September we'll be holding the FareShare Volunteer Awards. Nominations open soon, so please start thinking about who you would like to nominate to win an Award this year. We look forward to sharing the Award categories with you soon.

If you have a story you'd like to share, please send us an email at volunteering@fareshare.org.uk.



Elise Taylor

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Starring on this issues front cover is the Friday volunteer team from FareShare SouthWest Vale Lane. Sue, Jan, Gurmit, Francisco, Clare, Nessa and Phil all enjoyed time in the sun celebrating.





AO donates over 90 fridges to FareShare

Back in May, online electricals retailer AO kindly donated 96 brand-new under-the-counter fridges to FareShare. These were delivered to our regional centres in Kent, East Anglia and Thames Valley, before being distributed to charity partners in these areas.

Due to changes to energy labelling, the fridges would otherwise have been recycled at AO's recycling plant, despite being fully functional. AO reached out to FareShare, to see if the fridges could support their mission in redistributing surplus good.

Thank you AO for your support.

FareShare scoops a Charity Award for Surplus with Purpose

On Thursday 16th June, FareShare's pioneering Surplus with Purpose scheme was recognised for its environmental benefits with the 2022 Environment and Conservation award at the Charity Awards in London.

The scheme covers the extra costs

involved for farmers in picking, packing and transporting their surplus produce to redistribute it to people who need it most, rather than let it go to waste. It now accounts for a majority of all the food FareShare redistributes to its network across the UK.

FareShare EA stand proud at The Suffolk Show



FareShare East Anglia took its first stand at The Suffolk Show this year. With over 90,000 visitors in attendance over past years, it is the event to be seen at. Mike Barrett, Regional Manager, Sue Stenson, Volunteer Manager and Tracey Collins who is on secondment from Waitrose, were on hand to wave the flag for FareShare.

Mike said "The show is the perfect place to raise awareness of our fantastic charity. We have spoken to farmers about getting surplus food onto plates, potential new volunteers and new charities interested in how we can help them. We had a fantastic couple of days and it will become a regular must do for us".

Celebrating Volunteers' Week

None of the support FareShare provides to millions of people across the UK would be possible without you - our incredible volunteers.

From helping hands in the warehouse packing food, to being on the road delivering food to your local community or providing vital admin support - we are achieving our vision because of your incredible commitment and contribution.

Here are some of the ways Regional Centres celebrated and recognised their wonderful volunteers during Volunteers' Week.

**Thank you for all that you do.
Your support is vital to FareShare's work, and we can't do what we do without you.**



Above: Corporate Volunteers from Raisio helped in the FareShare Thames Valley warehouse during Volunteers' Week, and celebrated Thames Valley volunteers alongside staff with afternoon tea and cake.



Above and right: David, Stephen Mayur and Cat, volunteers at FareShare North East working in the warehouse before breaking for Volunteers' Week celebrations.

The High Sheriff of Manchester presenting Les, Volunteer Driver, with his 6 year, long service award. The award was handmade by participants in EMERGE's Touch Wood program.

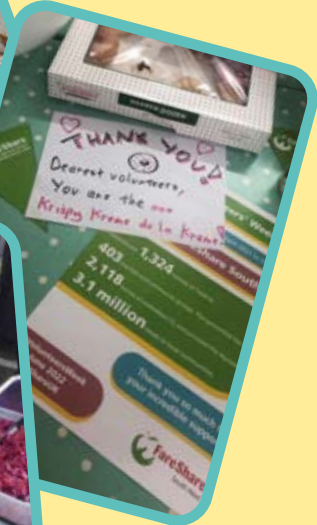




Volunteers at The Felix Project, London packing food orders before heading off to a central party where 150 volunteers from 5 depots came together in London to enjoy a delicious spread cooked by the Felix Kitchen. Pictured left to right; Shahab, Andrew, Sandra, Ahmed and Ellie. Pictured below Keith and Chi.



Photos of celebration decorations and delicious food enjoyed by volunteers and staff from a collection of FareShare regional centres across the UK.



Volunteers, Steve, Chris and Paul, Paul, Michael and Jayne from FareShare Hull & Humber enjoy a tea from their new Volunteer's Week commemorative mug during their local celebration.

FareShare launches #RunningOnEmpty campaign

In March, FareShare launched the #RunningOnEmpty campaign to draw attention to the ongoing impact that the cost of living crisis is having on people across the UK.

Nearly 7 million people are said to be going hungry in the UK, including 2 million children. That is an increase of 2 million since the pandemic. Research suggests almost half of all children are living in families who are unable to meet the cost of some basic necessities.

New survey highlights impact

The campaign is driven by a major new survey we conducted. Responses from more than 1,200 charities and community groups, which rely on food from FareShare to feed people at risk of hunger, highlight the dramatic impact the crisis is having on the

most vulnerable families across the UK:

90% of the organisations say their services have been affected in some way by the cost-of-living crisis

71% “moderately” or “severely” affected

75% have seen an increase in demand for their services over the past year

87% provide vital wrap around care services as well as food. These services include support with unemployment or low income, homelessness, family break up and abuse, mental health issues and addiction

Food, fuel, clothes, travel and household bills have all been rising steadily in recent months, with inflation now running at 6.2%, its highest level for 30 years. National insurance has also risen by 1.25% percentage points.

“The food is a real lifeline for me, as the sole carer to four young children”

The survey results reflect what we’ve been hearing from charities and people in need across the UK. People like James Henman in Kent. James is a single father to four young children. He started using a local pantry supported by FareShare about four months ago, called Gussie’s Kitchen.

“Everything’s going up – food, taxes, heating – and I’m really worried about what it’ll be like in winter,” says James.

“The food is a real lifeline for me, as the sole carer to four young children – but it’s also about the community support they offer. The kids can throw up real challenges at times, and I know I’ll be listened



to and helped with my problems – it's like a big family, all pulling together."

As Lisa Blakemore, one of the founders of Gussie's Kitchen, says:

"We've noticed a big increase in numbers coming up, particularly people who work fulltime but still can't afford bills. We couldn't help all these people without FareShare food – but the situation is just getting worse. It doesn't matter where you come from, the struggles are real."

Providing support when it's needed most

As FareShare CEO Lindsay Boswell said as the campaign was launched:

"Demand for our food is as high as it's ever been. That's why we've launched our new campaign, #RunnigonEmpty, to highlight the difficult circumstances that many families are facing across the UK and are calling for more support for those struggling to feed

themselves, and more donations of food from across the food industry to help meet that need." With the summer approaching, we know we must continue to do everything we can to help families who are already under strain cope with the increased pressure that the school holidays can bring. We could not do any of this without the commitment of volunteers to help us support people through this challenging time.

Laura shares experience of work placement at FareShare



Laura is a final year student at Edge Hill University and has been a volunteer at FareShare Lancashire and Cumbria since March 2021. Passionate about FareShare's work in addressing the issue of food poverty, Laura was keen to get involved and support the process of food redistribution.

"You will usually find me in the warehouse or out on deliveries as a Driver's Assistant, having the pleasure of meeting and chatting to the FareShare customers. Both environments are different in many ways, but both require adaptability, strength and a good sense of humour. When assisting a driver in delivering to charities and community

groups across Cumbria, you see first-hand the difference the food from FareShare is making and this sure is a rewarding feeling."

In October 2021, Laura undertook a 12-week student work placement at the same warehouse whilst studying for a BSc (Hons) degree in Nutrition and Health.

"The placement provided me with the opportunity to see the whole operational side of how FareShare works and see the day-to-day process of surplus food redistribution. Although a work placement was a requirement of my final year at university, I wanted to explore an environment with a little difference in experience, where I could develop my interpersonal and leadership skills. I wanted a setting that was an alternative to a typical food industry or a traditional nutritional clinical placement, where I felt would be restricted in terms of personal

development."

"I have learnt about food safety and manual handling, new skills, experienced different challenges, and taken on many responsibilities. Each time I took on a role in a different area, I gained an extra skill that was transferable."

"FareShare offers more than just working in a food environment. It also offers opportunities to learn about logistics, office administrations, warehouse operations and customer relations, all of which involve a different set of skills that are taught and easily picked up along the way. It has been a fantastic student placement and I have acquired a real education and understanding into surplus food redistribution and the diversion of food waste."

Laura continues as a volunteer and is looking forward to graduating, excited about what the future has in store in the 'world of work'.

Grimshaw Food Community Centre, Preston

The Grimshaw Food Community Centre has been working with FareShare since 2018 to provide food at holiday markets throughout Preston. With the COVID-19 pandemic causing more people to need support, the charity set up a community market for people to pick up supplies and food parcels.

"FareShare is the biggest part of our organisation being able to provide food because our community market is pay as you feel," Carol explained. "I don't think we would be able to function without FareShare's input. Their help has put our community service on the map."

"We get fruits, vegetables, yoghurts, cereals, cheese, butter, pasta, rice, quite a bit of chilled foods and ready-made meals, and raw foods that we can freeze. We also receive hot and cold drinks, like tea bags, coffee and milk."

Distributing FareShare items across the community

In addition to the parcels and community market, the organisation is finding other ways to utilise its FareShare deliveries so nothing goes to waste.

"We have freezers, so if any of the foods are near their sell-by date, we can store them in there," Carol said. "We also have a soup kitchen, so they may use the FareShare food for an event, which they're very grateful for. If there are leftover fresh foods from the community market, we'll deliver them to people who we know are struggling."

Ensuring all members receive the food they need

With food prices and the cost of living continuing to rise, the Centre has been working hard to provide food to the increasing number of people who need support.



"I have noticed an increase in the cost of food," says Carol, "which makes quite a difference. We have started getting more new people, so the demand is increasing. I can see the difference myself. We've seen quite a few new faces. In fact, it's very busy during the day now whereas before I would actually go around and talk to more people. Now I'm not having the same time, I'm going to need more helpers."

"Without FareShare, our budget would probably be gone. I would say that we are saving hundreds of pounds each month. When I think about the amount of food that we get from FareShare for the cost of, say, 40 odd trays, we'll pay £40. If I had to shop at the supermarket and buy that amount of food, it would well be in the hundreds. So FareShare has been really helpful there."

Brushstrokes Community Project, Midlands

Founded 23 years ago, Brushstrokes Community Project's mission is to aid people experiencing poverty. Part of a partnership with Father Hudson's Care and the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the organisation supports asylum seekers and migrants across Sandwell and West Birmingham, by teaching English and assisting with housing and welfare benefits. A significant part of the organisation's mission involves running food banks for those receiving asylum support or E.U. citizens with pre-settled status. The food banks run on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with approximately 100 households receiving food supplies each week.

"We often find that people come to us for food resources as their contact," explains Lucy Clarke, Resources Coordinator at Brushstrokes Community Project. "Then we're able to refer them for other things that they need help with, as well as build a real



relationship with them over the course of their time visiting us."

Providing food to a diverse community

Catering to a mix of people of ages and nationalities – an estimated 140 different countries are represented. "We know we get a guaranteed delivery every week from FareShare, and the foods we tend to get are the treat things, the things that we don't buy," Lucy shares.

The organisation purchases necessary ingredients, such as rice and vegetables, but relies on FareShare to help them provide food items

that are unique to the types of cultures they cater to.

"The deliveries we get from FareShare might be refrigerated items, and a lot of our clients come the day after a FareShare delivery arrives because they know they might get yoghurts, cheese and milk," Lucy says. "Then there are meat items, whether cooked or raw, that we give out. We also have lots and lots of clients who need halal or vegetarian options, which FareShare is good about giving us, and that's always really appreciated. These foods provide a treat for people, and that's why it makes such a difference."

Creating parcels with FareShare ingredients

In addition to food banks, the organisation also runs a cafe on Fridays, where a team cooks and prepares food parcels based on the size of the family. The cafe also provides a safe space for people to come together, socialise and form new friend groups.

"Sometimes we receive nice puddings, big trays of chicken, things like that from FareShare. Whatever comes on Wednesday, we take it to the cafe," Lucy shares. "The most helpful foods for us are the fresh fruits and vegetables FareShare provides, things like apples, bananas, pears

and bags of potatoes. If they come in the Wednesday delivery, then I don't have to buy those on Thursday for the cafe. We had lots and lots of carrots this week, which was brilliant. You wouldn't think you could get so excited about 10 kilos of carrots, but it really does make a difference."

Rising demand for food

Brushstrokes Community Project continued to support the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, despite having a massive increase in clients and seeing the number of households in need of food supplies triple. Now, with

the cost-of-living crisis, the organisation continues to provide assistance by helping people stay fed. "If people don't have to spend £15 or £20 on tins of tomatoes, potatoes, rice, pasta, you know, then they can spend that money on something else," Lucy explains. "So, I'm quite happy for people to come to our organisation as often as they need to, for what we provide enables them to buy what they need and want."

To find out more about the Brushstrokes Community Project visit **brushstrokessandwell.org.uk**



1 minute with...Sean

Every issue we get to know one of our amazing volunteers, and in this issue we meet Sean from FareShare Northern Ireland.



Right:
Sean with
his cycling
medals



Tell us about yourself?

'I was born in Dublin in 1938 and spent my entire working life as a builder. I retired at 75 years young. As a young boy living in the country the only way to get anywhere was to cycle. I really enjoyed cycling and at age 22, I joined a road race cycling club and competed for the next 30 years all over Ireland, England, and the Isle of Man.' During those years Sean won the Junior Ulster championships 3 times, and Ulster Senior Championship 12 times! Pictured below is Sean with his cycling medals.

Tell us about your experience volunteering at FareShare?

'I joined FareShare Northern Ireland during June 2017, initially as a van helper and more recently I help in the warehouse collecting and flattening the cardboard for recycling. I volunteer 4 days a week and it has been a lifesaver to fill my spare hours. I know that what I do makes a difference within my local community. I enjoy the companionship and banter within the warehouse.'

What are your hobbies?

'Cycling, painting, singing and Irish music.'

Pictured left is an incredible painting Sean painted for Northern Ireland's Volunteer Manager, Siobhan, for Christmas.