

# Thank you to all of our supporters

A huge thank you to all of the local businesses, schools, churches, mosques, community groups, and individuals who have supported us throughout the past year. Without your financial support, donations of food and other items, and fundraising efforts, we would not have been able to achieve what we've achieved.

In particular we'd like to thank the following:

## Grant Funders



## Business Partners



## Business Supporters

DBW Ltd  
Fareshare  
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Starbucks  
Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation

## Community Supporters



Berry Brow Methodist Church and Community Centre  
Denby Dale Inner Wheel  
Lions Club of Huddersfield  
Markazi Jamia Masjid Riza – Mosque  
O'Hooley and Tidow

Golcar Baptist Church  
Huddersfield Parish Church  
Huddersfield Rotary  
St Bartholomew's Church Meltham  
St Pauls Armitage Bridge

Huddersfield University Business School  
Huddersfield University  
Ultimate Frisbee Team



**The Welcome Centre**  
food bank and more...

and a very special 'Thank You' to all of our volunteers, staff, trustees, and committee members



[thewelcomecentre.org](http://thewelcomecentre.org)

**2018 Annual Report and more...**

For the period 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018



# Centre Manager's Introduction

The Welcome Centre has faced lots of challenges in 2017 - 2018: the roll-out of Universal Credit in Kirklees, the growing issue of Holiday Hunger, and more and more families and individuals in our local community experiencing crisis and needing our support.

Thankfully, The Welcome Centre has succeeded in meeting these challenges. In the past year, we have given out 12,355 crisis packs, 37% more than we gave out in the previous year. We have supported 3,878 people in our local community, including 1,222 children. And we have provided enough food in our food parcels for 199,548 meals.

In addition to providing immediate crisis relief through the provision of food and other essential items, we have provided clients with additional support through our advocacy, guidance and support service. We have supported 95 individual clients through 259 one to one appointments. This is an important and developing area of our work, helping clients to address underlying issues so that they can ultimately transition beyond food bank dependency.

Our priority over the past 12 months has been to meet the increased need for our service. This has meant raising additional funds, seeking additional food and stock donations, and recruiting more volunteers to our team, so that we can continue to offer our clients a high quality level of support. But we're proud to have done more than this. In addition to our existing services, we developed new services to address Holiday Hunger in Huddersfield, working in partnership with local schools to provide children with access to free food during the Easter and summer holidays.



Over the coming year, our dedicated team of volunteers, staff and trustees will continue to work hard to develop and improve the work of The Welcome Centre, for the benefit of anyone in crisis in our community. But without the support of individuals, community groups, and businesses in Huddersfield, there would not be a Welcome Centre. Thank you all for your support so far, we could not do it without you.

**Ellie Pearson**  
Centre Manager

LAST YEAR, WE GAVE OUT ENOUGH FOOD



TO PROVIDE **199,548** MEALS

LAST YEAR, WE SUPPORTED



LAST YEAR, WE RECEIVED **8347** REFERRALS



LAST YEAR, WE GAVE OUT **12,355** CRISIS PACKS  
OF WHICH **7,749** WERE FOOD PARCELS



[thewelcomecentre.org](http://thewelcomecentre.org)

## Practical Support In A Crisis

We're here to support families and individuals in crisis in our community by providing essential items, and advocacy, guidance, and support.

The Welcome Centre has operated as an independent food bank since 1997. Over the past 21 years we have grown significantly, to become one of the largest food banks in the north of England. We don't just provide food, we also provide other essentials, including toiletries, bedding, cleaning supplies, and basic kitchen equipment.

### How do people access our support?

People access our support through a referral system. More than 100 local agencies including other charities, statutory agencies, schools, and GP surgeries refer clients to us for support. We use the information we receive from referrers to make bespoke packs, taking into account each client's family size, access to cooking facilities, dietary requirements, and cultural preferences. Clients can collect their packs from us anytime between 11am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

### What is in a food pack?

Every food pack is different. We tailor the content of our packs to meet individual needs, whether that's providing high energy convenience food for people who are homeless, or providing extra fresh fruit and vegetable supplies for people we know love to cook. As well as tinned and dried goods, we're able to provide our clients with fresh food including fruit and vegetables, milk and cheese, bread, and baked goods. Our food packs contain food for seven days.



### Where does all the food come from?

Almost 90% of the food we give out is donated to us. Our collection bins situated in local supermarkets are filled with tinned and dried goods donated by individuals, and we receive regular food donations from community groups and businesses throughout the year. At Harvest we benefit from the generosity of schools and churches collecting on our behalf, and mosques and Muslim groups collect for us during Ramadan. These tinned and dried goods are supplemented by a regular year-round supply of fresh food from our business supporters. Even with so much generosity from the community, we don't always have enough of certain types of food. When this happens, we purchase the necessary food, so that clients don't go short. We're delighted that more and more of our supporters now donate money rather than food, which gives us the freedom to buy the food items we're really short of when we need to.





## More Than A Food Bank

**Every food pack that we give out is gratefully received by an individual or family in crisis. People visit the food bank for all sorts of reasons: job loss, debt and eviction, benefit issues, refugee an asylum seeker issues, homelessness, domestic violence, substance misuse, bereavement, and physical and mental health issues.**

Many of our clients only need short term practical support from the food bank, to help them through a difficult financial period. However, some of our clients need additional support to get them back on track, and that's where our Advocacy, Guidance and Support work comes in. Last year 95 clients benefitted from this additional support, and we delivered 232 hours of one to one client support.

### What sort of additional help do we provide?

We help clients in lots of different ways. Our Advocacy, Guidance and Support service offers clients a safe space, a listening ear, and emotional support. We work with clients to understand the challenges they're facing, and help them access the support they need.

Some of our clients just need information and signposting; a quick chat and some of our guidance leaflets are enough to point them in the right direction.



Some clients need more support from us: help with budgeting, understanding and completing documents and applications, someone to advocate on their behalf with other organisations. Some of our clients are moving into new properties that are completely bare and unfurnished; we help them access basic furniture to make their property to feel more like a home. This can mean the difference between someone staying in a property or returning to a life on the streets. Over the past 12 months, we have also been helping lots of clients struggling with their Universal Credit claims. In many cases, this is because clients are unable to manage their online claim, but clients also struggle with the initial five week wait for their first payment, and managing their budget when they don't know how much money they'll receive month to month.

Some of our clients need specialist support that we can't provide ourselves. We refer these clients to other specialist agencies who can help them, and we continue to work with the client in the background as well.



### Mohammed's story

Mohammed had lived and worked in the Huddersfield area most of his life, but moved overseas with his wife in 2015. Unfortunately his marriage broke down, a huge turning point in Mohammed's life.

*"My wife gave up custody of the children, and I suddenly found myself a single dad of four children all under 7 years old. I had to decide what was the right thing for the children's future."*

Mohammed decided to return to the UK, bringing his four children with him. He knew it would be difficult for his children moving to a strange country.

*"I was overwhelmed by the situation, I hadn't worked in the UK since 2015, when I had gone overseas. I really didn't know what to do."*

As he had never needed to claim benefits before, Mohammed did not know how the system worked. He submitted his benefit application but in his confusion did not supply all the required information, meaning his application was delayed and he wasn't receiving any income to support himself and his young children.

Eventually Mohammed was referred to the food bank for food and toiletries, we were able to step in to help him and his family. We helped him understand and resubmit his benefit applications, helped him get his children into a local school, and referred him to local charity Uniform Exchange, who provided free school uniforms for his children. Now Mohammed's children are all in school, Mohammed's benefits are in place, and he is able to look for work again.

## Behind The Scenes at The Welcome Centre

**A great deal of work goes on behind the scenes at The Welcome Centre, to make sure clients receive the best possible support.**

Our small staff team is supported by 90 volunteers. Our volunteers are at the heart of our charity, collecting donations, taking referrals, making food packs and greeting clients. Volunteers come from all walks of life to help at the Centre for a few hours each week, and our longest serving volunteer has been with us for more than ten years.

Our Board of Trustees is also made up entirely of volunteers. Our trustees monitor the work of the Centre, set our long term strategic vision, support the Centre's staff team. Like all of our volunteers, they care deeply about The Welcome Centre's, and contribute greatly to our achievements.

Every week, we rely on 314 hours and 30 minutes of volunteer time; we could not deliver the service that we do without our volunteers.



### Andrew Porter

Sadly, over the summer one of our long-standing volunteers passed away suddenly. Andrew volunteered as one of our weekly van drivers, collecting food donations from local supermarkets and businesses. Andrew always had a smile on his face and a mischievous twinkle in his eye, and he will be missed greatly by everyone at The Welcome Centre.

## What it's like to volunteer at The Welcome Centre



**Hi I'm Becky, and I would like to tell you about the different roles I've covered while being at The Welcome Centre where I've volunteered for nearly a year and a half. I applied to volunteer through The Welcome Centre website, and within a few days of filling out an application I was invited to visit the food bank.**

My normal volunteering role can range from greeting clients in reception, making food packs in the store, or helping in the fresh area preparing clients' packs with fresh food.

Volunteering at the food bank, every day is different. One day we're rushing around making 30 food packs, and the next we're sorting through donations of hundreds of carrots (this was one of my first jobs at The Welcome Centre and I've never seen so many carrots since!).

Working in a food bank is inspiring but at the same time saddening. It's inspiring to see the staff work their hardest to ensure they can give the best support possible to clients. It's inspiring to see the volunteers who come from all walks of life and work together and laugh together because we want to help those in need.

However, it's saddening that we have people relying on us for a basic necessity; people having to choose between feeding their families, keeping warm and going into debt. The reality of food poverty is devastating and distressing, and even though I feel lucky to have met all the wonderful staff and volunteers at The Welcome Centre, it's saddening that food banks still exist.



## Holiday Hunger

Over the last couple of years, a growing issue has emerged, known as 'Holiday Hunger'.

Holiday Hunger refers to a problem faced by many; families struggling with finances rely on their children's schools to provide them with a free or low-cost lunchtime meal, and in many cases breakfast too. During the school holidays, these children are at risk of going unfed or underfed. In 2018, we decided to work with schools in Huddersfield to try and tackle this problem locally, providing children with access to free food during the Easter and summer holidays.

### Kids Kitchen Club

For the 2018 Easter school holidays we partnered with a local school to deliver our Kids Kitchen Club project. Kids Kitchen Club ran on-site at the school throughout the Easter school holidays and offered children and their families the opportunity to participate in arts and craft, sports, and cookery activities. Each day of the project, we provided families with breakfast on arrival (thanks to Town Foundation's Early Morning Kick-Off breakfast club scheme), and then families took part in a family cooking activity, and a second activity run by one of our project partners (arts and crafts or sports). All of the families were given a specially created Kids Kitchen Club recipe book to take away, filled with healthy, low-cost and easy to make meals and snacks. Families then communally ate the food they had cooked, and were able to take home leftovers. Kids Kitchen Club and the toolkit of resources we developed to deliver it are available to other groups running similar projects.

**Through Kids Kitchen Club we supported 118 people from 38 families.**



### Feeding Families

Following the success of Kids Kitchen Club, we wanted to be able to help even more children during the six week summer holidays. Unfortunately, The Welcome Centre doesn't have the resources to be able to offer Kids Kitchen Club activities Huddersfield-wide, so we developed our Feeding Families Programme as a way of helping a greater number of children.



During the summer term we contacted all of the schools in Huddersfield, inviting them to access Holiday Hunger support for their families during the summer holiday, through our Feeding Families Programme. 21 schools confirmed that they would like to take part in Feeding Families.

We provided these schools with special vouchers to distribute to families accessing free school meals; the vouchers entitled families to food packs containing breakfasts and lunches for each of their children, for each week of the summer holidays.

*"This programme is a godsend to our families that struggle financially through the summer holidays and every family that has a voucher expressed their thanks and gratitude."*

Families then visited us weekly throughout the six week holidays, and exchanged their vouchers for weekly food packs containing bread, butter, cheese, tuna, soup, jam, cereals, milk, fruit juice, fresh fruit, crisps, and biscuits. We referred families taking part to another local charity called Uniform Exchange, so they could access free school uniforms for the new school year. Our Feeding Families Programme was funded through a community fundraising appeal and would not have been possible without the generosity of local people. Our volunteers worked extra hard all summer to deliver the Feeding Families Programme, in addition to our standard food bank work.

**1,093 Feeding Families vouchers were distributed by 21 schools. We gave out 1,135 Feeding Families packs in total, supporting an average of 189 children every week.**

## Working Together

Working in partnership with others is central to what we do.

Whether that's working with other charities and agencies to provide the best possible, joined-up support for our clients, working with businesses to develop volunteering and fundraising partnerships, working with other emergency food providers to share best practice and resources, or working with community groups to raise awareness of food poverty. Here is a snapshot of just some of our great partnerships this year.

### Lloyds Banking Group: The Business Partner

Lloyds Banking Group is a long-standing supporter of The Welcome Centre, providing hours of volunteering support each year through their 'Day to make a difference' scheme, and thousands of pounds of match funding donations. In the last year alone, 41 Lloyds staff have donated a total of 205 hours volunteering time at the Centre, and Lloyds has donated £1,000 in match funding.

*"I chose the Welcome Centre for my 'Day to make a difference' as I felt I could get really involved. It was really gratifying to see all the help and donations that shops and people contributed. It really opens your eyes to see how many families and individuals need these resources. I was touched by the people who volunteer and how much care they put in to every single parcel. It was amazing to see the great work the centre does for vulnerable people and families."*



### Town Foundation: The Charity Partner

We've worked with Town Foundation on lots of exciting projects this year. We joined forces with one of their business supporters to provide toys and Christmas presents for our clients. We partnered to deliver Kids Kitchen Club during Easter, with the Foundation providing breakfasts for the families every day, and providing sports coaches to run activities with the families. During the summer holiday, the Foundation's staff and trustees visited us, along with some Town players, to help us prepare our Feeding Families packs. And through the 'Fans for Foodbanks' initiative, Town fans have donated huge amounts of food to us through collections at all of their home games.



### Marshfest: The Community Partner

For the second consecutive year, our community partners Guerrilla Promotions, Marsh Blues Club and We Shall Overcome have come together to support us by organising Marshfest. Marshfest is a family fun day and music event showcasing grassroots music and performing art talents, and all of the profits from the event are donated to The Welcome Centre. Through Marshfest and other Marsh Blues Club events the team has raised almost £9,000 for The Welcome Centre over two years, and helped us to raise awareness of our work.