

For I was hungry & you gave me food. I was thirsty &
you gave me drink. I was a stranger & you invited me in
Matthew 25:35

2022-2023

More than just food



**CHRISTCHURCH
FOOD BANK+ PLUS**



FAITHWORKS

LISTEN | GIVE HOPE | ACT | INSPIRE



Christchurch Food Bank+ Life Centre

Introduction

A year on from the refurbishment the Food Bank is noticeably busier, and our Life Centre is thriving. Our cafe- style area means we now have an informal and welcoming space for visitors to sit with a drink and chat through the reasons for needing our services.

Our Life Centre provides space where food support, help with debt, support for those experiencing homelessness, and signposting to external services can all happen in one place.

This enables the team to work through any root issues that need to be addressed, and together work out what practical steps need to be taken.

In addition to food parcels, we continue to provide fresh fruit and vegetables, lunch bags, toiletries and our 'Meal

"Demand is up however the demographic has changed so that we are seeing more working individuals and families using the Food Bank."
- Tracy Blick, Manager

in a Bag' containing a recipe and all the ingredients needed to make this.

Throughout January we supplied many families with a slow cooker and individuals and couples with a soup kettle.



Lucy Hurley

Our team has grown again with Lucy Hurley joining our team to provide administration support.

Our team of 42 dedicated volunteers also continue to provide invaluable support.

Our ultimate aim is to walk alongside our visitors as they journey through our projects until they no longer need us.

Some of those who first came for support now drop in for a coffee and a chat, while others are now volunteering in our projects, providing support to others as they walk on their journey out of crisis.



Tracy Blick
Manager

Syjon
Sarah Lyon
Deputy Manager

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Evolving into a Life Centre

One woman came in to the Life Centre in tears – as Tracy sat down with her she explained her cooker had blown up, and while she had managed to replace this, she had used all her income up in the process.

Tracy organised for the seller to provide a refund, which paid for the new cooker, which then freed up money for her

to live off for the rest of the month.

“If we didn’t have the Life Centre this lady would have simply come in for a food parcel and then left without sharing about the real reason for needing food support in the first place.

With the space to chat and receive further support, she was able to return home and not need the Food Bank again.” – Tracy.



Christmas Stats 2022

School Holiday Hunger

226

Parcels given out which fed 350 adults & 464 children

Turkey Dinners

100

Turkey dinner trays fed 87 adults & 13 children

Whole Turkey & Trimmings

57

Turkeys & trimmings given to 92 adults & 189 children

Christmas Hampers

231

Festive hampers were given out to local families





The Christchurch CMA team led by Briar (2nd from left)

CMA Debt Advice & Budget Support



Briar Harley joined our team this year as the CMA Team Lead in Christchurch. Working closely with the Food Bank, they provide free debt advice and budget support to those who need it.

The production of our 'Where Does My Money Go' leaflet has meant that many approaching us for budget support have been able to work through this without needing further support..

We have also introduced a new Complex Benefits Advisor to support those who are employed and those unable to work.

Our Team

Our incredible volunteers gave 10,660 hours in time last year!

Sadly we lost two of our volunteers this year. We would like to honour Jenny Joy and Helen Mason with this issue of our annual review. You are very much missed.

We have 36 volunteers and three and a half members of staff! *It's quite the team and we could not do what we do without you.*

"We are family. This saved my life during Covid - having a purpose and somewhere to go, and it still does. I look forward to volunteering and coming every week." - Jenny, volunteer





More Help Than I Could Have Imagined

David* and his five children, after fleeing their home due to domestic violence, were referred to us for food and assistance with furniture by the school.

We were able to provide beds for the children, a cooker, fridge freezer and a kitchen pack including cups, plates, crockery and saucepans, as well as everything needed to build a home. Once the property was furnished we arranged for carpets to be fitted.

David had to give up work to look after his children. We invited him in to discuss access to The Hardship Fund and our Faithworks CMA team for debt advice and budget support.

We provided support with setting up utility bills, shopping, food and with finding local schools for his children to attend.

We stayed with him as learnt how to parent on his own, and support his children as they processed the changes they had been through.

We provided further support over Christmas to help make life a little easier. We provided a turkey dinner as well as a Christmas hamper. The family were also invited to our Christmas Community Supper.

We continued to work closely with the schools' pastoral workers and social services to ensure the family received all the help possible. Tracy said:
"It's so rewarding to see Dad organised and the children settled as we continue to walk with them on their journey out of crisis."

**Name changed to protect identity*



Community Supper

"This is the only time I eat my dinner off a plate with others." - Steve

We began the Community Suppers in March 2022.

After Covid and lockdown we realised that people need to come back together to do community.

"This is the only meal I don't eat alone."

It is open to anyone. The youngest that comes is two months old and the oldest is 83 years old. Everyone sits together.

A "friend" at each table ensures everyone feels welcome and included.

"I get time to speak with adults while the kids play with other kids." - Alison

Slow Cookers & Soup Kettles

Over 80 slow cookers and soup kettles have been provided over the last year, along with our recipe cards which included meals such as the 'Leftover Roast Dinner Soup' which has been very popular! Slow cookers and soup kettles require less energy to power, therefore helping to save a little on fuel costs.

"Try before you buy"

In times when food is so expensive, it is important not to waste money on trying new foods that families do not want to eat. This is particularly vital for children when trying new foods.

Our Meal in a Bag enables people to try new recipes without spending money on ingredients. If the recipe is a success, then it can be made time and again with confidence that everyone in the home will enjoy it.

One mum with three sons loved the Sausage Casserole Meal in a Bag so much that it is one of their favourite recipes now. This mum explained that they would never have tried the recipe if it had not been for the Meal in a Bag as the ingredients would have been too expensive to risk trying.

862 people came to one of our Community Suppers last year.



From Sleeping in the Woods to Home

We first met Craig* when he was sleeping rough in a tent in the woods. We provided him with a dry sleeping bag and a bag of food. We encouraged him to bring his laundry to the Food Bank to be washed and dried.

We also provided new underwear and boots. Craig did not trust anyone but slowly he started to drop in to pick up gas bottles for his stove and other small items.

Craig has been coming to the Food Bank for over 7 years. It has taken a long time for him to learn to trust the team and for us to build a relationship with him.

Occasionally we would be able to provide a bed in a Travelodge through our Sponsor A Night In scheme, especially when Craig was unwell.

SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) was activated at the end of 2022, where the government provide a bed for those sleeping rough during extreme weather. We encouraged Craig to engage with this and following this agreed to try living indoors with the support of Christchurch Food Bank+ and supported accommodation.

Two months later Craig is still living in his accommodation and continues to pop in to see us when he needs a friendly face or a little encouragement that 'he can do this'.

**Name changed to protect identity.*



Our van ready to deliver to a Mum and five children

Furniture Bank

"It's more than just furniture, it made me and my children's house a home, after we escaped domestic violence"

Social services, BCP Housing Resettlement team and Sovereign Housing all refer to Christchurch Food Bank+. Those referred are moving into unfurnished properties following homelessness, domestic violence, living in temporary housing or following relationship breakdown. Items range from fridge-freezers, beds and bedding, to a whole home of furniture.

The Furniture Bank cost £31K last year, £16K of this came from grants and the rest from donations and gifts in kind such as donated furniture items.

Our Coat Rack & Shoe Box

The idea for this came about when a young woman came to the Food Bank without a coat during the bitterly cold winter weather.

We worked out that the average price for a coat is £60 which is unaffordable for many coming to the Food Bank. Our Coat Rack and Shoe Box was born out of this.

Those visiting the Life Centre are able to choose a coat and pair of shoes if needed. We have set this up discreetly in the cafe area so that visitors can do so with dignity. We also have a stock of sleeping bags, toiletries and hot water bottles kindly donated by a local group.

Our team ensure the hot water bottles are toasty warm!





Thank you

"They are always such nice ladies here, always give me a lovely cup of coffee and a piece of cake and spend time talking to me." Sheila

We could not provide the food, furniture, time and all that our projects need without the amazing dedication of our volunteers and staff. Every person going over and above on a daily basis.

For the support and generosity of our community, churches, schools, funders, local organisations, statutory authorities, businesses and groups - thank you so much.

Christchurch Food Bank+ is self-funded so everything we have is given through donations and grants. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who donates, from a tin of food right through to a grant of £10,000.

A special thank you goes to St Joseph's Church and the Diocese for believing in our vision and giving us the wonderful chapel as our building for our Food Bank+ work.

We would also like to thank GodFirst Church for the use of their building for our Community Suppers and the ground to store our Furniture Bank, and all the other local churches that support us weekly with donations.

We could not do the work we do without your support, whether you are giving your time, furniture or food items, sewing bags or knitting hot water bottle covers - thank you!

Become a friend of Christchurch Food Bank+

Regular donations help us to plan more long-term. Standing orders can be set up using the bank details below.

- **£5** per month provides cheese, ham and butter to include with a family food parcel.
- **£10** per month provides fresh fruit and vegetables, bread and milk to include with a family food parcel.
- **£20** per month provides dairy produce and fresh fruit and vegetables to include with a single person's food parcel.



Bank: CAF Bank Account

Sort code: 40-52-40

Account number: 00034947

Alternatively scan the QR code to get started

Alternatively a standing order and gift aid form can be downloaded from our website at:

faith-works.org.uk/get-involved/donate/
or you can contact the office by calling 01202 429037.

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*Christchurch Food Bank+ is proud to be part
of the Faithworks' family of projects*



LISTEN | GIVE HOPE | ACT | INSPIRE

Charity no: 1108714 – Company no: 5077777

We believe that no one should be alone on their journey when life is hard.
Faithworks works alongside people, practically building hope and resilience.

We want every single person locally to be within 15 minutes of a place of welcome that
radiates life, community, and immediate help – exactly as **Christchurch Food Bank+** does!

We run practical projects around food, finance, recovery, homelessness and lone parenting
in urban Dorset, collaborating with councils, other charities and local churches.

Find out more by clicking on the QR code below...



📍 The Old Chapel, 67a Purewell,
Christchurch, BH23 1EH
📞 07587 371088 or 07536 983678
✉ christchurchfoodbank@gmail.com
📘 facebook.com/ChristchurchFoodBank
🌐 faith-works.org.uk/locations-across-dorset/christchurch-food-bank-dorset/

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