

# NOURISHING COMMUNITIES USING SURPLUS FOOD

SOCIAL  
IMPACT  
REPORT



2020





2020 – the year none of us saw coming and certainly a year none of us will forget. We have been reflecting on what has been a challenging but pivotal year for FoodCycle.



Despite everything, we are immensely proud of what we have achieved with your support, and we have been overwhelmed by the warmth of human kindness that has resonated from everyone involved with FoodCycle. We started the year hosting community meals in 42 locations but, come March, that all changed.

Both staff and volunteers were incredible in responding to the pandemic and within days of the first lockdown we pivoted to delivering food parcels to local communities. We continued to adapt and, by the end of the year, most of our Projects were running our Cook and Collect takeaway service, providing nutritious cooked food which is so vital for many of our guests.

We know from our meals how valuable social interaction is and we wanted to keep in touch with those feeling isolated. In April we launched the Check-in and Chat service, whereby trained volunteers make weekly calls to those in need – a service that we intend to continue.

This year's impact report is packed full of highlights and stories from guests, Project Leaders, volunteers, supporters, partners, suppliers and funders and really shows the true sense of community that is at the core of FoodCycle.

It was a huge honour to receive an MBE in the New Year's Honours List 2021. This award is testament to all the incredible work of staff, trustees and volunteers and celebrates the achievement of the whole organisation in supporting vulnerable people - a very big thank you to everyone who made this happen. Bringing people together is at the heart of FoodCycle and we look forward to welcoming you back to our community meals as soon as possible.

**Mary McGrath MBE**  
FoodCycle Chief Executive



"It's nice to know someone is thinking of me, even the text reminder about my delivery puts a smile on my face. It's not just about the food, it's about the social interaction too, like the phone calls and having a quick chat with the person who delivers the food. This service has been great but I can't wait for the meals to start again."

**Dawn, Peterborough**

"I have learnt how to pickle and preserve and to actually think about the food and how to save it if I have more than I can use at that time. It's really helped me through lockdown. I thank you not just for the food but for remembering the joy of cooking and learning new things."

**Sarah, Newcastle**

"Universal credit have sanctioned us, offered no help or advances and so the only way we have been able to eat this whole month is from what you've supplied us. Before this mess we were homeless for over 6 months, and we have never experienced kindness like you have given us. I wish I knew who referred us so I could thank them properly. But damn, you guys are so helpful and I couldn't be more grateful for all you have done for us."

**Simon, Bath.**

"It has made my day hearing from you. I go to the meal every week and I was hoping someone would call me and now you have. It's such a blessing to receive a call."

**Peter, Manchester**

# COMMUNITY MEALS

Bringing people together has always been at the core of FoodCycle's values. Whilst there has been lots of change, we did run a great deal of weekly community meals at the beginning of the year.

Guests from all backgrounds sat together and enjoyed a hot, three-course meal, cooked and served by a team of incredible volunteers. We will return to our community meals as soon as it is safe to do so.

42 Project locations at the start of 2020



17,000 people ate with us (from Jan-Mar)



Volunteers made **1,445** surplus food collections

**359** tonnes of food saved from going to waste



**775,644** meals\* handed out

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

## ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Last year was about adapting our services to ensure we could continue to support vulnerable people within communities across the country. FoodCycle's core aims have always been to save surplus food, tackle food poverty and help prevent loneliness, which we continued to do throughout 2020.

We started the year running community meals, then provided a delivery service throughout lockdown, transitioned to Cook and Collect, as well as launching the new Check-in and Chat telephone service.

# FOODCYCLE DELIVERS

When the news of lockdown was announced we had to act fast. There were thousands of FoodCycle guests who relied on our weekly meals and we wanted to ensure they would not go without.

It was no small task but with the support of our venues, suppliers, volunteers and staff, within days we were delivering food parcels to doorsteps, right across the country.



**62,076** deliveries made

**27,400** miles travelled  
that's more than the distance around the world!

**161,400** people helped  
with an average of 2.6 people per household



"He loved his food parcel, and it makes him feel like opening up a Christmas gift."



"The two children really enjoy receiving the parcel and look forward to the surprise of what's in it."

# COOK AND COLLECT

As restrictions started to ease, volunteers were delighted to be able to get back in the kitchen and do what they do best – creating incredible, nutritious meals.

With some of our guests not having the facilities or confidence to cook a meal from scratch, it was important for us to offer this service. With socially distanced queues, hand sanitiser and plenty of facemasks, guests were delighted to have a reason to leave their home. Not only do they leave with tasty meals and a bag full of food, but it provides a form of social interaction, even if it is from a distance.



"I enjoy collecting my meals each week. It isn't the same as the community meals but it is the only thing I have planned each week. It's just nice to have just a small routine and I get to see other people."

# CHECK-IN AND CHAT

We know that a large proportion of our community meal guests came to us because they felt lonely (75% of them), so when we were unable to bring them together, we wanted to come up with a way that we could stay connected.

Within weeks we launched our new Check-in and Chat telephone service, where volunteers make weekly calls to check in on those we support, see how their week is going and just have a little natter. This new service has been so well-received by both volunteers and those receiving calls, that this is something we will continue, long after the pandemic is over.

8,774 calls made

348 Check-in and Chat volunteers

1.2 million minutes spent nattering



74,073 hot dishes\* cooked

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

21,231 the number of times our hosts said 'hello' to guests

"When I was hanging up she said it was the first time she'd had a proper conversation in a while and that it had been really nice to speak."

"She was very happy to receive the call, and said it was a treat to have an adult conversation and talk about her worries."



# FOODCYCLE GUESTS

The people we support are at the heart of FoodCycle and we were pleased we could continue to help those who previously attended our community meals.

However, with the knock-on effect of COVID-19 and lockdown, we were supporting a broader range of people than ever before. This included families, key workers, NHS staff, refugees and those who were falling through the gaps and unable to access government or other forms of support. The reasons for needing our support ranged from being in isolation to simply being unable to afford to buy food.



"We are a couple with a 25 day old baby, my husband is a self-employed driver. The only income we are getting is my maternity allowance. We are due this month's rent and bills as well and we are not entitled to any public funds due to our immigration status."

"I'm a self-employed cleaner who is no longer able to work. I've been left struggling for the past 3/4 weeks now food wise! I'm proudful and it's taken me a lot to message you guys but I literally have no one else to turn to."

"I have several illnesses including cancer and every penny goes on trying to heal my tumours so I used to rely upon FoodCycle Bath to provide most of my food for the week and I am now really desperate!!!"



"I'm an NHS worker sometimes finding it hard to go out for food and also money is a problem and I sometimes struggle to afford food."



62%

said they relied on FoodCycle as they simply could not afford to buy food

57%

said they were self-isolating

83%

said they ate more fruit and veg thanks to their FoodCycle delivery

92%

said the deliveries helped them during the pandemic



# VOLUNTEERS

A huge thank you to our growing team of Project Leaders and volunteers who show so much dedication, bring a humbling amount of energy and provide such an amazing service to their local community.

**5,900** new volunteers registered and trained with FoodCycle in 2020

## Natalie, Peterborough

Having struggled with addiction, been homeless and relied on FoodCycle's weekly meals, Natalie was keen to give back, now she is able to do so. "I really enjoy volunteering with FoodCycle, it's giving me something to do and keeps my mind busy whilst I'm trying to get back on my feet. It's also a nice way to stay connected with some old friends."

Volunteers donated **38,600** hours of their time

Which would cost **£366,600** if we paid them the living wage

Volunteers packed over **124,000** bags

## Nick, Newcastle

Being furloughed spurred Nick on to become a volunteer, something he had been wanting to do for a while. "I started making phone calls and then before long I was packing bags, making deliveries and now helping with Cook and Collect. I've seen every stage of the process. It was a great way to connect with people, both guests and other volunteers and it gave me something to focus on, gave me a purpose and some structure and has been so good for my mental health."



## Stephen, Cambridge

FoodCycle Trustee, Stephen was keen to volunteer for the new Check-in and Chat service. "I think it's important to contribute wherever possible, as it gives you a greater connection to the people we are supporting. I really wanted to have a chance to understand just what they are dealing with during this crisis and how we can help them."

## Laura, London

Laura had been volunteering monthly for over 2 years and chose to double her shifts as soon as lockdown was announced. "FoodCycle has always been an important part of the local community, but lockdown seemed to hit our guests even harder than most, so being able to support them through this difficult time has been really rewarding. It's been really helpful having something positive to focus on, and after a week of being glued to my laptop for work it's so refreshing to finish the week with some safe, face-to-face social interaction with the other volunteers and guests!"

## Ed, Bristol

Having moved to Bristol for a new job, Ed was looking for a volunteering opportunity that would help him connect with his community. Passionate about saving and repurposing food waste, FoodCycle was the perfect fit. "The charity's work and aims align with my personal values and lifestyle choices - I am helping to alleviate the social and financial position of less privileged individuals, fight a broken food system, encourage social/ community connection and promote healthy, nutritional meals. Plus, my employers are supporting too and regularly donate surplus fruit and veg."

# WHY WE ARE NEEDED

## UK families continue to go hungry...

Marcus Rashford's End Child Food Poverty Campaign states that 4.2 million UK children are in food poverty, with two in five not eligible for free school meals. Figures from the Social Market Foundation suggest that almost two million children in the UK went short of food this year, with some 16% of surveyed parents saying their children had to make do with smaller portions, skip meals or go a day without eating between March and September. A similar study from The Food Foundation focusing on four million adults living with children, reported 12% of parents skipped meals because they could not afford or access food. On that note, 80% of FoodCycle guests who attended with children told us they skip meals.

## Destitution

A study on destitution in the UK from Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that more than a million UK households experienced destitution at some point in 2019, with one third (32%) of those households reported having no immediate source of income in the last month. While 78% of the population of destitute service users had incomes below the 'extremely low income' threshold – with at least 32% with no income at all and 74% with incomes of less than £70 a week.

## Loneliness

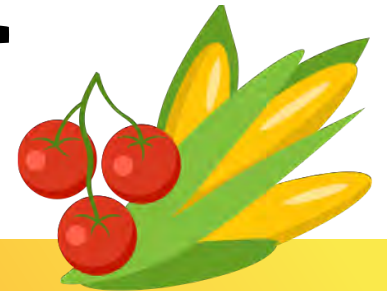
An Office of National Statistics study revealed that 30.9% (7.4 million adults) said their wellbeing had been affected through feeling lonely in the past seven days, and one in twelve respondents surveyed between 28 October and 1 November described themselves as always or often lonely. Young people are particularly at risk - with 16 to 29-year-olds twice as likely as the over-70s to be experiencing loneliness in the pandemic. Before the pandemic, 75% of FoodCycle guests told us they were lonely.

## Food waste is on the rise...

WRAP carried out two studies during lockdown: in April consumers reported a reduction in wasted food but in June surplus levels began to increase from 14% to 18% on bread, milk, potatoes and chicken. The most recent official figures covering pre-lockdown, published in January 2020, show that UK households waste 4.5m tonnes of usable food a year – enough food to easily fill 30 Royal Albert Halls and worth a total of £14bn.



# IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY



The Office of National Statistics found community spirit on the up in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic – with 64% of adults saying other local community members would support them if they needed help and three in four adults saying they thought people had been doing more to help others since the pandemic.

Having good social connections and eating a healthy, nutritious diet are important influences on health and can help protect against causes of stress.

We know that the pandemic has, and will continue to have, a devastating impact on many, including mental health, income and social interactions/loneliness. That's why returning to FoodCycle community meals and expanding into new communities is more important than ever.

Our focus for 2021 and beyond will be to strengthen communities by providing a safe and welcoming place to share nutritious food and conversation.



# OUR SUPPORTERS



As well as continuing their invaluable financial support for FoodCycle in 2020, COOK donated over 1,000 meals from their Clapham store during the first lockdown which our volunteers delivered to local people in need.



Through this challenging year our corporate partners have provided fantastic support, enabling us to help more people struggling to access food and friendly conversation.



It was another successful year for our long-term partnership with Just Eat. Staff (including the executive team) volunteered at FoodCycle projects across the country and the company's delivery partner, Stuart, helped get food to people across Birmingham during lockdown. They also launched their Christmas Meal Appeal where they matched customer donations, raising over £180,000 for FoodCycle.



## octopus

FoodCycle's 3-year partnership with Octopus was rounded off with fantastic fundraising and volunteering efforts from employees. "Our people really feel the impact of working with FoodCycle and know how the help we give both financially and via volunteering is directly supporting their FoodCycle guests." Louise Skinner, Octopus Giving Programme Manager

## THE OLD VIC

FoodCycle was thrilled to be selected as the charity partner for The Old Vic's live streamed performances of A Christmas Carol in December. Andrew Lincoln's portrayal of Scrooge inspired the audience to donate an incredible £240,000 which was generously matched by the play's writer Jack Thorne and his wife Rachel.



Photo credit Manual Harlan

## Virtual Cooking Sessions

FoodCycle's brilliant chef supporters and patrons led a series of virtual cooking events. Participants cooked delicious dishes from across the world, thanks to Danilo Cortellini, Ben Tish, Cyrus Todiwala, Monica Haldar and the team at Fooditude.



Ray Domingo, previously a volunteer at FoodCycle East Acton, organised a virtual 12-hour non-stop DJ set, raising over £2,400.

Budding MasterChef, Abbey, cooked an incredible 200 vegetarian meals in 100 days whilst raising money for FoodCycle.



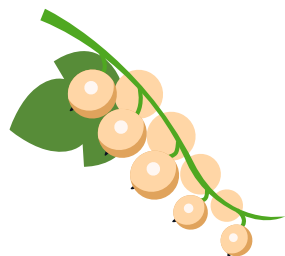
Oliver Ormond at Macquarie organised a 48 mile running challenge in the summer with his university friend Ben, raising an amazing £1,700.



# WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES



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



Income 2020	£1,600,036
Corporate donations	£612,006
Trusts and Foundations	£474,207
Individual income	£363,520
Community income & other	£64,165
Gifts in kind	£86,138



# THANK YOU

A special thank you to all the amazing companies, trusts, individuals, restaurants, chefs and organisations across the country who have either made a donation, donated food, staff time, vehicles, transport, services, supported with deliveries or helped with food distribution – there are just too many of you to fit on to the page.

## Corporates

Just Eat, Octopus, Redevco, Ocado, Evercore, COOK, Macquarie, Robey Warshaw, North East Controls Ltd, Westerleigh Group, ENGINE, Marsh, Brora and Hotpoint.

## Trusts and Foundations

The Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, Antonio Carluccio Foundation, Barbour Foundation, Charities Aid Foundation, CityLife Line, The Chrysalis Trust, Delfont Foundation, Drapers Charitable Fund, The Dulverton Trust, Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust, Eveson Charitable Trust, The Fishmongers' Company, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Henry Smith Charity, The Lyons Charitable Trust, The Medicash Foundation, Morrisons Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, Quartet Community Foundation, Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, Westminster Foundation and WRAP.

## Food Suppliers

Aldi, Asda, Booker Wholesale, City Harvest, Co-op, The Felix Project, FareShare, Lidl, M&S, Mindful Chef, Morrisons, Riverford Organic Farmers, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## Volunteer

All Projects are run by a team of incredible volunteers and we are always looking for more people to join us. Roles include collecting food, cooking, or hosting. You can also support the new Check-in and Chat service by signing up to make weekly phone calls to natter with our guests.

To sign up to volunteer please visit [www.foodcycle.org.uk](http://www.foodcycle.org.uk)

## Become a corporate partner

We work in partnership with organisations large and small to help achieve our aims. We provide fantastic fundraising and volunteering opportunities to bring together staff and demonstrate your wonderful commitment to your community.

From a Cause Related Marketing campaign, to forming a long-term partnership and providing pro-bono support, partnering with FoodCycle will align your brand with a respected national charity.

We love to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with organisations which help us deliver support to the most vulnerable people in communities.

## Fundraise

You could take on something sporty such as a walk, run, swim or cycle; organise something food related such as a virtual cookalong for family and friends or arrange an event like a virtual quiz night or karaoke evening. We have a tonne of ideas to inspire you on our website and we can offer advice about your fundraising.

For more information on fundraising and corporate partnerships please email [jess@foodcycle.org.uk](mailto:jess@foodcycle.org.uk)





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[www.foodcycle.org.uk](http://www.foodcycle.org.uk)

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