

**NOURISHING COMMUNITIES  
WITH FOOD AND CONVERSATION**



**2022 SOCIAL  
IMPACT  
REPORT**



# WELCOME!

As I look back, I am hugely proud of FoodCycle's achievements through yet another challenging year. Our volunteers and staff were resolute in continuing to provide nourishing meals and social connections under constantly changing restrictions whilst working on plans to return to community dining.

From 19th July FoodCycle was finally able to get back to doing what it does best: bringing people together over a hearty meal, to have great conversations, connect with others whilst at the same time rescuing surplus food.

Having good social connections and eating a nutritious diet are hugely important to the health of individuals and society as a whole. We are proud that our community dining model helps to change behaviour for both our guests and volunteers, with people trying new foods, eating more fruit and vegetables whilst making friends and getting to know people from different backgrounds.

Knowing our Projects have facilitated such positive changes, we believe passionately that community dining should be taking place every week throughout the whole country. In 2022 we intend

to carry out research to demonstrate these positive benefits and encourage wider involvement.

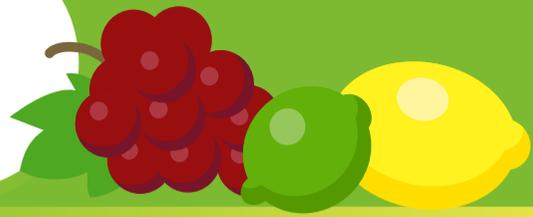
We were all delighted that our very own Sophie Tebbetts, Head of Programmes, was awarded the Charity Times Supporting Leader of the Year 2021 for her outstanding work and determination to adapt our programme to deliver throughout the pandemic.

I too was honoured to receive the MBE from her Royal Highness Princess Anne at Windsor Castle at the end of the year. It was an amazing opportunity to share with HRH how fantastic our volunteers are and how much they care about saving surplus food whilst caring for others in their communities.

A very big thank you to all who help make FoodCycle such a warm and welcoming space and for supporting our work over the course of last year.

**Mary McGrath MBE**  
**FoodCycle CEO**

**47** local communities benefitted from FoodCycle services



**16** new projects launched



**455,000** meals served\*



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



**6,083** Check-in and Chat telephone conversations



**3,600** volunteers donated 63,880 hours of their time



**1.9M** minutes spent engaging with our guests\*\*



**86%** of FoodCycle guests said that coming to a FoodCycle meal makes them feel part of their community



*\*equivalent meals, based on the assumption an average meal weighs 420g (FSA 2008)  
\*\*total contact time through Community Meals, takeaway service or Check-in and Chat calls*

# VISION

To make food poverty, loneliness and food waste a thing of the past for every community.

# MISSION

Week in, week out, we nourish the hungry and lonely in our communities with delicious meals and great conversation, using food which would otherwise go to waste.

## AIMS



### Connect communities

Help strengthen and build resilient communities by bringing people together to share healthy, delicious meals.



### Support mental health, wellbeing and reduce loneliness

Enhance the health and mental wellbeing of all by creating welcoming spaces for people from all backgrounds and walks of life to have conversations together.



### Nourish the hungry

Improve nutrition and reduce hunger by cooking healthy meals for those in need, leading to improved food knowledge and changes in behaviour.



### Promote sustainability

Change attitudes to food and society's impact on the environment by cooking with surplus ingredients.



### Inspire change

Share the virtues of our community dining model and the voices of our guests to gain greater support and speed our expansion, enabling us to help more people and more communities.



# WHY WE ARE NEEDED

## **14.5 million people are in poverty**

A report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation states that 1 in 5 of the UK population (22%) is living in poverty. Following the removal of the £20 increase to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit, and with energy tariffs and tax bills set to rise, British families face the prospect of having to endure the worst cost of living crisis for 30 years. The full impact of the pandemic is yet to hit home but it is predicted that it will further increase levels of destitution and 61% of FoodCycle guests are already reporting that they struggle to pay bills.

## **Loneliness is rife after the pandemic**

Half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all and 70% of FoodCycle guests said that they sometimes or often felt lonely. The pandemic meant people have spent even more time on their own and they are missing human connection and social interaction. A FoodCycle guest from Islington says "I haven't been outside for most of covid and I have been so excited to get back to FoodCycle to see my friends, I really missed seeing them every week. I feel like I am ready to start living again."

## **Good food is still going to waste**

A WRAP report estimates that a UK household wastes on average the equivalent of 8 meals a week. Whilst we are getting better at reducing food waste, we are still throwing away 4.5 million tonnes of perfectly good food each year, with a value of £13.8 billion. The carbon associated with this food is equivalent to that generated by one in five cars on UK roads.

## **Nutrition improves wellbeing**

Results from a national survey published in the American Journal of Public Health, showed that frequent fruit and vegetable consumption can increase happiness, life satisfaction and wellbeing in just two years. 81% of our guests said that they eat more fruit and vegetables because of FoodCycle and 84% said that the meals have given them the chance to try new foods.

## **Supporting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals**

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an urgent call for action by all countries, recognising that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. FoodCycle's work contributes to multiple goals by tackling food poverty, food waste, bringing communities together and supporting health and wellbeing.

# THE RETURN TO COMMUNITY MEALS



2021 saw the return to our much-loved Community Meals. With extra safety measures in place, we were finally able to invite our guests to sit inside and share a delicious, nutritious, three-course meal with us.

The volunteers were pleased to be back in the kitchen, and we have seen so many tasty meals dished up. Some favourites include lasagne, curries, stews and we even made a full Christmas dinner at many of our Projects.

Having good social connections and eating a healthy, nutritious diet are important influences on health and wellbeing, which is why we will continue to bring our meals to as many communities as possible over the coming years.



**86%** of FoodCycle guests said that coming to a FoodCycle meal makes them feel part of their community

**85%** said it gives them a reason to leave the house

**83%** said they feel happier after attending a FoodCycle meal

**81%** said they eat more fruit and vegetables



“FoodCycle is amazing! You meet up with other lonely people. You make friends. It’s like a family evening when we come to you. We are so welcomed from the volunteers. We are given a beautifully cooked meal. The volunteers come round to each table and talk to us. They are so caring. Thank you for all the hard work you do for the community.”

**FoodCycle guest, Marylebone**



“Great to come back to the Saturday night group, to a place where I belong, it makes my mood happier to come back to the centre.”

**FoodCycle guest, Prestwich**



“I think it is a great way to rebuild the community. This is what society needs more than ever in my opinion.”

**FoodCycle guest, Cambridge**



“I’ve loved being able to attend the sit-in meals and trying food I wouldn’t think to cook or try at home (the mushroom on the bread blew me away). I love the atmosphere - it is so friendly and being able to sit and talk with new faces has helped me mentally not feel so alone. I would give it 100% - Thank you.”

**FoodCycle guest, Birmingham West Heath**



# DELIVERIES AND COOK & COLLECT



At the beginning of 2021, with restrictions still in place, we were still providing food to our guests through deliveries and our Cook and Collect takeaway service. Whilst it may not have been the sit-down meals everyone was hoping for, it gave people a reason to leave their home and enabled them to have some social interaction, even if it was from a distance.

**93%** said that they had eaten more fruit and vegetables  
**95%** said it had helped them through the pandemic



“Lifeline. Social contact. Practical advice and signposting about helplines. A reason for me to go out. A fixed point in my week. Human love and concern when I felt abandoned by everyone else. Something to look forward to.”

**FoodCycle guest, Bristol Barton Hill**

“I live alone, I am a carer and elderly. I looked forward to the contact on Fridays. Seeing someone even through the windows and being treated to nice food was so helpful.”

**FoodCycle guest, Norwood Junction**

“We have had a very hard time financially due to my wife losing her job during the pandemic. The fruit, veg, bread and occasional tinned food we have received has been a huge help in managing to feed our family. The hot meal and desserts have also been hugely helpful, because we have at least one meal a week that we have not had to make ends meet for. I would like to say a huge thank you to all the volunteers at FoodCycle, your help and friendly faces over this period have been greatly appreciated.”

**FoodCycle guest, Kingstanding**

“I love the meals supplied by your wonderful organisation. You made my life bearable with deliveries to my front door when I was housebound. A thousand thank yous.”

**FoodCycle guest, Marylebone**

# CHECK-IN AND CHAT



Born out of the pandemic, the new telephone service continues to be a popular addition to FoodCycle's services. Each week volunteers make calls to those that might be feeling lonely or in need of social contact.

6,083

**Check-in and Chat  
telephone conversations**

77%

**of people said that receiving a  
weekly call had made them feel  
less lonely**



Graham has been a guest at FoodCycle Langworthy ever since it started. When the pandemic hit, he immediately signed up to the Check-in and Chat service.

He says "I thought it was a great idea and it's really nice to talk to different people. I feel very happy after my calls, we talk a lot about food, what I do with my free time and any cooking that I've been doing at home. I live on my own so it's a good idea for people who don't always have somebody to chat to at home. I'd definitely recommend it for others like myself."

**"To me it's a way to know that I'm not alone, somebody,  
a friend, is on the other side of the line."**

**"I cannot put into words how helpful they are. It's so  
validating to have an empathetic ear willing to listen,  
even on a good week, but especially on a hard one."**

# FOODCYCLE GUESTS

Whether they receive weekly calls, have collected take-away meals or shared a Community Meal with us, our guests are at the heart of everything we do. At FoodCycle we operate a 'no questions asked' policy, so everyone is welcome, no matter their situation.

People use our services for many different reasons, which means we see a diverse range of people come through the doors, from all backgrounds and walks of life.



**82%**  
of guests said they  
have made friends

**90%**  
said they had met  
people from different  
backgrounds

**91%**  
said they felt "well fed"  
after a FoodCycle meal

**81%**  
said they felt less  
lonely after attending a  
FoodCycle meal

**88%**  
said FoodCycle gives them  
a safe space to socialise

**60%**  
will often or sometimes  
skip a meal



"FoodCycle has changed our lives. As Asylum seekers, my husband and I get paid £37.50 per week, we're struggling since we began the asylum process. FoodCycle was sent from heaven as all of our vegetables are from FoodCycle. We appreciate everything you are doing for the community. God Bless every individual who is involved in making this come true. Thank you for everyone who is helping."  
**FoodCycle guests, Birmingham West Heath**



"Being part of a group that meets here on a Saturday takes away my loneliness and helps my mental wellbeing. Being amongst other people and to socially interact and make new friends is really beneficial. The service by the staff and the food they provide is lovely."  
**FoodCycle guest, Kilburn**



"The volunteers in the kitchen prepare very nourishing tasty 3 course meals with the ingredients received. Servings are generous and for those of us with large appetites are assured of seconds. It's an excuse to have a sit-down meal and get to converse with others. It's much nicer than being on my own at home. I count the days to the next meal and exchange of news."  
**FoodCycle guest, Norwood Junction**



"I live on my own, coming to FoodCycle has opened up my life, being with other people and sharing a meal together means a lot to me. It is so welcoming and friendly. The volunteers are so warm and so helpful. The food is marvellous, and I look forward to coming every Saturday. I feel very fortunate to have this meal each week, the food is so tasty and fresh and healthy."  
**FoodCycle guest, Peckham**

"It's the highlight of my week."  
**FoodCycle guest, Bristol Barton Hill**

"It has kept me alive the past 6 months - I've met my tribe - thank you so much."  
**FoodCycle guest, Bristol Barton Hill**

"It is my favourite day of the week. Nice sit-down meal, good conversation and always feel welcome."  
**FoodCycle guest, Exeter**



# VOLUNTEERS

Once again, our volunteers have continued to go above and beyond, adapting when needed and ensuring that we can continue to provide good food and friendly conversation, week in, week out.

It's not only our guests that benefit from the weekly Community Meals and Check-in and Chat calls, volunteering has a really positive impact for those giving their time too, with 87% saying they have met people from different backgrounds and 61% saying that it has given their lives a new sense of purpose.



 **3,600 volunteers donated 63,880 hours of their time**

## Why people volunteer...

**95%** want to help reduce food poverty

**82%** want to help strengthen their local community

**88%** can't stand food waste

**78%** to help tackle loneliness

**69%** to meet new people



# MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS



Eddy is a volunteer at FoodCycle Westgate and says “I chose to volunteer at FoodCycle because dealing with surplus food and waste is important in our communities. I really enjoy meeting new people and staying connected with young people and volunteering is good for us retired folks.”

Former researcher Anne has been a volunteer at FoodCycle Islington for five years. “The thing I love about FoodCycle is that no two sessions are the same and you’re doing it with a group of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds, completely different to my usual group of friends. But over the years those people, the regular volunteers, have actually become my friends. Also, I love food, and I love to see people eating together.”



Volunteering at FoodCycle Westgate, Sarah says “I do lots of jobs, from packing the surplus bags, serving hot meals and making teas and coffees. One of the main things I love about being a Project Leader is interacting with new people every week, I find it so rewarding.”

**95%** of guests rate the friendliness of the volunteers as **excellent**



“The volunteers are VERY friendly, compassionate and approachable. They listen to me. They don’t judge me. They don’t quiz me. They always ask me how I am. They are so kind, thoughtful and generous with their time.”

FoodCycle guest, Cambridge

“I enjoy the happy, lovely volunteers who put a smile on my face.”

FoodCycle guest, Liverpool Dingle

# OUR SUPPORTERS

Throughout 2021 grant funders, corporates and individuals continued to provide fantastic support, enabling us to expand our Projects into new areas and reach more people struggling to access food and friendly conversation.



FoodCycle's partnership with Just Eat continues to go from strength to strength. Just Eat's Christmas Meal Appeal was the most successful yet, raising over £251,000 (including a donation from one of Just Eat's partners, Coca-Cola). Just Eat staff across the UK, including those in Birmingham, Sunderland and London, also organised fundraising events, and staff (including the executive team) volunteered at FoodCycle Projects.



We were thrilled to establish a new partnership with Quorn in 2021. The company's generous financial support has helped us launch new Projects, including in Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Leeds. Quorn employees have been active FoodCycle volunteers and our guests have benefitted from nutritious meals made with donated Quorn products.





Continuing their fantastic partnership with FoodCycle, COOK provided additional financial support in 2021 to open a new Project close to their head office in Sittingbourne, Kent.



Boursin ran a Christmas campaign with FoodCycle, supporting our work and teaming up with MasterChef winner Kenny Tutt to create a series of recipes to help prevent food going to waste over the festive period. The recipes were widely featured in the press and Kenny also hosted a special cook-along for FoodCycle volunteers and staff.



It was a fun-filled year of fundraising as Whirlpool staff took part in the FoodCycle 50 Challenge and the Virtual London Marathon for FoodCycle. Their donations of kitchen appliances have been invaluable to help our volunteers store fresh produce and meals at venues.

## Other corporate support:

Some of our amazing corporate partners raised funds through customer campaigns. Planty donated a portion of sales in November, and our London Projects benefitted from Whole Foods Market's Shop Local Give Local campaign in December. We've been delighted to have continued support from Yorkshire Handmade Pies, who have donated 30p to FoodCycle for every sale.



A grant from the Redevco Foundation helped us transition back to Community Meals following the easing of coronavirus restrictions.

## Food Invention Challenges

Our bespoke employee volunteering sessions returned in 2021. Staff from 18 companies, including Goldman Sachs, Rude Health and the Wellcome Trust, attended the team-building sessions and were challenged to create delicious dishes using surplus food – the meals were then given to local people in need.



## Community Fundraising

Cyclist Jon Casey pedaled 354 miles in 24 hours from Crediton to Lowestoft, raising a fantastic £2,153 for FoodCycle.

Pupils, staff and parents at The Paragon School in Bath raised over £2,000 for FoodCycle Bath during 2021 and donated store cupboard essentials to their local Project.

## FoodCycle 50

2021 saw the launch of our new annual challenge event, FoodCycle 50. Volunteers, supporters and corporate partners undertook a range of initiatives, including running, cycling and swimming, collectively raising over £11,000. We had everything from running pineapples, surfing bananas and swimming strawberries.



# THANK YOU

*With many thanks to all our supporters during 2021, including:*

## **Corporates**

Just Eat, Quorn, Coca Cola, Redevco, COOK, Boursin, Taylor Wimpey, Hotpoint, Octopus, Oxygen House, Whole Foods Market, Savills, Metro Rod, Macquarie, and Rolls-Royce Bristol.

## **Trusts and Foundations**

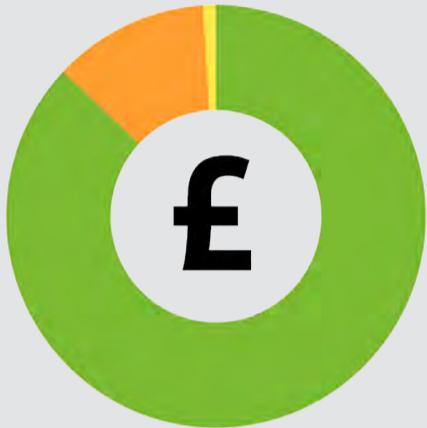
The Fishmongers Company, Drapers' Charitable Fund, Charities Aid Foundation, The Eveson Charitable Trust, EQ Foundation, Henry Smith Charity, The Moondance Foundation, Sir James Knott Trust, Society of the Holy Child Jesus, The Steel Charitable Trust, and The Swire Charitable Trust.

## **Food Suppliers**

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

And a special thank you to all the amazing companies, trusts, individuals, independent shops, restaurants, chefs and organisations across the country who have either made a donation, donated food or staff time – there are just too many of you to fit on to the page.

# WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES



85%

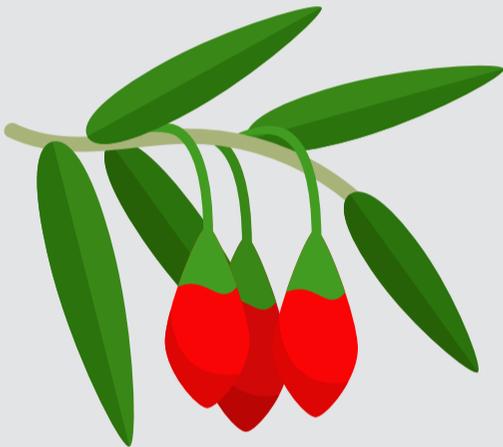
**Charitable activities**

14%

**Fundraising**

1%

**Governance**



## Income 2021

Corporate donations	£505,357
Trusts and Foundations	£322,415
Individual income	£361,633
Community income	£27,063
Other	£45,501
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,261,969</b>

Figures are draft and are subject to change when final accounts are produced in April 2022

## IN THE MEDIA



Throughout the year, FoodCycle was featured or mentioned in over 230 articles and reports.

This included everything from regional newspapers and radio stations to national articles in The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian and the Evening Standard. Volunteers and employees also appeared on Blue Peter, Sky News, BBC Wales and ITV East Anglia.



# 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.

## **Corporate Partnership**

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 cook-along for family and friends or arrange an event like a 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.

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

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



## **NOURISHING COMMUNITIES WITH FOOD AND CONVERSATION**

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 @foodcyclehq

 in foodcycle

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

FoodCycle is a company limited by guarantee (number 7101349)  
and a registered charity in England and Wales (number 1134423)

Registered office: FoodCycle, 2.16, The Food Exchange,  
New Covent Garden Market, London, SW8 5EL