



2023 IMPACT REPORT





A warm welcome!



I am enormously proud of what we managed to achieve in 2023, it was an exceptional year of growth and ended with us serving, on average, 3,000 guests a week. Our aim was to open 20 new Projects but in true FoodCycle style, we exceeded this and launched 22, including establishing ourselves in the East Midlands for the first time. None of it would have been possible without staff, volunteers and supporters who have worked tirelessly to help us achieve this.

We started the year with our research report 'Your Place at the Table' which demonstrated that community dining acts as a social anchor for many, benefitting both mental and physical health through nutritious food and social connection. This is the first in a series of annual reports.

As we've grown, so has the support of our fantastic charitable trusts and corporate partners and it's been wonderful to build new partnerships as well as strengthen existing ones, helping us to carry on our invaluable work.

Heading into the summer, we launched our 'Community Dine with Me' awareness and volunteer recruitment campaign, a pro-bono media campaign that came through The Creative Shootout and gave us over £200,000 of agency support and advertising space.

We also took the time to look at how we deepen our impact for our guests, working with partners to create enhanced nutritional training for volunteers as well and developing a digital signposting platform to be used at Projects.

Last year wasn't without its challenges. Access to surplus food continues to peak and trough but we're working hard to secure sustainable partnerships so we can keep serving nutritious and well-balanced meals. The cost-of-living continues to bite, resulting in rising running costs but also hugely impacting our guests - 76% worry that their financial situation will continue to get worse.

We also said farewell to Mary McGrath after 10 amazing years as FoodCycle CEO. My focus as the new CEO will be to build on Mary's foundations and make sure that we continue to serve as many people and communities as possible, creating connected, well fed, resilient and sustainable communities.

FoodCycle community meals will run in 100 locations by the end of this year, and we'll have served over 3.5 million meals to date! A true cause for celebration as we mark our 15th Birthday!

Sophie Tebbetts
Chief Executive



2023 in numbers

83 communities benefitted from FoodCycle community meals

We saved **239 tonnes** of food from going to waste, which equates to 563,945 portions of food*

We dished up **127,587** community meals**

5,849 volunteers donated 133,295 hours of their time

The food that we saved would have equated to **148,725 kg of CO₂** emissions, had it have gone to landfill



214,461 hours spent engaging with our guests***

22 new Projects opened in 2023

The number of guests eating with us increased by **57%**

92% of FoodCycle guests said that coming to a FoodCycle meal makes them feel happier

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

**A community meal is a two or three course meal cooked and served by FoodCycle volunteers and eaten by our community of guests and volunteers.

***total contact time through community meals 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



4.2 million children are growing up in poverty

Data collected by The Food Foundation reports that families are being hit the hardest, with 23.4% of households with children are experiencing food insecurity compared to 14.8% of households without children. They also report that children in the UK are shorter than their EU counterparts, due to poor nutrition.

Food poverty negatively impacts our ability to eat a sustainable diet

72% of FoodCycle guests say they can't afford to buy the food they need, let alone the luxury of nutritious ingredients. Increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables to 5 a day can add 8 months onto life expectancy and decrease greenhouse gases by 8.2%.

Saving waste and the planet

In 2021/22, WRAP reported that 6.4 million tonnes of food (and drink) waste was generated from UK households. This equates to 95 kg per person per year. If we continue as we are, by 2050, emissions from the food system will be 4 times higher than the level that is needed by the UK to meet its net zero target.

Food insecurity is impacting health

Hospital data for England and Wales reveals that in the past decade there has been a startling rise in diagnoses linked to poor diet. Lack of nutrition can lead to vitamin deficiencies, rickets and malnutrition, which could develop into serious long term health conditions.

Feeling lonely negatively affects mental wellbeing

Campaign to End Loneliness reports that 60% of people experiencing chronic loneliness also experience mental distress. Researchers found that people who eat socially are more likely to feel better about themselves and have a wider social network capable of providing social and emotional support.

Supporting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

FoodCycle's work delivers against six of the goals: Food Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Reduced Inequalities, Responsible Consumption and Production and Climate Action.



Community meals

FoodCycle community meals continue to bring food, conversation and company to people across England and Wales. We're proud of the welcoming, warm and safe spaces we create, which are enjoyed by guests and volunteers alike.

88%

of guests say that coming to a FoodCycle meal makes them feel part of their community

92%

of guests said they feel happier after attending a FoodCycle meal

73%

of volunteers said they have met people from different backgrounds



"I think FoodCycle is a necessity for the community for companionship and to help free people with the cost-of-living troubles. Thank you so much for all that you do."

FoodCycle guest, Chelmsford

"Meeting and working with different people, making a positive impact on the community, doing something good for other people."

FoodCycle volunteer, Wembley

"Excellent community service, helps feed those in need and brings cohesion and sense of belonging to the community."

FoodCycle guest, Peterborough



"I think FoodCycle is a very important place, not just for food but for community and meeting people. It's a very large part of community acceptance and meeting new friends in similar positions."
FoodCycle guest, East Ham (London)



"As relatively new to the UK (3 years) it has given me an opportunity to meet new people and make a difference in the community. I love cooking and FoodCycle has given me an opportunity to use my skills effectively."
FoodCycle volunteer, Milton Keynes

"Appreciate all the volunteers putting time and effort into providing for the community. Everybody makes you feel part of the community no matter who you are."
FoodCycle guest, Hucknall (Nottingham)



Check-in and Chat

Our Check-in and Chat volunteers made 2,780 calls in 2023. The service, which was set up during lockdown, has now run its course and we have made the decision to bring an end to the calls. All service users now attend a FoodCycle community meal or have been signposted to an alternative service.

Guests

Having a warm and welcoming space to connect is vitally important to our guests. People attend a FoodCycle community meal for lots of reasons but we're there every week making sure they leave feeling well-fed and happier.

Circumstance

72% feel lonely

69% eat most or all their meals alone
(when not at FoodCycle)

46% live on their own

40% have a long-term physical health
condition

But the benefits are clear:

93% feel well fed

92% feel happier

88% feel part of their community
after attending a FoodCycle
meal

85% have made friends at a
FoodCycle meal

84% feel less lonely

79% eat more fresh fruit and
vegetables because of
FoodCycle





“Amazing charity that gets me thinking of different foods to cook with, they have saved my life. The whole team are amazing.”

FoodCycle guest, Clacton



“Thank you for the most amazing, cosy, warm, friendly facility and tasty community meal. There is no other like yours.”

FoodCycle guest, Byker (Newcastle)

“FoodCycle makes me feel human. It’s like going to a 5-star restaurant and being waited on. I like it - it is clean. The people are friendly. They make everyone feel welcome. Thank you.”

FoodCycle guest, Woolwich (London)

“I think it is a wonderful service. Living alone I find it difficult to cook for myself. I suffer from depression and socialising is very important for me. Thank you to all the fantastic volunteers.”

FoodCycle guest, Falcon Lodge (Birmingham)

“The volunteers are lovely and the people who come are just as nice. There’s always a friendly face no matter the weather. I enjoy bringing my daughter and sitting with my sister while we all chat. It’s a great place.”

FoodCycle guest, Sheffield

It takes me over an hour to get here and I’m pregnant, but I still come every Monday to see the other women from Ukraine I met here. We are all living across London now, but we get a few hours together once a week when our kids can play, and we can talk. There’s lots of different food every week and there is always something fresh.”

FoodCycle guest, Dalston (London)



Volunteers

FoodCycle community meals would not be possible without our dedicated team of Project Leaders and volunteers. Every week, across the country they cook up incredible meals and ensure that every person who comes through the door leaves with a smile.

Volunteers join us for various reasons

81%

want to help
reduce food
poverty

64%

want to tackle
loneliness

53%

want to meet
new people

45% have made friends

40% have gained new skills or
improved existing ones

31% have tried food they
haven't eaten before

73% said they have met people from
different backgrounds

46% have a better understanding of
issues surrounding food waste

68% feel good about themselves
after volunteering



"I love cooking, baking and helping people, FoodCycle offers me the opportunity to try new recipes, be creative and get real time feedback. Meeting people from different backgrounds keeps me out of the bubble I used to live in."
FoodCycle volunteer, Birmingham

"Everyone is valued and treated with respect regardless of their background. I've met so many people and have a greater understanding and consideration for loneliness and food insecurity/poverty."
FoodCycle volunteer, Sheffield



"Food is my passion and my career and I also hate the thought that food is wasted unnecessarily. I like helping others and learning about other cultures particularly related to food. I have exchanged recipes with some of the attendees in the past. I like the fact that FoodCycle is all inclusive - everyone should feel valued."
FoodCycle volunteer, Westgate

"I have anxiety and ADHD and I was very nervous about volunteering. The team found the time to email and talk with me on the phone and arranged for me to come in and have a look around before my first session. It was invaluable to have that 1:1 introduction, it really helped to put me at ease, and I was much less scared my first time because I knew what to expect. I enjoyed it so much that I signed up for the next week on the way home!"
FoodCycle volunteer, Salford



Equal Opportunities

FoodCycle prides itself on being an inclusive and diverse organisation and is proud to have been recognised as a Disability Confident Employer as well as receiving Pioneer status from the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDI).

Our supporters

Once again, supporters old and new have gone above and beyond. Donating time, money and expertise which all enables us to expand into new areas and reach more people struggling to access food and friendly conversation.



Our long-standing partner, Just Eat, provided amazing support in 2023. Their teams got involved in fundraising, volunteering at Projects, organising office food collections as well as completing a 137-mile cycle challenge between their London and Bristol offices. The year culminated with the Winter Meal Appeal, where Just Eat donated 5p from every order throughout the week-long campaign.



It was another busy year for FoodCycle's partnership with Quorn Foods. As well as continued financial support, they co-commissioned our 'Your Place at the Table' report, donated Quorn products and vouchers for our meals, hosted one of our Volunteer Celebration events at their Leeds HQ, including a cooking demonstration, and employees regularly volunteered at Projects.



FoodCycle was thrilled to launch a new three-year partnership with Danone in 2023. Alongside financial support, Danone employees have been busy volunteering at FoodCycle Projects, contributing hundreds of hours. Danone's Nutrition team also provided their expertise to develop new resources for volunteers and guests, including enhanced Nutrition Training for FoodCycle volunteers, video content and a booklet with healthy eating and cooking tips.



FoodCycle received continued funding from the Compass Group Foundation to support volunteer training and development. Compass Group chefs hosted an evening of cooking demonstrations and workshops with FoodCycle Project Leaders in the West Midlands, hosted and supported our Volunteer Celebration events and lots of employees volunteered at our Projects.



FoodCycle was selected as Bel UK's charity partner in 2023. As well as providing financial support, the company's brand, Boursin, supported FoodCycle by launching a beachfront pop-up bistro alongside Great British Bake Off star Manon Lagreve.



CALASTONE

In addition to supporting key FoodCycle events, employees also took part in several Food Invention Challenges and raised funds through challenge events and other initiatives throughout the year.



Pen Underwriting selected FoodCycle as its charity partner for 2023 and 2024. Employees raised funds through numerous events across the country including the Great South Run and hosted FoodCycle at their annual conference. The company has supported Projects through food donations and employees have deep cleaned some of our venues.



Fortem Capital continued their support through their annual Charity Flight Night darts evening, and once again Director Chris Dagg took part in the 100-mile Ride London event.



Other corporate support:

Many other corporate partners provided wonderful support this year. Mewburn Ellis made a financial donation; the National Composites Centre raised over £11,000 for our Bristol Projects by cycling from Bristol to Cologne; Protiviti selected FoodCycle as their charity partner and raised over £10,000 through a series of events; Shake Shack Oxford Street included a donation on one of their menu items and KitchenCraft generously donated kitchen equipment to our West Midlands Projects.



Roots and Shoots Gala Dinner

Some of the UK's top chefs, including FoodCycle Patron Danilo Cortellini, Ben Tish, Luke Tipping, Stefan Pini and Lorenzo Salami donated their time to cook up an exquisite meal for over 100 diners. The evening, hosted by food broadcaster Nigel Barden, was an opportunity to bring supporters and corporate partners together to share a meal and raise vital funds. The event wouldn't have been possible without our sponsor Just Eat, The Fishmongers' Company who kindly gifted the use of their livery hall and their staff's time, Compass Group's chefs who created the canapés and all the generous companies who gifted drinks, food and auction prizes.

Danilo Cortellini hosts Italian Feast

Supported by FoodCycle volunteers, talented chef and FoodCycle patron, Danilo Cortellini, whipped up a delicious four-course Italian feast. 60 paying diners enjoyed the one-off supper club designed to evoke the spirit of community dining which raised over £3,000. The evening was generously sponsored by Calastone and all the food and wine were kindly donated by Danilo's suppliers.



Community Fundraising and Food Invention Challenges



The University of East Anglia chose FoodCycle as Charity Partner for 2023 with students taking part in a range of fundraising initiatives.



CASA BRUGAL

A pop-up event 'Casa Brugal' held in Hackney, London and organised by Edrington and other community partners raised funds for FoodCycle's London Projects.

Challenge events

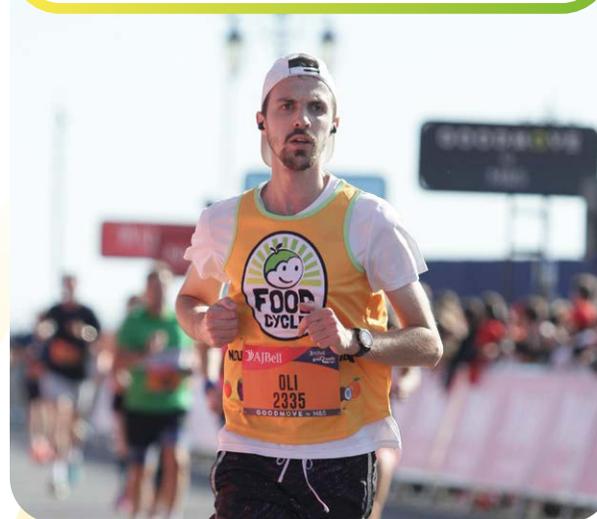
It was our biggest year yet for challenge events, with many corporate partners, volunteers and supporters running, swimming and cycling to raise vital funds for FoodCycle.

Places in FoodCycle's London Landmarks Half Marathon and Ride London teams continued to be sought after, and supporters also got involved in over 20 events from the Hackney Half to the Manchester Marathon.



Food Invention Challenges

2023 was our busiest year ever for Food Invention Challenges, with 22 companies taking part, including Goldman Sachs, The Wellcome Trust and Virgin Music. These fun sessions bring teams together to create three-course meals using surplus food which are then donated to local organisations supporting communities in South London. Over the course of the year, 360 participants produced 880 three-course meals and rescued more than a tonne of surplus food.



In the media



METRO

Man whose mental health means he can't cook relies solely on food charity to eat

Published Jun 4, 2023, 7:03am



Richard, 64, uses food charities and soup kitchens to feed himself everyday (Photo: Spencer Hirst)

Richard and three other women have just finished their main course, a makeshift soup also with no cotender. Because it tastes like soup to some people.

The group have spent the better part of the early afternoon discussing the pros and cons of all the different food banks they visit on a daily basis.

This lunch at the New Kingshead Community Centre in Hockley, east London, is the first of two FoodCycle meals Richard will eat today. He will get his dinner from a different branch in Walthamstow tonight, his lunch from one in Woolwich tomorrow and dinner from another in Bow, Road.

BBC goodfood

Volunteering gave me new confidence

Close Connections



Throughout 2023 there were more than 360 articles, features or mentions of FoodCycle. This included interviews with guests and volunteers as well as highlighting some of our corporate partnership activities. Our 'Community Dine with Me' campaign also saw media partners and agencies donate £200,000 worth of time and advertising space.

Where your money goes



87%
Charitable activities

12%
Fundraising

1%
Governance

Income 2023 **£2,762,831**

Corporate donations	£1,268,608
Trusts and Foundations	£983,742
Individual income	£208,852
Gifts in kind	£83,346
Trading income	£152,018
Other income	£41,149
Community income	£25,116

Figures are draft and subject to change when final accounts are produced in April 2024



What's next for FoodCycle...?

As we celebrate 15 years of FoodCycle and all the amazing things we have achieved, we're also looking at what's next. We've already set out our next three-year strategy which will come into action in 2025.

Some of our goals over the coming months and years are:

Reach 100
Projects by 2025



Celebrate 15 years
of **FoodCycle**

Strengthen our
sustainability



Produce annual research reports that champion **community dining**



Support more
families and children

Reach the milestone of
3.5 million meals
served during our birthday year



Be recognised as leaders
in delivering and promoting
community dining



How you can help

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.

Volunteer

All Projects are run by a team of incredible Project Leaders and volunteers and we're always looking for more people to join us. Roles include collecting food, cooking, hosting, or helping lead the sessions.

To sign up to volunteer please visit:
www.foodcycle.org.uk

Fundraise

You could take on something sporty such as a walk, run, swim or cycle; organise something food related such as a tea party for family and friends or arrange an event like a quiz night or karaoke evening. Why not plan an event to help celebrate our 15th Birthday? 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:
fundraising@foodcycle.org.uk

Thank you

With many thanks to all our supporters during 2023, including:

Corporates

Bel UK, Calastone, Compass Group, Copper Chimney, Danone, Engie, Fortem Capital, Glastonbury Festival, The Guinness Partnership, Host Student Housing Ltd, Human Made Machine Ltd, Just Eat, Mewburn Ellis, the National Composites Centre, NatWest, Pen Underwriting, Protiviti, Quorn Foods, Shaftesbury Capital, Whirlpool.

Trusts and Foundations

1989 Willan Charitable Trust at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, Adint Charitable Trust, AKO Foundation, The Champniss Foundation, The City Bridge Trust, Compass Group Foundation, Drapers Charitable Fund, E Q Foundation, The Eveson Trust, The Fishmongers Company, Greater Together Foundation, Hodge Foundation, Julia and Hans Rausing Trust, L&Q Foundation, Moondance Foundation, National Benevolent Charity, Rothschild Foundation, Sir James Knott Trust, Swire Charitable Trust, Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, The Turley Associates Charitable Trust, Zurich Community Trust.

Food Suppliers

Aldi, Asda, Better Food, Booker Wholesale, Birmingham Wholesale Market, City Harvest, Co-op, Exeter Food Action, Lidl, Makro, M&S, Morrisons, Oddbox, Riverford Organic Farmers, Sainsbury's, Tesco, The Big Difference, The Bread and Butter Thing, The Felix Project, Waitrose and all our local independent retailers.

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.



NOURISHING COMMUNITIES WITH FOOD AND CONVERSATION

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www.foodcycle.org.uk

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