



Annual Report 2025

For the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

Chief Executive's welcome

2024 – 2025 has been another busy year for The Welcome Centre. The ongoing cost of living crisis has continued to push families and individuals into crisis, whilst also making it much more challenging to fundraise to deliver our service. We are incredibly fortunate to have had the continued support of our community – from the many businesses, groups and individuals who have chosen to support us, to Kirklees Council who remain one of our key funders and strategic partners.

We started the year with our Chief Executive Ellie away on maternity leave. Fortunately for us, our Deputy Chief Executive Jill led us through this period skilfully, maintaining our strategic focus and organisational ethos despite a sometimes-challenging operating environment.

At The Welcome Centre we strive to achieve our vision:

To provide a high-quality service for people in crisis in our community. Ultimately, we would like to close the doors to our food bank, because it is no longer needed.

We believe that no one should have to rely on a charity to feed themselves or their families, but as long as they do The Welcome Centre will provide a caring service, offering access to food and advice in a safe space.

Sadly, closing our doors because we are no longer needed still feels a long way away. In the meantime, our focus is on providing a high-quality food and advice service to anyone in our community who needs us. Reading this report, you will find many examples of how we've achieved this over the past year, from case studies of our advice team's work with individuals and families, to behind the scenes improvements to our food bank operational processes.

cont...

**We have
supported**

5,056
people



1,966
**of whom
were Children**



2,811
Households supported
by food bank

We have given out 18,143 crisis packs, supporting 5,056 people in our local community, including 1,966 children. Our advice, guidance and support team has provided 12,576 support sessions.

But we know there is still much work to be done. Over the coming year we will be exploring more early intervention preventative work to engage with people before they need the food bank, and transitional support to help people move beyond crisis sustainably. We'll be continuing to develop new partnerships, as we know partnership working is one of our greatest strengths, and without our partners we would not be able to reach the most vulnerable in our community, or to offer the breadth of support that we do.

We are incredibly proud of The Welcome Centre's achievements in what continue to be challenging times.

Of course, these achievements do not belong to The Welcome Centre alone. Without our supporters and partners, we would not have been able to achieve what we have. So all that's left for me to say is thank you to everyone who supports our work throughout the year, and also of course to our dedicated team of volunteers, staff and trustees for their continued hard work to develop and improve the work of The Welcome Centre. Thank you all, we could not do it without you.

Ellie Coteau
Chief Executive



Jill Knowles
Deputy Chief Executive



Our ethos

At The Welcome Centre, we really do care about the people we support. We recognise that everyone who comes to us is different. Some just require a little help, and some have complex and sometimes chaotic lives. Some may have struggled to find help and support elsewhere, and some may just need someone to take a moment, listen and perhaps help them navigate next steps.

We are incredibly proud to be a person-centred organisation focussing on empowering individuals to take control and make their own choices and decisions. We treat everyone individually without judgement, offering advice and support when they need it most. We follow trauma-informed practices, always aiming to create a safe and supportive environment for healing and recovery. We work with a numerous other organisations, charities, networks and agencies to find the best outcomes for people.

For us terms like 'trauma-informed' and 'person-centred' are not buzz words, they truly are at the heart of everything we do. Moving forward, as our service continues to develop and grow, we will remain faithful to our core values of being a CARING organisation:

C

Compassionate

We are kind and caring in everything we do

A

Ambitious

We strive to be the best we can be and continually improve our service

R

Responsive

We are responsive to the needs of individuals and our community

I

Inclusive

We support anyone in crisis in our community

N

Non-judgemental

We support people through their situation, we do not judge them for it

G

Genuine

We are authentic and open about who we are, what we do, and why



Our people

The Welcome Centre is run by a small, committed staff team along with the incredible support of more than 140 volunteers.

Our volunteers have given more than 21,700 hours of their time to The Welcome Centre in the last 12 months.

Our wonderful volunteers undertake a huge variety of roles across the whole organisation. Our Board of Trustees give their time to provide governance, guidance, and accountability. Our warehouse volunteers receive and sort incoming donations and prepare our crisis packs. Our volunteer drivers are out in the community collecting donations. At our Lord St office, our telephone referral volunteers respond to incoming requests for support, our fresh volunteers make sure fresh produce is added into our packs, and our advice, guidance and support volunteers welcome people into the centre and offer a safe and supportive space. We also have volunteers who support our finance functions, our databases and fundraising and so much more. Phew... that's a lot!

We certainly could not do all of the amazing work we do without our volunteers. They generously give their time, their energy, and their experience, choosing to do so selflessly and without expectation of recognition or reward, showing kindness and care to their community.



How our volunteers feel about The Welcome Centre

'Friendly, kind and committed staff make volunteering a pleasure - thank you!'

'Really valuable experience. Really well organised and great staff. The Welcome Centre are all doing an amazing job helping those in need.'

'I feel volunteering has increased my confidence, I enjoy doing it, it's good to socialize and I have made friends here.'

'It is a pleasure to volunteer there and I look forward to it every week.'

'I enjoy the company of other volunteers and staff. It's good for me to do this work even though I wholeheartedly wish it wasn't necessary. I'm very impressed by the kindness of people who donate and volunteer to enable us to do such vital work so well.'

Behind the scenes at the food bank

We're here to support families and individuals in crisis in our community by providing essential items, including food, toiletries, baby and pet supplies, and household items (bedding, towels, crockery, pots and pans). People can collect their packs from us in-person at our town centre site, and we also offer home deliveries for people who face barriers to collecting their packs.

£375,420 the total value of the food and other essentials we've given out in the last year.

An update from our food bank operations team

Our fantastic food bank team has been busy as always, making sure people in crisis in our community have access to food and other essentials. Behind the scenes, the last 12 months has been a period of change and growth for the team.

Our delivery driver moved on from The Welcome Centre near the start of the year, and it was really important that we recruited the right person into the role, as driving for The Welcome Centre is about a lot more than delivering food packs! Our driver is the main point of contact for people receiving home deliveries, and it's essential that they are friendly, caring and approachable, as they work with some of our most vulnerable people. We needn't have worried, and we were thrilled to welcome the wonderful Sue to the team. Sue bravely began her role during one of the snowiest, iciest weeks of the year. Despite the challenging conditions, she took to the role like a natural – proving to be an invaluable addition to the team from day one.

Behind the scenes, we've rolled out a new stock management system that allows us to effortlessly track inventory, streamline ordering, and gain clearer insights into the flow of stock donations and demand. Changes like this are really important, as they help our staff and volunteers to work more efficiently. And of course, the time, energy and money that they help us to save can then be focussed on other projects to further improve our service.



Last year, we gave out enough food to provide 317,000 meals!



Last year we gave out 18,143 crisis packs



One of our proudest operational achievements over the last year has been the expansion of our supermarket voucher scheme. Alongside the dried and tinned goods that we provide, we offer people a supermarket voucher to purchase their own fresh items such as fruit, veg and dairy. This voucher is given in place of us providing fresh produce, which allows people some dignity and independence in choosing their own food. We have also rolled out our offer of supermarket vouchers for larger family packs, people with very restrictive dietary requirements, and baby food.

We'll be continuing to work hard to improve our food bank offering for people over the year to come, starting with a review of our food packs to make sure they're the best they can be.



More than a food bank

Providing people in crisis with food and other essential items is just part of what we do. We also offer people visiting the food bank advice, guidance and support, to help them get back on track. Our advice, guidance and support services include a fuel bank, client grant programme, and digital inclusion scheme, alongside providing emotional support and a listening ear when people need it most.

An update from our Advice, Guidance and Support team

Our advice, guidance and support service has continued to develop and grow, and is now an intrinsic part of our service, supporting people through their moment of crisis and towards independence. We suffered a real loss in the team this year, when our lovely Duncan sadly passed away. Duncan was a much-loved member of our small team, and his loss was really felt by not just staff and volunteers, but also all the people he supported.

We have a team of four staff supported by around 20 volunteers. The team is committed to providing a person-centred and trauma-informed service, so that we can offer a safe, non-judgmental and empathetic environment for people accessing our food bank. We know that creating these conditions is essential to building trust with people in their most vulnerable moments, and ultimately in being able to support them through the challenges they're facing.

Our advice, guidance and support team deliver a broad range of support interventions, including triage and welfare checks, signposting and referral to other agencies, and emotional and listening ear support, as well as the opportunity to access budgeting and benefits appointments, our in-house fuel bank, and a grant programme providing emergency funding for essentials including white goods and furniture. We have also continued to deliver a digital inclusion offering, providing clients with mobile phones and SIM cards where needed, to help address the digital barriers that many of the people we support face.



The last 12 months at a glance:

We provided more than 1,000 people with emotional support and a listening ear, at the time when they needed it most.

For many people, coming to the food bank is a really difficult step to take, especially if they're already struggling with their mental health. Being able to provide a non-judgmental, listening ear is one of the most important things we do, and people tell us how much they value feeling safe, respected, and heard.

We have run regular energy support drop-ins, and have given out more than 600 fuel vouchers, nearly 300 winter warmer packs, and 68 energy saving packs.

We know that food poverty and fuel poverty often go hand in hand, with people having to make the painful choice between heating and eating. Our fuel support initiatives mean that people can eat hot food, take a warm shower, and light their homes on a dark evening.

We awarded 223 households with grants for furniture, white goods, and other essentials.

These grants are the difference between people going home to a cold, unfurnished property, and being able to cook a hot meal, wash their clothes, and sleep in a bed.

We gave out 233 sim cards with 6 months of free data, 14 mobile phones and 8 tablets.

In today's world having digital access is an essential part of life. Giving phones and SIMs to clients provides a lifeline, enabling them to do all the things so many of us take for granted – phone a friend, book a GP appointment, and so much more. The team is now training to be Digital Champions to make sure we can continue to offer the best support and signposting in this area.

We helped families with more than just the basics

We worked in partnership with other local charities to offer children's Christmas presents including bikes, and theatre tickets. We also provided children's oral packs, Halloween activity packs, holiday camp places and Huddersfield Town tickets.

Over the coming 12 months we have plans to launch some exciting new partnerships, to further improve our offering for people in need in our community.



**Our Advice, Guidance &
Support Service
provided 17,845
support interventions**



**Our Advice, Guidance &
Support Service
delivered
12,576 support sessions**

Martin's story

Martin is an older gentleman, who was first referred to us having recently been excluded from other services due to his challenging and angry behaviour. The first time he came in to collect a food pack he was very agitated and struggled to engage. Our Advice, Guidance and Support team gathered around him to offer a safe non-judgemental space to keep him calm and slowly get to know him and build trust.

Each time Martin came, we were patient and empathetic. We noticed that he could become distressed if certain foods weren't in his pack, so we made sure to always have these foods available for him – a simple but important way for us to build trust.

Eventually we were able to support Martin to engage with Adult Services and Community Plus. We also continued our relationship with him, supporting him with his emotional wellbeing and budgeting. Martin still has a way to go but he has come a long way already and continues to engage well with other services and community groups.

Sarah's Story:

Sarah, a single mother with a young son, came to collect a food pack after losing her job.

She told us she had always worked hard and rarely asked for help, and she felt incredibly anxious walking through our doors. The kindness and warmth we showed to her and her son reassured her that The Welcome Centre was a safe space to talk without judgment.

We gave Sarah's son an activity book and a snack of some fruit whilst Sarah opened up about her struggles. In response, we gave Sarah fuel and budgeting support, made a referral to Uniform Exchange, and signposted her to mental health and employment services. We also gave her and her son Huddersfield Town tickets so they would have a treat to look forward to.

Sarah now has a new job and is feeling much more positive about facing some of her other challenges, and she knows that she doesn't have to face them alone now that she has our support.

"I have felt very lonely and isolated this summer as I did not want to tell people how much we are struggling, so we have turned down visiting people out of embarrassment. I can't believe how incredible we were treated when we came and I felt genuinely cared about. Me and my son have been through a lot and can't remember the last time we had a full cupboard and fridge. We can't stop looking at it all and just know we have a place we can get support means so much."

Our supporters

The Welcome Centre depends on the support of our community – without the donations of money and food that we receive from individuals, businesses, community groups, churches, schools and mosques, we simply couldn't do what we do.

An update from our Fundraising Manager

The past year has been incredibly busy and rewarding for our fundraising and marketing efforts. We've made significant strides in raising our profile, building new relationships, and generating vital income to support our work. Our fundraising 'team' is a team of one, and this year it was all change in the team! Charlie Taylor, previously our Advice, Guidance and Support Manager took over the role; Charlie has had a very busy twelve months getting to know and working with all our incredible supporters, as well as welcoming on board new supporters.

One of our key focuses over the past year has been growing our social media presence, and we've seen excellent results. Our increased online visibility has not only helped raise awareness of our services among those who may need support, but it has also opened doors to new corporate partnerships. Split Pixel and WD Accountants both joined us as corporate partners this year after discovering us online. Caterers Choice also joined us as a corporate partner, after several years of donating food to us, and Yes Energy committed to supporting us over the coming year and have already done lots of fundraising and hosted a food donation drive, as well as lending their energy expertise to our Advice, Guidance and Support service.

In addition to welcoming new corporate partners, we've continued to strengthen our existing corporate relationships, most notably with Macs Trucks who provided us with the largest corporate donation in our charity's history. As well as this record-breaking gift, their team have been really engaged in fundraisers throughout the year; our Fundraising Manager Charlie even joined them to take on the Three Peaks Challenge over summer! Existing corporate partners Dark Woods Coffee have continued to support us, and in addition to their generous financial donation also provided us with a supply of delicious coffee to keep our staff and volunteers fuelled. Syngenta also continued to support us, including fundraising throughout the year through their staff fruit bowl initiative. Our valued corporate partners Cummins, COWAP and Food Mate also renewed their generous financial support. We are extremely grateful to each company for their ongoing support with finances, volunteering and food donations.

We've received significant grant funding this year from Kirklees Council and the Household Support Fund, Glasspool, and the National Lottery Community Fund. Alongside these larger grants, we received grant funding from the Edgar E. Lawley Foundation, the One Stop Community Grant, Do It, Arnold Clarke, Redrow, Tesco Stronger Starts and The Gripple Foundation. These grants fund all areas of our work from purchasing food to give out and funding our client grants programme, to funding core costs like salaries, rent and utilities.

We've also been very lucky to work with other local charities to raise funds this year. Our long-time supporters at Community Cards have continued their commitment to The Welcome Centre, donating the proceeds of their card sales throughout the year. In March, we partnered with the Huddersfield Town Foundation on their Big Sleep Out event, raising more than £4,000 for The Welcome Centre.

Perhaps our most heartwarming fundraising moment of the year came over the summer, when our old van had to be scrapped. This left us facing real difficulties being able to collect donations and deliver food packs to vulnerable households, but we needn't have worried. Our community came together and supported our van appeal fundraiser, donating an incredible £12,000 to help us purchase a new van. This community generosity exemplifies the spirit of Kirklees residents and businesses and a collective commitment to making a difference.

Charity fundraising is challenging, but we remain focused and determined, always exploring new avenues to sustain and diversify our income so that we can continue to deliver our service to those most in need in our community.

We're proud of what we've achieved in the past 12 months and incredibly grateful to all the individuals, businesses, community groups and funders who make our work possible.



Thank you to all our supporters

A huge thank you to all the individuals, businesses, schools, churches, mosques, and community groups 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 this year.

In particular, we'd like to thank the following:

Grant funders



Business partners



Business supporters

Agro Smart Big Picture Charity Films Cadmans Solicitors Caffè Shop Ltd
Cedar Court Hotel DBW EWRC Handmade Bakery Hartley's Bakery
Lindley Grange Care Home Morrisons Nando's
Pets at Home Foundation

Community supporters

Community Cards Fixby Ladies Greenhead College
Honley Samba Band Huddersfield Giants Supporters Association