

Nourishing Norfolk

The story
so far
September 2023



What is Nourishing Norfolk?

Nourishing Norfolk is an innovative response to providing lower-cost food for people struggling to make ends meet.

Food insecurity poses a significant challenge to thousands of people living in Norfolk. Until we tackle the basic need of being able to eat, we cannot address the wider challenges that many communities face in Norfolk.

What do we mean when we say 'food insecurity'?

The short answer: when a person is without reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious, healthy food. People experiencing moderate food insecurity will have, at times, reduced the quality or quantity of their food because they didn't have the money or resources. People experiencing severe food insecurity have run out of food, experienced hunger, and/or have gone days without eating. This puts their health and wellbeing at serious risk.

A short introduction from our CEO

We are entering the third year of our trailblazing Nourishing Norfolk initiative.

We have made significant progress towards our goal of ensuring no one in Norfolk goes hungry. We will soon see our 25th food hub open, bringing affordable food and support to prevent people reaching a crisis where there's nothing in the cupboard.

This progress would not have been possible without the collaboration of our valued partners, who have contributed their expertise and resources to the initiative.

In this report, we hope to highlight the accomplishments of the past few years and the ways in which our partners have helped us to achieve them.



Claire Cullens
Chief Executive



The context for Nourishing Norfolk

In a county famed for its agriculture and food production, around 73,000 adults struggle to access food.

Norfolk faces unique challenges around its large rural population, seasonal employment patterns and low-wage economy, all of which act to limit food security. Last year, Norfolk food banks provided 11,797 people with emergency food. Missed meals and poor diets negatively impact the health and welfare of Norfolk people, putting pressure on our local social and health services.

Food insecurity, whether temporary or long-term, puts a huge strain on families both physically and mentally.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the issue into sharper focus when we recognised that 25% of Norfolk Community Foundation funding was awarded to 'pop-up' food distribution projects to respond to numbers of people struggling to afford to eat. The combination of the increase in food costs and fuel has only heightened this demand. The cost of a basic basket of goods rose considerably between 2022 and 2023,

with the average cost jumping by 19% in just one year.

This crisis has led to new groups of individuals who are struggling to provide food for themselves and their families. Whilst foodbanks provide a vital lifeline to those who need it most, it was clear that a radical solution was required. This was in the forefront of our minds when developing the Nourishing Norfolk programme.

OLDER PEOPLE
are more likely to live in isolated, rural areas

Around **73,000** adults in Norfolk are worried about their food security[†]

[†] University of Sheffield, 2021
All other figures from NODA

Our approach so far

Using a combination of our grant data and information provided by Norfolk Office of Data and Analytics, we identified key geographies where need was most acute.

Our research told us that people did not want handouts; they wanted to buy the food they needed but at a price they could afford.

We looked outside of Norfolk for a solution, and discovered the social supermarket model. These innovative stores are not like foodbanks: they don't give food away, but instead sell a wide variety of food at a discounted price, bridging the gap between a

foodbank and a supermarket.

To understand how this might work in Norfolk, we opened a pilot store in a community, selecting Thetford's Burrell Ward as the location because it had 3 critical pillars in place:

- A district council keen to partner in an innovative community offering
- A local organisation embedded and invested in their community wanting to do more
- Local funders and fundraisers keen to back transformative solutions

Our pilot told us that hunger was a symptom of other problems people were facing. Food hubs don't just address hunger, but also the challenges that push people into food insecurity in the first place. Today, we see this magnified across the 22 food hubs we have subsequently opened.

We continually look to improve our offer. More research was conducted in the summers of 2022 and 2023 to understand the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the difference that the food hubs were making and has resulted in us developing our support of the hubs.

People in Norfolk earn **£3,000** less per annum than the average for England

16% of Norfolk households live in fuel poverty



The impact

In the community



22
food hubs offering affordable food & support across Norfolk



40%
saved off of the average shopping basket



22,000+
people accessing a Nourishing Norfolk food hub

£1.5m

raised so far thanks to fundraisers, local and national donors



7,500+
households registered with their local food hub

Food support



Our warehouse supplies
70%
of the food hubs each week



Over 6 months, just one food hub can save
12,000kg
of food from landfill



We have
45
essential product lines stocked in the warehouse



Feedback from the hubs

Working with research students from the University of East Anglia, we gathered feedback from the Network about what difference the hubs are making in their communities.

“ We don't drive and live rurally, the local shop continuously puts up its prices and we simply could not afford to buy food from there. Without this scheme we would not eat.

- Ashley, Breckland Mobile Food Store Customer

“ It is hard. This situation is very hard. I could afford food before but now I cannot. All these have taken a toll on my mental health and I feel if it weren't for these people and the food hub, I would have been stuck. I visit the mental wellbeing group here two days a week when I come to shop here and they have helped me out a lot. The people here always listen to my problems, and I know they are there by my side and I have somebody to talk to.

- Martha, Dereham Food Cabin member

“ Most people do not like talking about their problems, they wouldn't talk about getting into debt. I was talking to a shopper here and she was very scared about her debts and been taken to court for not paying it off. I told her about CAP (Christians Against Poverty) and helped her with setting up a meeting with them so that they can help her to put all her debts in one big pay and pay it all off at once. We signpost people to different organisations which we know will help them.

- Jonathan, Dereham Food Cabin volunteer.



“ It's not just a food pantry, it's an information point which is so helpful.

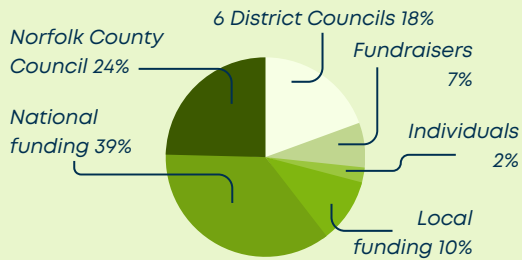
- Donna, Feltwell Pantry member

Norfolk Community Foundation's role



1. Convening funding partnerships

- Local support and fundraisers like Norfolk Superhero and Jarrold
- Partnerships from Norfolk County Council and all 7 District Councils
- Leveraging funding from outside of Norfolk, such as from The National Lottery and Feeding Britain



2. Building learning networks

- Ongoing support and shared learning for all the food hubs through the Nourishing Norfolk Network
- Regular meetings and training to continue each hub's development

3. Sharing learning with national partners

- Collaborating with national partners, like Feeding Britain
- Attracting international interest and helping others develop similar models

4. Bringing together businesses

- Norse Group helping us to provide:
 - A centralised warehouse in Norwich for ambient goods
 - Distribution to all food hubs
- Building relationships with farmers and growers working alongside the Royal Norfolk agricultural association

5. Securing store cupboard staples

- Identifying local and national suppliers to save our food hub volunteers time and money
- Brokering better deals through the power of the network

Frequently Asked Questions

Click here to hear the team answer F.A.Qs

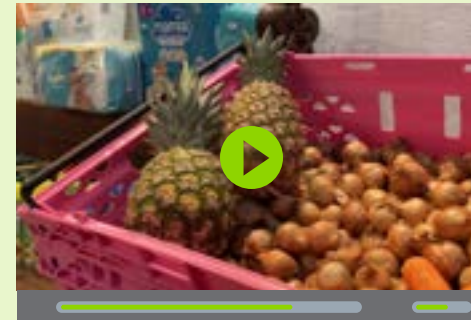


We are often asked questions about how the Nourishing Norfolk programme works.

From where the food comes from and who can use the hubs, to what's the difference between a food hub and a food bank. Claire, Tori, Billie and Lizzi have answered your questions in informative videos.



What is it all about?



What can you buy at a food hub?



Who can use the hubs?



What is the difference between foodbank and food hub?



How can I help?

Nourishing Norfolk recently featured in a Joseph Rowntree Foundation report on designing out hardship locally.



Read it here >

Nourishing Norfolk

A brief history

November 2020

The Burrell Shop, East Anglia's first Social Supermarket, was launched at The Burrell Centre by Norfolk Community Foundation with support from Breckland District Council and Feeding Britain.



October 2021

The Nourishing Norfolk Network is formed. The Food Pantry Feltwell joined The Burrell Shop as the first network member. The Network provides mutual support for the hubs, and a forum to share ideas, concerns and best practice.



January 2023

Norse Group Ltd. begin to provide Nourishing Norfolk with warehouse space and logistics to launch the Distribution Hub, providing hubs with a reliable, local offer for food. They also support with advice and with professional print.



May 2022

Breckland Mobile Food Store is launched with Kickstart Norfolk as the Network's first mobile food offer.



11 food hubs launched in 2022

Including: The Feed Social Supermarket in Norwich, Sheringham Food Club, Dereham Food Cabin, The Pantry in Kenninghall, ENYP Social Supermarket in Norwich, Sally's Store in Great Yarmouth and Love Downham in Downham Market.



August 2023

Jarrold raises £19,369 for the programme.



June 2023

The Norfolk Superhero Challenge raises £200k+ for North Norfolk Hubs.



Launched so far in 2023

- Watton Food Hub
- Magdalen Street Pantry, Norwich
- Caister Community Larder
- Purfleet Pantry, King's Lynn
- Holt Food Hub
- Phoenix Larder, Norwich