

# ABOUT BOW FOODBANK



**BOW  
FOODBANK**



Bow Foodbank has been serving Tower Hamlets since 2014. It operates across two sites: one in Bromley-by-Bow, the other in Bethnal Green. We have a small team of paid staff who co-ordinate around 500 local volunteers to ensure that no one in Tower Hamlets has to go without food.

## ONE COMMUNITY

Our volunteers are the heart of our organisation. A number of our volunteers have also used our services and understand the stigma that can exist alongside food insecurity. We don't distinguish between our guests and volunteers, seeing ourselves as one community, working together to ensure everyone has access to nutritious food. Whether someone lives, works or studies in Tower Hamlets, getting involved in Bow Foodbank is a way to support neighbours and colleagues, and if you ever needed us we would offer non-judgmental support to you too.

**75%**  
**OF INCOME**

We are proud that **over 75 per cent of income** (including food donations) comes from local businesses and individuals.

**This really is community helping community!**

## ADVICE AND SUPPORT

We offer non-referral, judgment-free assistance to everyone who asks for it, as we know overcoming the shame and stigma of foodbank usage can be a major hurdle to overcome. Since access to technology can be limited for our clients, many people come to us through word of mouth. Friends, family and neighbours look out for one another, and direct people to us for help. We maintain an open-door policy and provide food and other essentials, as well as advice and support, to anyone in need.



## SERVING TOWER HAMLETS

In Tower Hamlets many adults and children live below the poverty line, and struggle to access enough food to eat. Parents report going hungry to feed their family, and some go without household essentials such as toothpaste in order to put food on the table. As the borough with the highest child poverty rate in the country, it is vital to our work that we ensure everyone can access emergency food supplies should they need them. Around a third of our guests come from single adult households supporting multiple children.

# IN 2022...

WE HELPED  
**4150**  
INDIVIDUALS

GIVING OUT  
**£395,500**

## WORTH OF FOOD AND ESSENTIALS

This is over 22,000 individual visits. 6994 number of children were linked to these individuals. They came from all walks of life and backgrounds. 50 per cent of our guests are currently in employment but may be struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis, or not have regular hours of work. 876 number of people were supported with advisory services helping them to build their financial resilience.

Between summer 2022 and the end of the year we have seen the need increase by 80 per cent with a significant increase of people in work needing support as the cost-of-living crisis means more and more families are struggling to make ends meet. We project in 2023 we may be supporting over 1,000 families a week.

**OUR AVERAGE FOOD  
BILL IS AROUND  
£8,500  
A WEEK**

Currently our average food bill is around £8,500 a week (when we are supporting 750 families). We are fortunate to have around £1,500 of food donated per week, meaning the overall value of food we are giving our is around £10,000 per week. Last year we raised around £7,000 per week to spend on food and other essentials. Clearly this means we already have a gap between what we are raising and what we are spending, which will increase if the number of guests continues to go up and the cost of food continues to rise.

The crisis is hitting us as an organisation, **with increases to the cost of food meaning each bag we give has risen by around 20 per cent.** Every individual or business that supports us is helping to ensure no one in Tower Hamlets has to go hungry and we can care for our community.

## **NO PENSIONER SHOULD CHOOSE BETWEEN HEATING OR EATING THIS WINTER.**

As we enter winter, there is a particular focus on the elderly population and food poverty. We don't want any pensioner to have to choose between heating and eating, as this can have serious or even fatal consequences.

We have seen an increase in the numbers of the elderly population visiting us as the cost-of-living crisis has worsened. Before the summer, pensioners represented five per cent of our guests. In July, this rose to eight per cent. In October, 11 per cent of our guests were pensioners. In real terms, this is a growth of 17 to 88 pensioners needing support to access food.

Tower Hamlets has a high rate of pensioner poverty, with many pensioners renting and therefore more affected by the current financial crisis than in other communities.

To ensure no pensioner has to choose between heating and eating, Bow Foodbank is offering extra support. We are providing free additional food bags over the months of December, January and February when the pressures of paying for heating will be at its worst.

**To sustain this initiative, we need to raise  
an extra £60,000 to support 250 individuals.**



## CORPORATE DONORS

If you are thinking about, or have given to Bow Foodbank, firstly thank you! 13 per cent of all our income comes from businesses like yours. Tower Hamlets is a unique part of London with large numbers of big businesses alongside some of the poorest areas in the country. We thank you for supporting the wider community where you work.

Did you know that parts of Tower Hamlets have the highest levels of child poverty in England and many struggle to access enough food to eat. Parents report going hungry to feed their family, and still more go without household essentials such as toothpaste in order to put food on the table.

Around a third of our guests come from single adult households supporting multiple children. 50 per cent of our guests are in work locally, often in lower-paid jobs with irregular hours meaning sometimes they require an extra helping hand to make ends meet.

**£20**

A £20 donation buys one family a bag of food that would support them for three days.

**£25**

A £25 donation means a family can also take a children's top up bag.

**£50**

A £50 donation means we are able to offer fresh fruit and vegetables to 20 guests.

# AS A LOCAL BUSINESS, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS YOU CAN HELP US.

- 1** Encourage your staff to give as they earn. We are on a number of platforms that facilitate this including Your Cause, Benevity and CAF Donate. Our Charity Commission number is: 1162185 and we are registered with Charities Trust.
- 2** Why not consider match funding your staff giving or volunteer hours? This can be done via Benevity or Your Cause.
- 3** You could sponsor a week's worth of food. When we are helping 750 families a week our food bill is around £8,500. In sponsoring a week, we would send you a report informing you of the exact number of households we supported that week, with the number of individuals and children within that household.
- 4** If you have a 'charity of the year' we would be very interested in being put forward, and building a relationship of ongoing support.
- 5** We do offer corporate volunteering days. We enclose details about how these work, we would love to see you at our delivery sites welcoming our guests and distributing food.
- 6** Although we buy most of our food, we also take donations. You could hold a food dive to add to the food we purchase. This is especially helpful if you can arrange for food to be delivered to us. We enclose a list of our core items that we ask people to focus on, so we know we don't run out of the items people want.
- 7** We are largely volunteer-run and have teams of people who help us with activities such as graphic design, transport, and data management You could add your business to our list of people who offer pro-bono or discounted services.

Lastly, why not hold an event or take on a sponsored activity to help us raise funds?  
You can do this via our Local Giving Page: [localgiving.org/charity/bowfoodbank/](https://localgiving.org/charity/bowfoodbank/)

**We enclose a few ideas on sponsored events that other businesses have undertaken.**