

More Than Food

NORTH YORKSHIRE
& YORK

Community Food Bulletin



FEAST: Food, Entertainment, Arts and Sport Together – Supporting Families Across North Yorkshire

“School holidays can be difficult for many families. FEAST helps ease that burden.”

FEAST is North Yorkshire’s Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, offering enriching activities with healthy meals to children and young people during the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. Coordinated by North Yorkshire Together and funded by the Department for Education, FEAST supports families by providing access to safe, community-led activities that are free for those receiving benefits-related Free School Meals.

Since its launch in 2021, FEAST has grown a countywide network of place-based providers. So far, these providers have delivered nearly 150,000 activities – and at least as many meals – to thousands of children and young people across North Yorkshire, giving them new and fun experiences that support physical health, emotional wellbeing, and social connection.

“FEAST has supported children across North Yorkshire to stay active, eat well and have fun – all while strengthening the communities they live in.”

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FEAST is delivered by a diverse range of over 100 local providers, including sports clubs, arts organisations, youth clubs and schools. Many are not-for-profit groups, deeply rooted in their communities. This model not only helps ensure coverage across North Yorkshire's vast geography but is more responsive to community need and interest, and strengthens the local voluntary and community sector through direct investment and development opportunities. Over the last four years, the programme has distributed more than £3.6 million in grants – investing almost £1 million per year into community delivery.

Food plays a central role in FEAST. Every child attending an activity receives at least one meal while they're there, with many providers offering two or three, plus snacks throughout the day. All of these meet School Food Standards, and wherever possible, children help to prepare and cook food themselves. Partners such as North Yorkshire Council's Healthy Schools Programme and organisations like Phunky Foods provide training, advice and resources to FEAST activity providers to ensure food is not only nutritious, but also an opportunity for learning.



Children taking part in activities at Kanga Sports, a FEAST Provider.



Young people taking part in activities at Helmsley Arts Centre, a FEAST provider.

At Christmas, FareShare provided surplus food to FEAST, reducing waste while supporting families at a crucial time. Through this initiative, FEAST activity providers like Wild Explorers, Nigel Carson Sport and Bentham & Ingleton Youth Club were able to offer a wider variety of meals and snacks to children, as well as food staples for families to take home. In summer, Tugo donated almost 2,000 portions of pasta and tomato sauce so FEAST activity providers could offer a free, healthy hot meal to the children and young people joining them at their activities, ensuring more of their grant could be directed to offering activities.

Looking ahead to summer 2025, North Yorkshire Together is preparing another exciting programme of activities, including a new collaboration with FareShare, where catering students will cook food to be distributed at FEAST activities. For organisations interested in delivering activities or supporting the work in other ways – now is the perfect time to get involved.

To find out more about FEAST or to explore upcoming activities please visit <https://northyorkshiretogether.co.uk/feast> or contact hello@northyorkshiretogether.co.uk

An interview with Lived Insights

We want to give special thanks to Astrid Hanlon for her time, advice, and insights in the area of food insecurity with a particular focus on lived experience. We caught up with Astrid recently and asked her about place based working – rooted in the lived experience of people who may be food insecure, and / or people who are successfully finding ways of building their self-reliance, resilience and independence.

Can you tell us a bit about Lived Insights?

We're a lived experience-led organisation, working with people who've experienced homelessness, addiction, mental ill health or the criminal justice system. Our aim is to address poverty, health inequalities and financial exclusion by putting those closest to the issues at the heart of the solutions.

How did your work in North Yorkshire begin?

It started in 2023, working with Alan from Skyblue Research on food insecurity in York. We brought in community researchers with real, lived experience and spoke to over 55 people across nine food provisions. The focus was on dignity, choice, reliance – and understanding why place matters when supporting people.

“It works because it's a local community base. It's not like one person, it's everyone.”

What stood out from that early work?

That local knowledge is everything. Our researchers' connections made the work possible. Each food bank had different rules, rhythms and realities – understanding those helped us see what was working and where things could change.

Has that learning carried through to your current projects?

Definitely. In 2024 we began working more widely across North Yorkshire, linking with local champions like Julie Greenslade at The Neukin in Hawes and Carol Taylor at Age UK Craven. These rural communities are different – stigma and trust are big factors. Standard workshops didn't work. What did work was stepping back and supporting trusted local organisations to lead the way.

“I think food banks are wonderful if people know the organisers and people running them are really welcoming and they don't judge.”



You're also working on mental health in rural areas?

Yes, through the Roundhouse Connection. We're exploring access to mental health services with groups like Scarborough Survivors, Hambleton FoodShare and The Living Rooms. It's about listening – especially to people who've never engaged with services, or who feel let down by past experiences.

“We don't ask questions, we're not here to police people. Who has the right to decide if you can, should, shouldn't?”

It takes time and trust. We've learned that relationships come first – slower, softer approaches rooted in community. That's how people begin to open up.

What connects your work on food and mental health?

The way we work. We only enter spaces where we're invited. We work through the trust already held by overstretched community groups doing vital work. And we adapt to rural realities – long distances, digital gaps, local dynamics. People are always building connection in small, powerful ways – and we're here to listen and support.

“Smiles open more doors than forms ever will.”

What would you say to others working in this space?

If you're a local organisation, food provider, or place-based group and want to embed lived experience into what you do, we'd love to hear from you. We offer frameworks and support to help gather community insights that shape real change.

“Local leaders with lived experience don't just serve the community – they are the community.”

Astrid's top tips and learning



Astrid also shared a set of practical tips for those working with individuals and communities with lived experience. These may be useful for food providers, funders, or VCSE groups — and the team at Lived Insights are happy to have a conversation with you.

Their website can be visited here:

<https://livedinsights.org.uk/>



- Trust Local Knowledge – Staff, volunteers, and attendees know their space best. Ask for their advice on who to speak to, when, and how.
- Lead with Humility – Be open about your purpose, build trust slowly, and let go of rigid assumptions or timelines.
- Listen More Than You Speak – Prioritise listening over extracting information. Let conversations evolve naturally.
- Respect Boundaries – Always ask permission and gain consent. Being present in someone else's space requires care.
- Understand the Bigger Picture – Food insecurity often links to wider issues like housing, health, and trauma. People's lives are complex.
- Be Conscious of Your Impact – Check how your presence is received. Be flexible and adapt based on feedback from staff and individuals.
- Create Space for Change – Ask what people want to see improve, not just what they've experienced. Involve them in shaping solutions.
- Make Room for Joy – Conversations can be uplifting and inspiring. Help create conditions where joy, connection and solidarity can thrive.



Resurrected Bites- “on a Mission to Fill Bellies Not Bins”

Special thanks to Michelle Hayes from Resurrected Bites for providing the following information.



Resurrected Bites collects good quality food from going to landfill and uses that food to feed people in pay-as-you-can community cafes and also provides some of the stock for low-cost community groceries in the former Harrogate District.

The cafes (in Harrogate, Killinghall and Knaresborough) are warm, welcoming spaces aimed at tackling food waste as well building community. We run the cafes on a weekly basis at three different locations so that people start to recognise the same faces. Many people have found friendship in our weekly cafes and travel to the different cafes together with their new friends. One lady who is recently bereaved and who had just moved to Harrogate said:

“People kept telling me that I needed bereavement counselling, but I knew I just needed to come to this café to talk to someone about my grief. I knew that because it is a community café, I would find people to talk to even though I was going in on my own whereas people would think I was strange if I sat on their table in a commercial café.”

The lady now comes every week to chat to her new friends and feels it has really helped her mental health. We also often have a pop-up shop with flowers and groceries too which are also available on a pay-as-you-can basis.

Whilst the cafes are for everyone, the community groceries are for people in food poverty. The cost-of-living crisis is hitting hard and many working families in addition to those who cannot work are struggling to make ends meet. We want to avoid people missing meals or getting into debt because they are having to choose between eating or paying a bill or putting fuel in the car to get to work.



The community groceries, which are based in New Park Primary Academy Community Hub in Harrogate and Gracious Street Methodist Church in Knaresborough, offer an affordable way for people to access good quality, nutritious food. The groceries are not food banks where food is free and choice is limited. They run through a subscription scheme and for a small, annual fee, members have access to the shop, can select the items they want just like in a normal shop or supermarket, but only pay a fraction of the price.

People can self-refer or be referred. After an initial assessment of need, members choose a set number of items: fruit/vegetables, bakery, store cupboard, chilled, frozen and non-food. 1-3 person households pay £5 and receive 10 times that value. 4+ households pay £10 for double the amount. Membership is £5 per annum.

We also offer free additional support e.g. a Work club to help with CVs, interview practice and job searching, budgeting, cookery and drop-in sessions for advice/signposting.



To find out more visit:
<https://resurrectedbites.co.uk/>

What are food clubs – and why are they working?

Insights from The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT)

A New Model for Food Access

Food clubs like those run by The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) are reshaping how we think about food support. They are not food banks — but a community-powered solution helping people access good food with dignity, choice and connection.

- Free to join
- No referrals or criteria
- Weekly food at low cost
- Based in local hubs: schools, church halls, community centres

By embedding food access in everyday life, food clubs help build resilience — not just provide emergency support.

What makes food clubs different?

Dr. Megan Blake (University of Sheffield) explains:

“Food clubs allow people to express values like thrift, care and sustainability – and that builds community, not just transactions.”

Food clubs like TBBT provide:

- Affordable, nutritious food (with 80% of members eating more fruit & veg)
- Choice over what food is taken home
- A dignified experience, rooted in shared values
- An outlet to prevent food waste, a key motivator for many members

Unlike food banks, they focus on curation, logistics and infrastructure to deliver full, balanced bags of food every week — especially crucial in ‘food deserts’ where good food is unavailable or unaffordable.



Measurable benefits

Recent member surveys (initially in 2020 then followed up in 2024) show that food clubs are making a difference:

- 72% feel more connected to their community
- 64% feel less alone
- Over 80% eat more fruit and vegetables
- Many report improved physical and mental health
- Older members are eating with others again, reducing malnutrition and isolation
- Members describe less stress around food, more joy in cooking, and renewed confidence to try new things.
- Eating together is improving family relationships and emotional wellbeing.

“It’s helped us not worry as much about money and made it more affordable to make a full week of meals...

We’re trying food we never thought we’d try.”

— TBBT member

A Model for Change

Food clubs are helping communities:

- Reduce reliance on food banks
- Strengthen social connections
- Create space for joy and belonging
- Improve nutrition while lowering GP visits
- Foster local solutions while calling for national policy on affordable, nutritious food

Food clubs aren't just about what's on the plate — they're about what happens around it: Connection. Care. Community.

To learn more about Food Clubs please visit:
<https://www.breadandbutterthing.org/food-clubs>

You may also want to check out ‘A Slice of Life’ the 2025 impact report by The Bread and Butter Thing.



Rethinking Surplus Food: Nutrition Matters



All findings are presented as general insights from food aid settings across Yorkshire, without breaking them down by city, town, or district. Special thanks to Rebecca Newman for providing some key statements about the preliminary findings from this work so far.

As part of a growing focus on food equity and sustainability, FixOurFood and FareShare have been exploring how surplus food supply chains in Yorkshire could better support nutrition. Their early research findings reveal both challenges and promising practices in a range of food aid settings (such as food banks, food pantries, and community kitchens) across the region.

What we're learning so far:

A survey of 43 'food aid settings' uncovered key trends:

- Mixed confidence in nutritional balance – almost half felt they offered balanced food, while the rest said only “sometimes.”
- Diverse users – with older people and families with young children making up the largest groups.
- Food demand vs. practicality – food is often rejected not due to preference, but because people don't know how to cook it or lack freezer space.
- Barriers to better nutrition – ultra-processed donations, limited fresh options, lack of storage or cooking skills, and inconsistent supply.
- System pressures – many settings lack the funding, staff, and facilities to improve or expand their offer.
- Changing needs – rising demand from working families, more dietary requirements (halal, allergies), and an urgent need for quick, easy meals.

Despite best efforts, many providers say supply simply doesn't meet the level of need. There's strong interest in a “food ladder” approach—but limited resources to deliver it.

Insights from the frontline:

Interviews with 16 food aid settings highlighted practical, impactful interventions:

- Relationships first – trust builds confidence in food choices.
- Better logistics – using FareShare and similar services saves money and creates room for added support like cooking classes.
- Empowering models – food pantries offer dignity and choice, while donation models remain essential for those in crisis.
- Hands-on education – cooking demos outperform recipe cards in shifting behaviours.
- Nudging nutrition – one setting arranges pantry shelves by the Eatwell Plate to support healthier choices.
- Joined-up working – integrated support across services is key to making the “food ladder” a reality.

These findings reinforce the need for thoughtful partnerships, investment, and innovation to ensure surplus food supports health—not just hunger.

A full public report is currently being developed by FixOurFood. Please check out their website for updates:
<https://fixourfood.org>.



Resources for the Community



If you have not yet heard of Sustain, please check out their website here: <https://www.sustainweb.org/> you can find a range of brilliant resources, reports and updates on the latest news and research available with particular focus on good food economy and food for all, local action and sustainable farming.

Key resources for food providers:

1. <https://www.sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit/>
2. <https://www.sustainweb.org/good-food-enterprise/growing-community-food-enterprises-toolkit/>
3. <https://www.alliancefordignifiedfoodsupport.org.uk/principles-recommendations>
4. <https://environment.leeds.ac.uk/sustainability-research-institute/dir-record/research-projects/1888/scaling-up-place-based-food-initiatives>

Who are Sustain?

Sustain is an alliance of organisations and communities working to transform the food and farming system. They advocate for policies that promote health, equity, and sustainability—focusing on priorities like nutritious school meals, access to healthy and organic food for low-income communities, responsible food advertising, levies on unhealthy products, and action to tackle the root causes of food poverty and build local food resilience. You may be interested in reading their latest report in partnership with Trust for London, reflecting on two decades of work tackling food poverty. We are asked these core questions:

- Could we collaborate with local authorities to implement 'cash first' initiatives, such as emergency grants or vouchers, reducing reliance on food banks?
- Can we encourage the creation of localised food insecurity action plans, involving stakeholders from various sectors to ensure comprehensive strategies?
- Are we able to implement tools to assess the effectiveness of local interventions, allowing for continuous improvement and accountability?
- Do we promote partnerships between public health, housing, education, and community organisations to address the multifaceted nature of food insecurity.

To read the full report visit:

<https://trustforlondon.org.uk/news/>

Public Health North Yorkshire

Food for the Future: 'Framework for Action'

Special thanks to Jenny Thompson for sharing this information from Public Health North Yorkshire.

'Food for the Future Framework for Action' is North Yorkshire's developing plan to transform the food system, to enable more people to access affordable, nutritious and sustainable food. We know this will have benefits for people's health, for the environment and the local food economy.

Since early 2023, a group of enthusiastic people from across the food system in North Yorkshire, have been getting their heads together to think about how best to make changes in the food system. They have spent time thinking about what changes, related to the way food is grown and produced, supplied, sold and wasted, will have the most impact on health, the environment and the economy. A Framework for Action is in development and a Partnership Group is overseeing the development of the Framework.

Community food projects are an integral part of this process. In July last year, a group of representatives from projects from across North Yorkshire came together in a focus group to share what they felt are the current challenges for people of North Yorkshire around food, what does an ideal future look like and how we might get there. In this conversation, food providers shared 'if only we could' statements. Their insight was really valuable and helped to shape the priorities for the Framework.

If you would like to find out more about the Framework or get involved in the wider systems work, please email Adele.Wilson-Hope@northyorks.gov.uk

'If only we could'

- 'Have no more need for foodbanks.'
- 'Feed everyone the quality of food we know is nutritious to mind and body and afford to do so.'
- 'Not need to be here today discussing food insecurity.'
- 'Have a system that means people don't have to choose between quality food and something else.'
- 'Treat food as a public good and respect everyone's right to affordable, nutritious food.'
- 'Make less profit on food before it comes to the shelf.'



'Action domains' have been identified in the Framework, including, 'Securing nutritious and affordable food for all'. A priority action within this domain includes connecting local food providers and sourcing surplus food collectively.

Some areas in North Yorkshire already have strong networks, Adele Wilson-Hope and colleagues in the Communities team, who are leading on this action domain, are hoping to strengthen these and support the development of new networks. This will allow knowledge, resources and learning to be shared which will better support people, at place, to access affordable, nutritious and sustainable food. It will also help community food providers to support local people to gain more control over their health and well-being.'

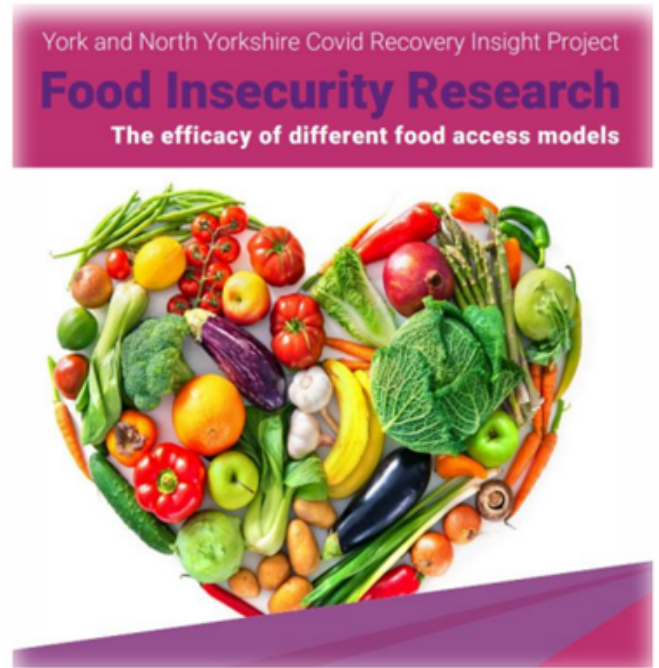
Community of Practice Recordings

If you have not yet seen our Food Insecurity website take a look here:
<https://www.skyblue.org.uk/foodinsecurity/>

We particularly invite you to visit the Community of Practice ('CoP') recordings. These 'CoPs' are conversations that explore key recommendations of the Food Insecurity Project launched at the Food Summit in September 2023 where we investigated ways to address food insecurity in York & North Yorkshire.

Topics so far have included:

- Place Based Collaborative Models and Food Ladders
- Cash (Income)First Approaches
- More than Food
- Mixed Income Models
- Social supermarkets, pantries, pay as you feel cafes.



If you would like to join us for the next Community of Practice discussion please let us know! They are always well attended and different providers not only benefit from at least two topical and relevant guest speakers but can also share very practical tips and common challenges in a safe space all about doing things better together.

Anyone wishing to speak at a future CoP should simply contact Adele.Wilson-Hope@northyorks.gov.uk.

Spotlight on Selby

With special thanks to Tom Jenkinson and Warren Davies from the Communities Team, North Yorkshire Council.



The context

The towns of Selby, Sherburn in Elmet and Tadcaster — home to over 31,000 people — face varying levels of food insecurity. Selby itself has a particularly high proportion of residents (26%) receiving Universal Credit, pointing to significant need. The Selby East and Selby West wards are ranked above the national average for deprivation, particularly in terms of income, health, and outcomes for children and older people.

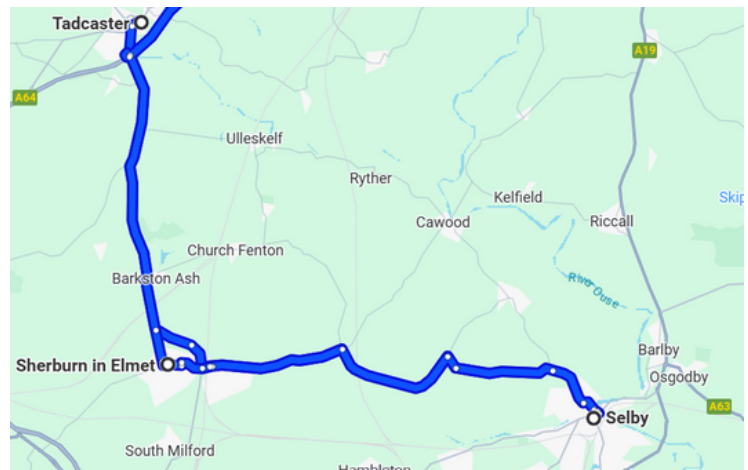
Key highlights from local provision

Selby & District Foodbank

As the core provider of emergency food aid in the area, the Selby & District Foodbank continues to experience rising demand. To meet this need, it now purchases most of its stock, as donations alone are no longer sufficient. In 2023, the Foodbank launched a Financial Inclusion Project, which has delivered over £1.8 million in financial gains for local residents and prevented more than 100 people from becoming homeless.

Selby Community Fridge

Run by Up for Yorkshire, the Community Fridge reduces food waste and removes stigma by focusing on environmental impact. It had to reduce its opening hours due to logistical challenges but continues to serve many local families. The team is now exploring a shift to a Community Pantry model, which would include small contributions from users and incorporate skills-building such as cooking on a budget.



The Big Communittea (Selby)

This welcoming drop-in offers free breakfasts and nutritious lunches every weekday and served over 11,500 meals last year. Its informal, open-door approach reduces barriers for those struggling with mental health, stress, or financial hardship. The charity has strong local partnerships with groups like Hands of Hope and Sainsbury's.

Coultish Centre lunches

In Selby's Coultish Centre, volunteers provide affordable meals with a strong emphasis on social connection. Around 40 people attend weekly for food priced between £1 and £5, many seeking both nourishment and company.

Sherburn Community Larder

Established in January 2025 in response to gaps in existing provision, this volunteer-led Larder now supports 55 households — 158 people in total, including 68 children. As well as food, the Larder offers hygiene items and a warm, welcoming space. During school holidays, breakfast is provided to children accessing the service. Supported initially by North Yorkshire Council's Household Support Fund, the Larder is now exploring long-term funding options.

Tadcaster & Rural CIC / The Barn

After the local Salvation Army Foodbank closed, The Barn took on the provision. Their Community Café now runs every Wednesday, offering food, financial advice, and warm spaces. A separate youth café evolved from a low-cost snack model into a free, healthier hot meal offer — and has recently expanded to include youth-led cooking sessions, supported by the Foodbank and the Household Support Fund.

Key issues emerging

Sustainability remains a top concern across all sites, as funding pressures increase. Providers are seeing steady rises in demand and are heavily reliant on volunteers — with transport and logistics presenting further challenges. Access to fresh food is another recurring issue, especially in Tadcaster. There's also a strong and consistent focus on maintaining dignity. Many projects are reframing food support by embedding it in social, environmental, or educational activities, helping to reduce stigma and encourage engagement.

Learning for others

- Link food with advice: Selby's integration with Citizens Advice has delivered powerful outcomes and helped reduce ongoing reliance on food aid.
- Start small and evolve: The Sherburn Community Larder has adapted quickly — moving from pre-packed parcels to a café-style model with breakfast for kids during holidays.
- Reframe the narrative: Positioning food support around waste reduction or wellbeing helps shift perceptions and increase uptake.
- Co-location works: Tadcaster's model combines food, advice, and community support in one place — making it easier for people to get holistic help.

Use schools as anchors: In Selby, school food pantries are saving families an average of £13 per week and offering fresh, nutritious options at low cost.

Voices from the ground

“Needing food is symptomatic of a greater struggle... Whether it's debt, health or just falling through the cracks.”

— Faith Emmanuel, Selby & District Foodbank

“Short-term fixes don't normally lead to problems being alleviated... they can increase stress.”

— Sherburn Community Larder Trustee



For more information on food provision in Selby, please visit:

<https://www.skyblue.org.uk/foodinsecurity/>

Coming up!

Household Support Fund (HSF) Round 7 update:

The Household Support Fund was set up by the government to help people who are struggling with the increase in living costs and feeling the financial pressure of paying their bills. North Yorkshire has received an allocation of £6.2million for 2025/26 – details of the scheme are currently being developed in line with the Department of Work and Pensions guidance, including a seventh round of Food Support Grants. Details of the Food Support Grants scheme will be available in the summer, with a focus on provision of free or low-cost food and associated preventative activity. To keep updated on HSF, please visit:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/benefits/household-support-fund>.

Next Community Food Bulletin:

If you have any news or stories that you would like to share with this network, which comprises community food provisions across North Yorkshire & York as well as other stakeholders interested in supporting the ambition to reduce food insecurity, please email

Amber.Graver@northyorks.gov.uk

or Adele.Wilson-Hope@northyorks.gov.uk.

Our next bulletin will go out in November 2025 so please have any information to us no later than mid-October.

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