

IMPACT  
REPORT

2022

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

After a tough couple of years adapting to the challenges of the pandemic the country was quickly plunged into the 'cost of living' crisis which shaped trends for 2022. For Black Country Foodbank this meant we had to react and respond to make sure that we reached as many people as possible. Through opening more Foodbanks, offering a voucher code to front line workers over the telephone, bulk buying food and toiletries, launching our recipe bags and sharing our stock with 50+ other food aid charities across the Black Country we have managed to provide for everyone that has accessed our services.

During 2022 our Foodbanks were pushed to the limit as we struggled for stock, saw queues of people at our Foodbanks and worried whether the volunteers would be able to keep going. Of course, our volunteers are the backbone to everything that we do and their commitment to their communities is second to none. We cannot begin to convey how thankful we are for all that they give.

Our Foodbanks are incredible spaces where providing a food and toiletry parcel is only the beginning. Often there is additional support ranging from debt advice to clothing and furniture, helping people with their immediate needs but also tackling the root of the crisis. As one our Foodbank leads described, their vision for their Foodbank is to be 'relational rather than transactional and even if it's simply remembering a name and a food preference – it makes them a person not a number'. The passion for people drives the volunteers to provide a welcoming environment, so much more than a food parcel.

The figures that you will read in this report are staggering but please remember that these figures are only the tip of the iceberg. There are many more people who are not accessing Foodbanks or help from charities because of fear, pride or lack of knowledge. The levels of poverty run much deeper than this report conveys.

This is not the situation we had hoped for. We hope that one day we will be reporting that we are closing our Foodbanks. We will continue to share our stories and stats and use our voices to fight for change, whilst making sure that we are meeting the need to the best of our ability. Thank you for your support and standing with us.

Jen Coleman, CEO

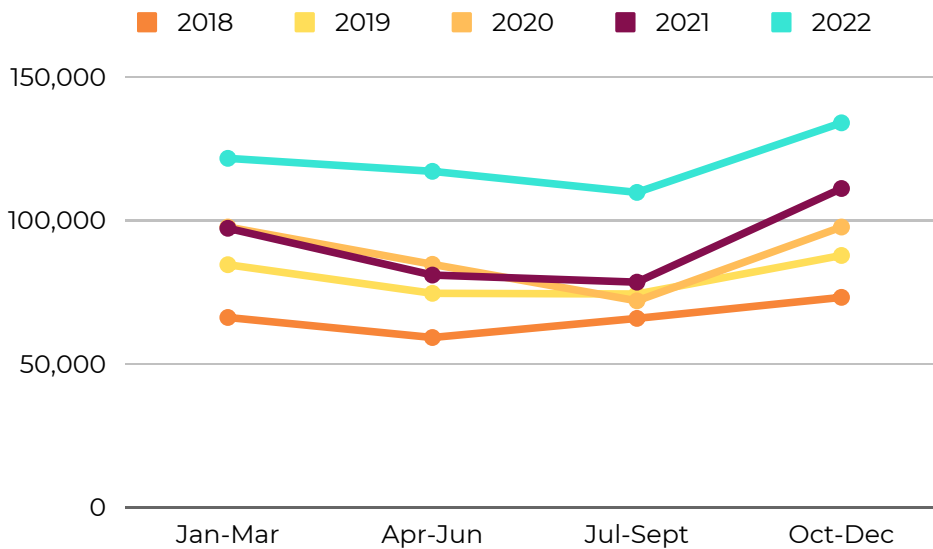


Our Foodbanks are incredible spaces where providing a food and toiletry parcel is only the beginning.

# THE YEAR OVERALL

## Meals Distributed from 2018 - 2022

A comparison of the number of meals distributed each quarter from our Foodbanks between 2018 - 2022



### Meals Provided

↑ 31%

As shown clearly in the graph above, the number of meals provided increased by a staggering 31% from 2021 to 2022. Overall 519,469 meals were distributed from 27 Foodbanks and additional charitable organisations (known as Partner Projects), across Dudley, Walsall, Sandwell and Wolverhampton.

### People Supported

↑ 39%

The number of people supported overall from our Foodbanks increased by 39% from 2021 to 2022. The usual trend for the previous two years for people supported is that there is a continual decrease from Q1 to Q3 and then a spike in Q4, due to the strain on people's finances with Christmas. In 2022 the first three quarters did not follow the usual pattern, as the amount of people supported stayed consistent and Q2 even increased from Q1. This is likely due to the energy crisis and cost of living crisis.

### Donations

↑ 8%

Donations increased by 8% from 2021 to 2022 but across the year there was a large contrast of what was donated in each quarter. There was an encouraging end to the year with donations compared to the start of 2022. The first half of the year was 10% down compared to 2021, whereas the second half of the year was 23% up. The stronger end to the year has provided vital resources to meet the increase in demand.

# A YEAR OF FIRSTS - 2022

**22,859**

It was the first year we supported more than 20,000 adults

**13,556**

It was the first year we supported more than 10,000 children

**238**

**TONNES**

It was the first year we have provided over 200 tonnes of food

**15,601**

It was the first year we have issued over 15,000 vouchers

**482,773**

It was the first year we distributed more than 400,000 meals

\*These figures do not include Partner Project data

# REASONS FOR CRISIS

The reasons below give an insight to the variety and scale of the crisis that those attending our Foodbanks are facing. These top five reasons are from all the Foodbanks combined. Within each borough of Dudley, Walsall and Sandwell there are slight differences, but 'Low Income' and 'Benefit Issues' are consistently high. Issues with Universal Credit were high priority in Sandwell and Walsall.

## 01 Low Income

Low Income is consistently the highest reason for crisis across all three boroughs of Dudley, Walsall and Sandwell, with 6046 people and making up 40% of the total reasons. We have seen an increase in those in employment needing our support, especially those on zero hours contracts.

## 02 Benefit Issues

Benefit issues was 23% of the total reasons for crisis and included 3458 people. We believe this is partly due to the sudden cut to the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift. This imposed the biggest overnight cut to the basic rate of social security since the creation of the modern welfare state.

## 03 No Access to Public Funds

8% of those accessing our Foodbanks are because they have no access to public funds. A high majority of these are in the Dudley borough.

## 04 Out of Work

Out of Work contributes to 7% of those attending our Foodbanks overall. Dudley had a higher proportion compared with Walsall and Sandwell. Dudley's unemployment rate is 4% which is slightly higher than the UK average.

## 05 Debt

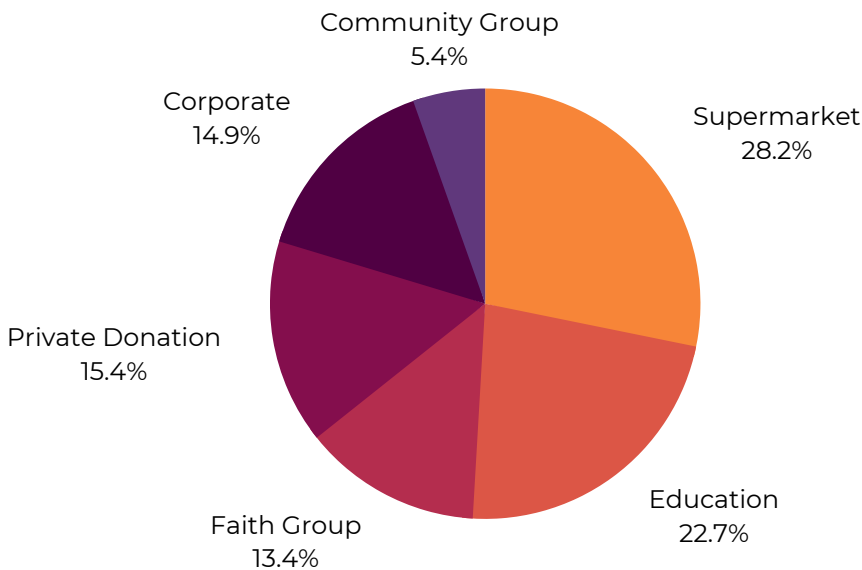
5% of those accessing Foodbanks are because of debt. 2022 saw borrowing and lending rise, showing that households are turning to credit in order to try to pay for living costs.

# DONATIONS

The first half of the year saw a struggle to keep up with demand with limited stock. Donations reduced by 10% in this time compared to 2021. We believe the cost of living crisis and much needed support going to Ukraine impacted the donations compared to the previous year. The second half of the year was incredibly encouraging with donations increasing significantly, seeing a 23% increase compared to 2021. This was due to our Harvest Campaign being the highest it has ever been. Supermarkets (store donation points) and schools are consistently the highest proportion of physical donations and personal donations and grants are the highest proportion financially.

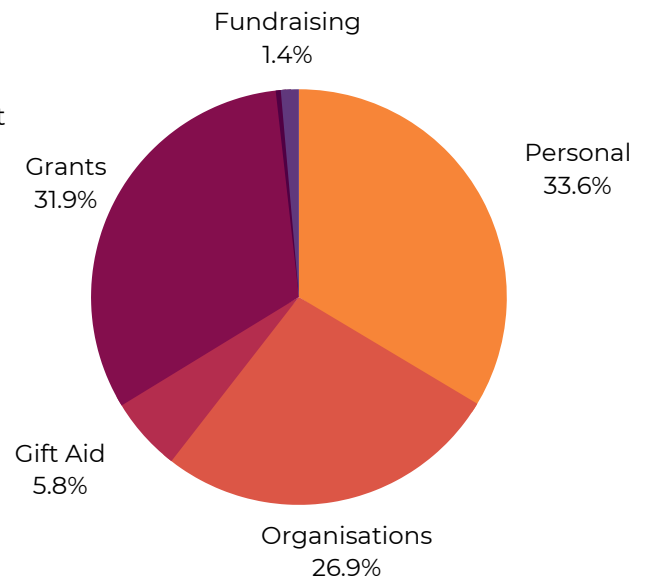
## Food and Toiletry Donations

Percentage each category contributes to food and toiletry donations



## Financial Donations

Percentage each category contributes to financial donations



↓ 15%

### LENT (Easter)

Food and toiletry donations decreased by 15% from 2021 to 2022 during the Lent Campaign. This will partly be due to donors wanting to support the Ukraine crisis which began at the same time.

↑ 16%

### HARVEST (September- October)

Harvest was incredibly encouraging with donations increasing by 16% from 2021 to 2022. This was the most donations we have had at this time, even surpassing the total Christmas donations for 2022.

↑ 21%

### CHRISTMAS (November - December)

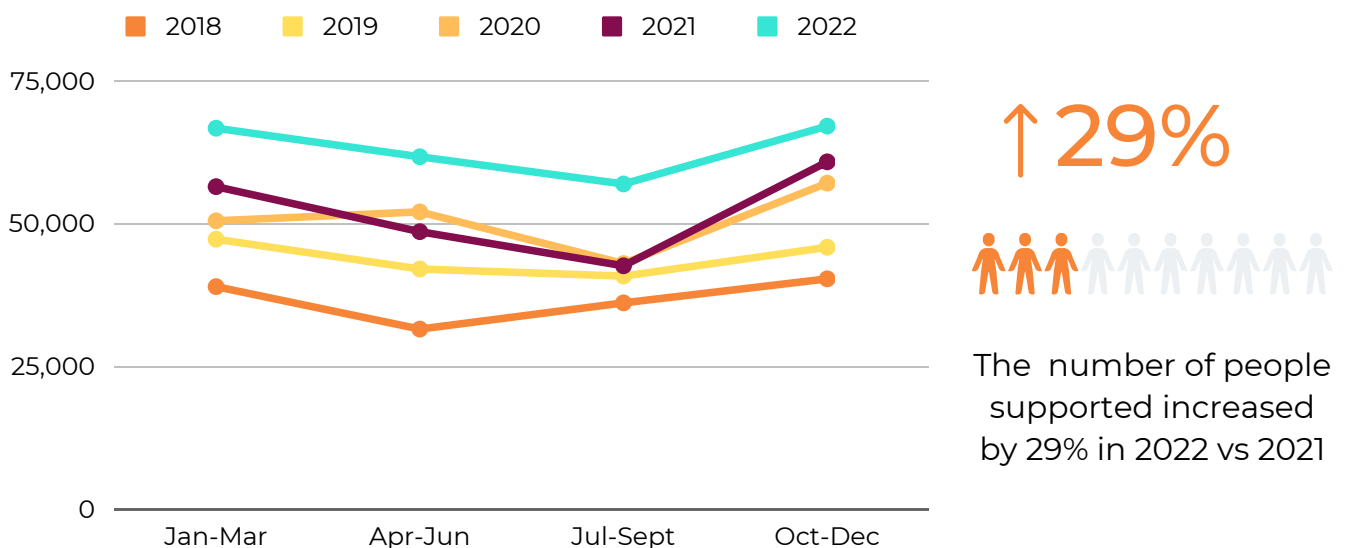
Christmas donations stayed consistent with Harvest and increased by 21% from 2021 to 2022. This helped to meet the increasing demand especially during that time of year when finances are particularly stretched.

# DUDLEY

Dudley had 12 Foodbanks, the highest number of Foodbanks across the three boroughs. Therefore, as expected Dudley had the highest figures for an individual borough. All the Foodbanks bar one had an increase in demand when comparing 2022 vs 2021. The donations for the whole of 2022 increased by 7% compared to 2021. This is encouraging but with the demand increasing by 29% then there is still a significant offset between the amount in vs the amount going out.

## Meals Distributed from 2018 - 2022

The comparison of the number of meals distributed in each quarter between 2018 - 2022



From the graph above it demonstrates the increase in demand year on year in Dudley and highlights the significant jump there has been in 2022.

- 126 Tonnes of food was distributed
- The total number of meals distributed = 252,631
- The total number of people supported = 18,978
- The proportion of those supported being children = 34%
- On average 972 meals provided each day

*"These are unprecedented times, with many individuals and families reaching out to Foodbanks for the first time. It's a sad truth but there are increasing numbers of people who simply cannot afford the ever-rising cost of living. Thanks to the generosity of the people in the Black Country and the volunteers who turn up week in week out."*

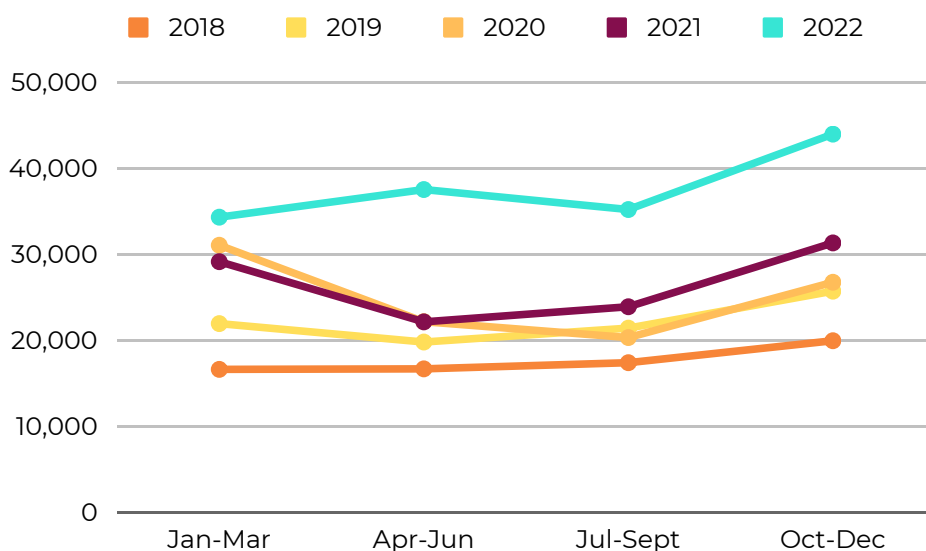
Lynne - BCFB Dudley Coordinator

# WALSALL

In 2022 Walsall distributed food from 8 Foodbanks across the borough. Having an additional Foodbank compared to 2021 will have increased the capacity to provide food and toiletries, however the increase in demand has much more to do with the cost of living crisis. All the Foodbanks saw an increase in the number of people supported and food distributed in 2022 compared to 2021.

## Meals Distributed from 2018 - 2022

The comparison of the number of meals distributed in each quarter between 2018 - 2022



↑ 51%



The number of people supported increased by 51% in 2022 vs 2021

Similarly to the Dudley figures, the graph reflects the large increase in demand in 2022 in Walsall. Unlike the two previous years in 2020 and 2021, 2022 did not follow the trend of a reduced middle part of the year, instead the need for support stayed consistent.

- 76 tonnes of food was distributed
- The total number of meals distributed = 151,107
- The total number of people supported = 10,931
- The proportion of those supported being children = 40%
- On average 581 meals provided each day

*"I think this year is the first time that I have actually seen queues of people waiting for help before the official opening time at some of our centres. We have to thank all the volunteers who go out of their way to help the people in need who attend our distribution centres."*

Allan - BCFB Walsall Coordinator

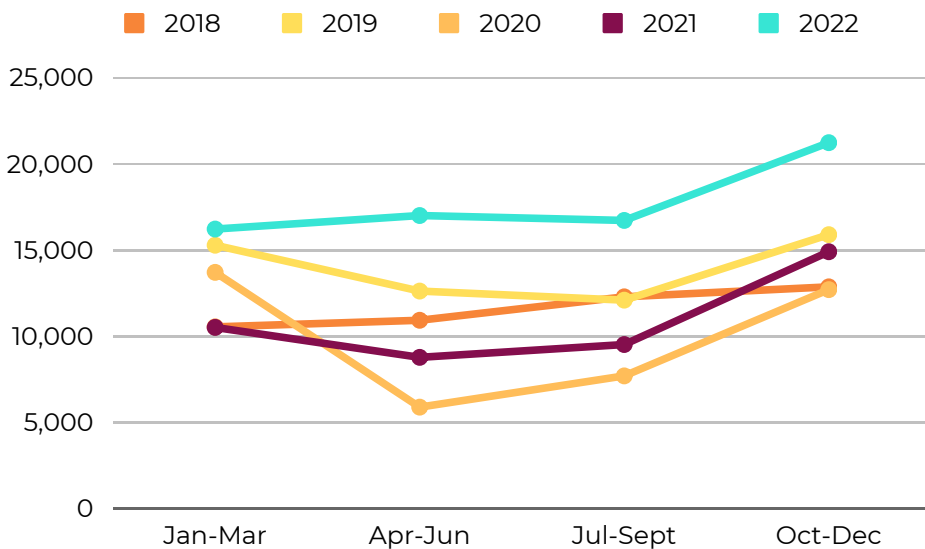


# SANDWELL

Sandwell is a borough we have made great efforts within 2022 to develop our connections and build momentum to reach more people who require our help. We welcomed Holy Cross Church as a Foodbank to bring the total number of Foodbanks for Sandwell to 7. This focused engagement has contributed to the staggering 62% increase in demand for support in 2022 compared to 2021. Like Walsall, every Foodbank saw a large increase in demand and we expect this to continue with the current cost of living crisis and increasing the awareness of who we are in the borough.

## Meals Distributed from 2018 - 2022

The comparison of the number of meals distributed in each quarter between 2018 - 2022



↑ 62%



The number of people supported increased by 62% in 2022 vs 2021

From the graph above it demonstrates from 2018 - 2021 the figures fluctuated, but the 2022 figures show a distinct increase in demand from the previous years.

- 36 Tonnes of food was distributed
- The total number of meals distributed = 71,209
- The total number of people supported = 6,061
- The proportion of those supported being children = 43%
- On average 274 meals provided each day

*"Our presence is growing in Sandwell, unfortunately this is needed rather than celebrated! We can't thank our Foodbanks enough for their on-going support and commitment which means people can now access Foodbank across most areas of Sandwell."*

Lynne - BCFB Sandwell Coordinator

# PARTNER PROJECTS

We are proud of the partnerships we have built with charitable organisations across the Black Country, including Wolverhampton. In 2022 we have partnered with 59 other projects which has provided us with alternative opportunities of accessing people we may not have been able to reach. This includes projects which provide hot meals for the older generation, those that are homeless, children's holiday clubs and many more groups. We have highlighted three Partner Projects we have supported in 2022, but others to mention include; Russell's Hall Hospital, YMCA, Brushstrokes, DMBC Public Health, West Midlands Police, Revival Fires, Brierley Hill Babybank and Cornerstone Community Church.



## Welcome Group Halesowen

The Welcome Group Halesowen seek to alleviate social isolation and financial exclusion of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees, providing a safe weekly drop-in and telephone support for people across Dudley, Sandwell and the west of Birmingham.

## Good Shepherd

Based in Wolverhampton, the Good Shepherd aim to end homelessness and create sustainable pathways out of poverty. They want to ensure the most disadvantaged and marginalised have the support and opportunities they need to achieve their full potential.



## Black Country Women's Aid

Black Country Women's Aid support survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence across The Black Country. Their sensitive and holistic support helps over 8000 victims of abuse each year to escape from violence, cope with trauma and rebuild their lives.

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**18 tonnes** OF FOOD PROVIDED TO PARTNER PROJECTS

# FROM THE FRONTLINE

THANK YOU

*"At one of our Foodbanks we have provided a safe space for a severely anxious mum who struggles to leave the house. We supported her with a food and toiletry parcel, gave her time to chat over coffee and offer prayer. She has shared with the volunteers at the Foodbank that she has felt welcomed, cared for and listened to."*

Case Study from a BCFB Foodbank

This report focuses on the incredible impact the charity has had across four boroughs in 2022 through Foodbanks and Partner Projects. There's so much more to the BCFB story. Please contact us if you'd like to find out more about the work that we do. We would not have been able to respond to the crisis without the amazing support of our volunteers and donors. From all the team at BCFB we want to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported us.

## DONATE

If you have felt moved by this report and want to support the work of Black Country Foodbank, please visit the donation page on our website or scan the QR code. We are greatly appreciative of all donations given.



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## CONTACT

Black Country Foodbank,  
Albion Street, Brierley Hill, DY5 3EE

[www.blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk](http://www.blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk)  
[admin@blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk](mailto:admin@blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk)  
01384 671250