



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025
OUR FOOD **MAKES** A DIFFERENCE

OUR VISION

Our vision is for 'Communities where everyone thrives'.

This focuses on the strengths of a community and our aim to facilitate positive and lasting change.

OUR MISSION

Through the power of food, our mission is to empower communities in Norwich, ensuring each and every person has the support to eat well, live well, and feel connected.

By providing safe spaces at the heart of the community and a holistic programme of projects and 1:1 support, we can reduce inequalities, raise aspirations, and create a shared culture of strength and kindness.

OUR CHARITY HUB

This year, The Feed Foundation, our charity, has continued to run our Lakenham community hub, which is made up of our social supermarket, community café, and our community kitchen.

Our programmes are representative of the needs and the strengths of the community we serve, and we regularly take on board feedback from community members through surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, and community consultation.

Our programmes are co-produced as much as possible with the community that utilise them, ensuring relevance of support.

We take an Asset Based Community Development perspective, leaning into the strengths of the community, listening to their perspectives on the issues that they face, and resourcing them to co-create their own solutions.

**WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT FOOD,
AND PASSIONATE ABOUT PEOPLE.**



ABOUT US: **OUR CIC**

We run a chain of cafés and a busy catering enterprise, the profits of which contribute towards running our community projects. Our projects also enable us to provide volunteering opportunities and work experience for the community. The food we make is delicious, homemade and locally sourced.

This year we have focused on our existing sites, controlling our costs and improving our operations.

In March we took over the running of the Norfolk Snowsports Club bar and kitchen, a fantastic community facility in Trowse, Norwich.



ABOUT US: OUR CHARITY

Our social supermarket is the part of our community hub that provides members with access to free fruits and vegetables, free freshly baked bread from Bread Source, and low-cost affordable groceries – because we believe that no one should ever have to go without the essentials.

We have actively reduced our use of Ultra Processed Foods at our hub in order to tackle the health inequalities our members face. We also regularly take donations from local suppliers in order to reduce food waste in the community.

Our charity hub hosts 36 volunteers, who are the life blood of our service, and any day of the week they can be found connecting with hub members, handling all of our deliveries and donations, and lending a listening ear. We could not do what we do without them!

OUR VALUES

Be focused

We will keep things simple. We will concentrate on doing a few things really well and communicating clearly.

Be energetic

We are committed, dedicated, determined, purposeful and fun. We will not give up on achieving our vision and mission.

Be creative

We dream big and learn from trying new things. We collaborate with other organisations who share our goals, locally and from further away. We are aspirational and inspire the people we work with to aim high.

Make people proud

We take pride in our work and our products and want to be known for being the best. We celebrate our successes.

Treat people well

We always prioritise equality and gain strength from diversity.

Improve our environment

We seek to improve the local communities where we work and to make a positive impact on the environment.

THE CHALLENGES PEOPLE FACE

Our community hub is based in the heart of Lakenham, one of Norwich's most disadvantaged areas, facing deeply entrenched and overlapping forms of deprivation. It ranks poorly on income and employment, and a high share of residents rely on means-tested benefits and struggle to access jobs (IMD, 2019). Child poverty continues to stand at around 34%, which is well above the national average.

This income strain intersects with health and service access, in a vicious cycle of cumulative disadvantage. Census data show that lower proportions of residents rate their health as "good" compared to national averages.

Local barriers compound these challenges: precarious, part-time, or low-wage work with poor benefit uptake, health struggles including mental health difficulties, and patchy access to effective, timely healthcare. The result is a highly layered disadvantage, where income, health, and structural barriers reinforce each other.

Our community hub exists to disrupt that cycle and to engage in community regeneration. Our aim is to untangle this web of disadvantage.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR MISSION People are able to eat well, live well and feel connected.

WHAT WE DO TO ADDRESS

THOSE CHALLENGES

Run a food hub, using affordable/free healthy food as a gateway to community.

Work in an asset-based way, focusing on the strengths of the community.

Develop support programmes through community consultation.

WHAT WILL CHANGE FOR PEOPLE

- People can afford to eat well, regardless of circumstance.
- People have the skills and knowledge to create a healthy diet for their families' unique circumstances
- People feel connected to the food they eat

- People are given opportunities to make choices, which increases their sense of agency.
- Adults and children have improved self-worth and access to opportunities for connection.
- People share in the pleasure of food.

- People feel connected to others.
- People are connected to the right support in the community.
- Our support programme reflects the needs and strengths of the community it serves.

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE



Reduced Health Inequalities



Improved Quality of Life



Stronger, more connected communities

COMPARED TO LAST YEAR, **OUR MEMBERS REPORTED...**

- ↑ A 34% increase in members saying that they use the social supermarket daily, or a few times per week.
- ↑ A 12% increase in people saying that the social supermarket “helped them to access a wide range of food.”
- ↑ A 6% increase in people saying that they can afford to eat a healthy, balanced diet after using our social supermarket.
- ↑ A 13% increase in members saying that they feel more connected in the community since joining our community hub.

HOWEVER, **NEED IS INCREASING...**

- Of those who responded to our latest survey, 29% of people say that they “always, or often have to skip essentials such as electric, gas, or hot water due to low finances.”
- 59% said that household bills would stop them from accessing food if it wasn't for the social supermarket.
- 41% said that the physical health of someone in their family stops them from accessing food, and we know that over half of our members have a disability in the household.
- 21% said that the cost of parenting has started to impact on their ability to afford essential bills over the past year.

A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

This year has been one of reflection, challenge, and determination.

We said goodbye to our home of six years on Prince of Wales Road, and also to our previous CEO, Lucy, whose leadership and passion helped shape The Feed into the organisation it is today.

As a team, we took this moment of transition as an opportunity to come together and review our Theory of Change. This process helped us ensure that our programme of projects remains focused, aligned with our mission and vision, and relevant to the needs of the community we serve.

We've continued our vital work against a backdrop of rising costs and uncertain funding. Despite these challenges, I've been inspired by the tireless commitment of our staff and volunteers, who have worked shoulder to shoulder with the community to deliver real, tangible support.

I'm proud to share just some of the fantastic outcomes from this work in the pages of this report.

A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Demand for our services continues to rise, and our projects are consistently well-attended — a clear reflection of the need that exists across Norwich.

By aligning what we do with local priorities such as health equality, food security, and community empowerment, The Feed is well-positioned as a trusted delivery partner for the city.

This report is a powerful testament to the passion, dedication, and resilience of our team and volunteers. Thank you for being part of this journey — I look forward to what we can achieve in the year ahead.



Gemma Harvey-O'Connell
CEO

OUR YEAR

This year has been one of both challenge and inspiration. With reductions in funding across the landscape, the need for our services has never been greater – yet neither has the determination of the wider Norwich community to step up and make a difference.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our funders, as well our enthusiastic Friend of The Feed businesses, we've been able to continue delivering vital programmes that provide food, support, and hope to those facing poverty. At a time when so many are struggling, it has been truly humbling to see Norwich come together – businesses, volunteers, and individuals – to ensure no one is left behind.

Your support hasn't just kept our doors open; it has strengthened the heart of our community. Together, we've proven that even in difficult times, compassion and collective action can create real, lasting impact.

Thank you for standing with us. The work continues, and with your help, so will the hope.

Alex Birrell, Programme Manager

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We are grateful to have partnered with the following organisations this year to make our vital work possible:

- AGE UK
- Norfolk Community Law Service
- Norfolk Community Advice Network
- Your Own Place
- Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Service
- University of East Anglia
- Trussell Trust
- Norwich Food Bank
- Shelter
- Norwich Citizens Advice Bureau
- Norfolk Social Services
- British Red Cross
- Norfolk Early Help Hub
- Greenlight Trust
- Grow Kids
- Norwich Fuel Bank
- Norwich Baby Bank
- Change Grow Live
- Future Projects
- Norfolk County Council
- Norwich City Council
- Tesco's
- Active Norfolk
- Norfolk and Waveney MIND
- The Magdalen Group
- The Matthew Project
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Jarrolds
- Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust
- Working Well Norfolk
- Smash Marketing
- Hebron Housing
- Voluntary Norfolk
- Green Light Trust
- NIDAS
- Norwich Science Festival
- Katy Dunn
- Edible East
- The Eve's Hill Veg Co
- Lakenham Primary
- Norwich City College
- Life Beyond Care
- McCarthys
- Booker
- ASDA
- Yoga 4 wellbeing
- Cuddly Cavies
- SOS
- Morrisons
- Freshways
- Norfolk Community Foundation
- Havensfield Eggs
- Taste of Suffolk
- Roger Holme
- Spire Solicitors
- Little Green Button
- Norwich City Services Ltd
- Alex Rimmell
- Leathes Prior
- Place UK
- Pivotal
- Select Recruitment
- Flawless Cleaning
- Meadow Harvest
- Tilia Market Garden
- The Nest (Norwich Community Sports Foundation)
- City College Norwich (supported during Community Meals)
- Pasta Foods Ltd
- Hey Girls
- EMCOR

OUR PREVENTATIVE SUPPORT PROJECTS

Social
Supermarket

Community
Cafe & Kitchen

First Steps

Bloom

Cook Eat Grow

Community
Growing

Volunteering

Nourish

Community
Voices

Active Feedie

HOW WE DO THINGS: COMMUNITY CONNECTING

This year, the Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership funded us to complete community research in order to better understand what barriers people using social supermarkets face to eating healthily.

Our community connector spent time with our community hub members and the wider Lakenham and Tuckswood community, and wrote a report that considers how knowledge inherited through lived experience can be harnessed to tackle the challenges of food insecurity. It proposes that community knowledge is like an ecosystem of knowledge and values, and highlights its potential to create change.

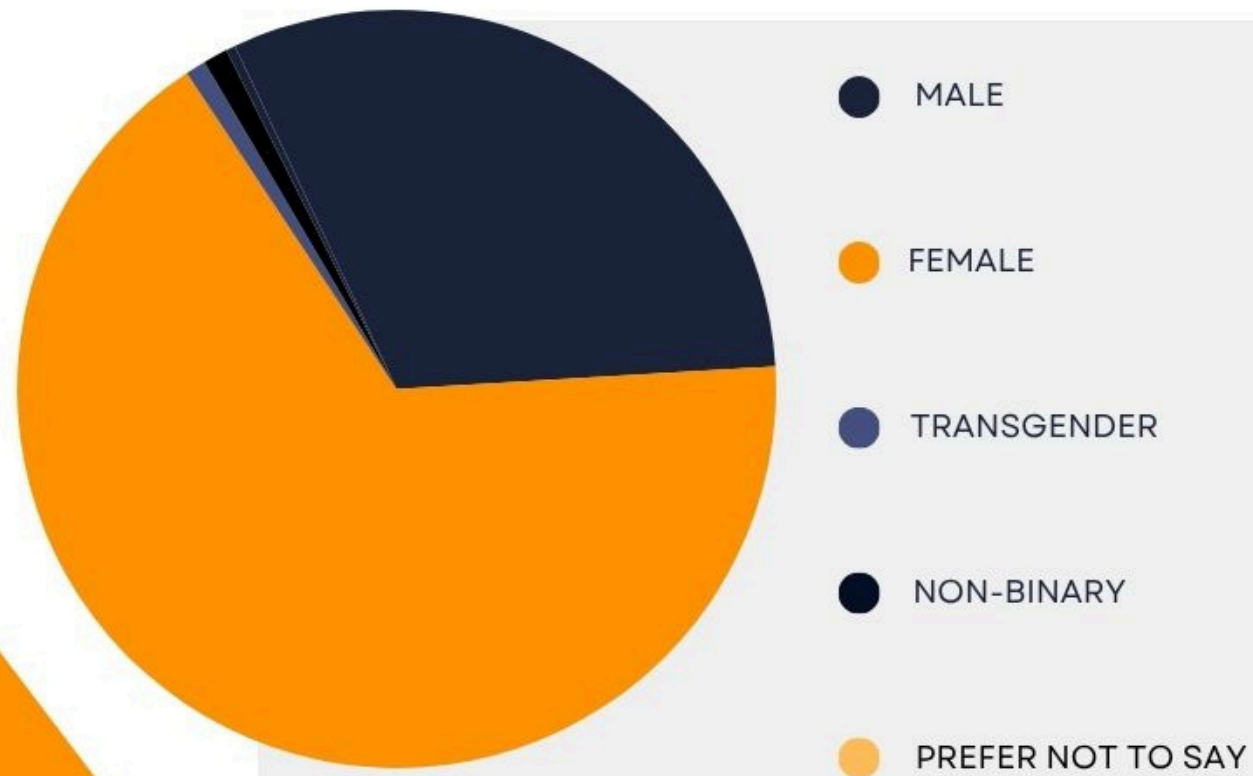
Food, he says, “brings people through the door of our Social Supermarket and into a culture of respect and dignity. It brings people into our Community Café, a precious space, where it is a conversation starter, a connection-maker, a resource to ignite enthusiasm for co-creation, change, and community.”

He continues to work alongside our community to co-create programmes of support, and to facilitate a sense of community ownership over the hub.

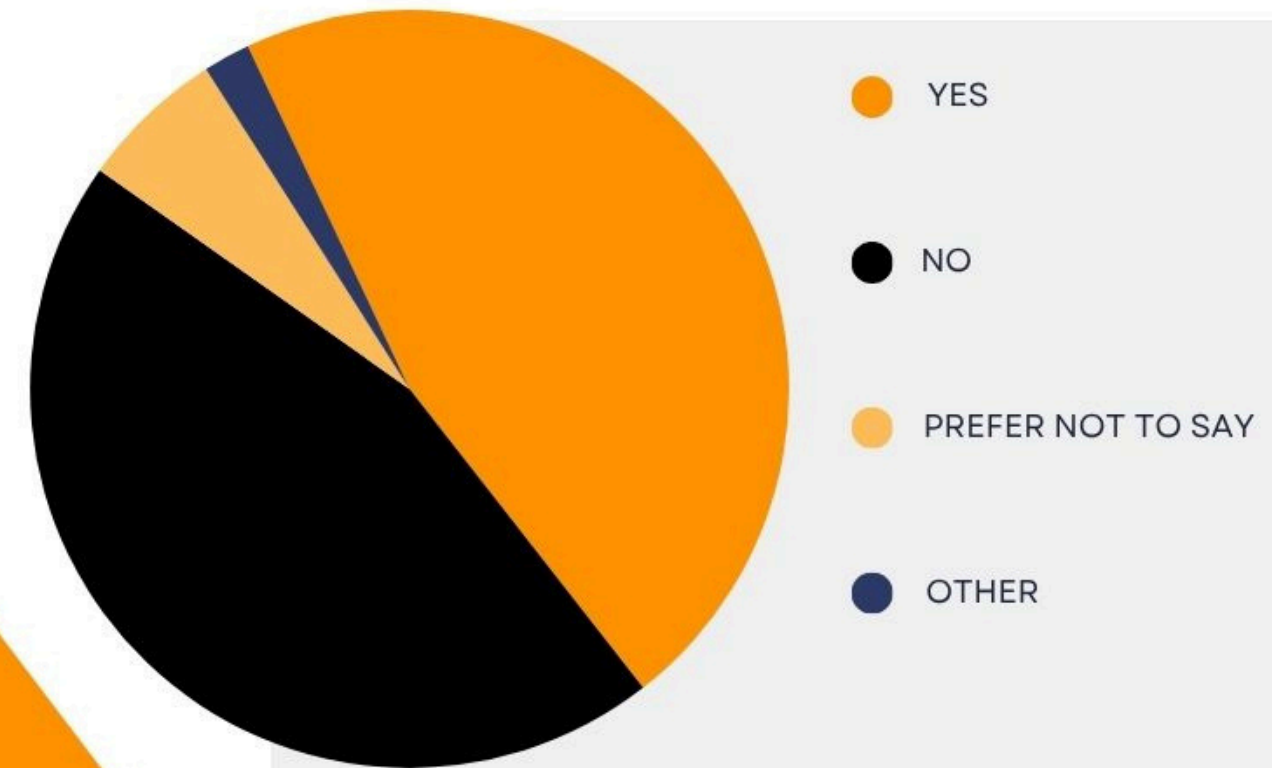
OUR MEMBERS

We have 3,145 community hub members, including 1,868 children in members households.

GENDER

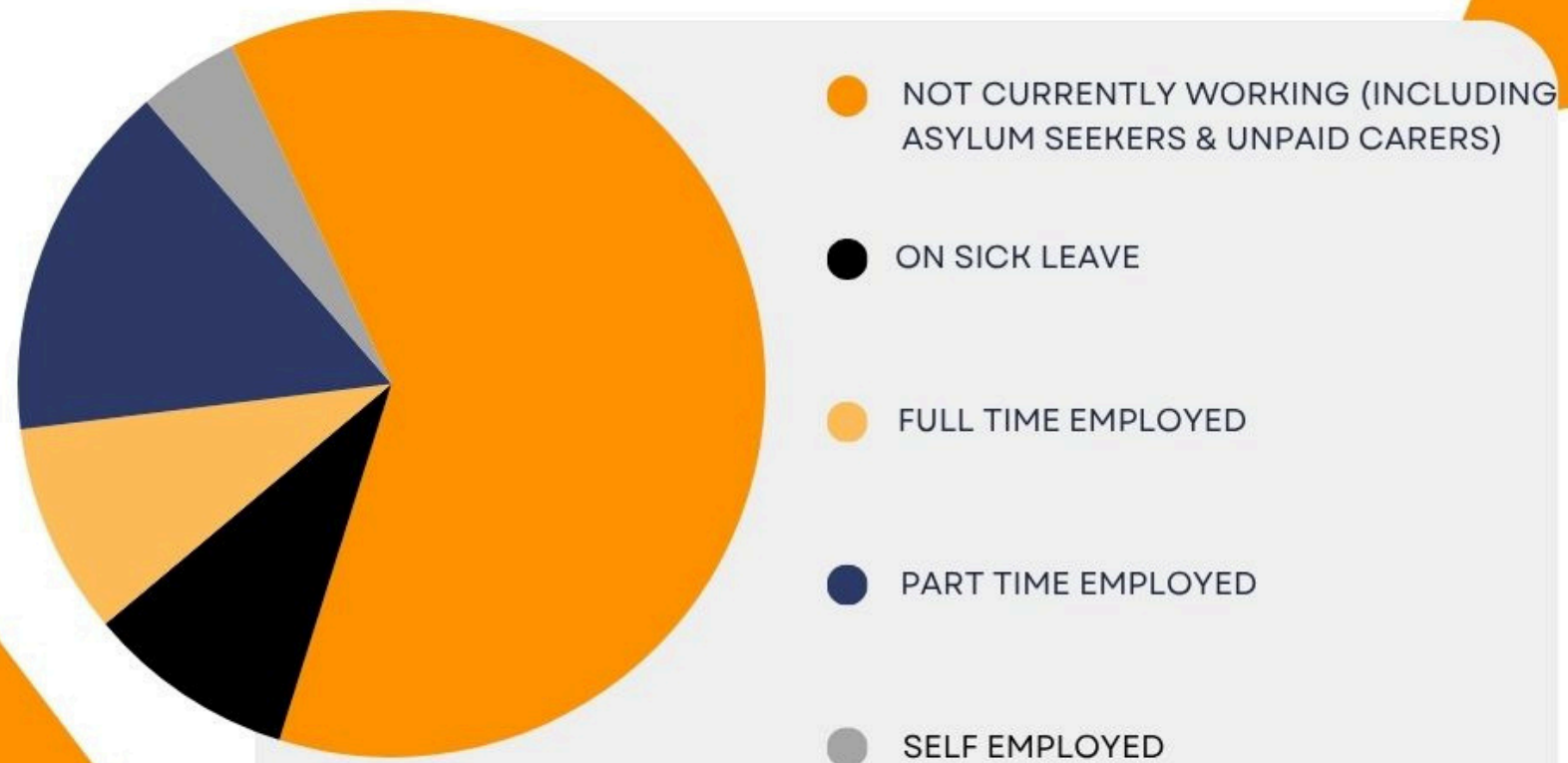


DISABILITY



OUR MEMBERS

EMPLOYMENT STATUS



HOUSING



OUR PROJECTS



SOCIAL SUPERMARKET

Over the past year...

- 🍊 We gave away 23, 008 kilos of free food from our community fridge.
- 🍊 We gave away 194 kilos of free hygiene products from our hygiene bank.
- 🍊 We gave away 14, 440 free bags of fruit and vegetables last year.
- 🍊 A basket of goods is 40% cheaper than at a standard supermarket.
- 🍊 81% of our members say that our social supermarket helps them to get a wide range of food at a lower price.
- 🍊 We've had an average of 344 visits per week. The average spend was £3.94.
- 🍊 2 new applications to become a community hub member per day.

SAVVY SHOPPER - AMANDA'S STORY

Amanda found us by fluke. On wandering in, she says she found there were some lovely, caring people who welcomed her with open arms.



Amanda told us that she works 16 hours a week since she injured her back. She says that "sometimes, life can be a struggle" as she ends up with £50-£60 to live on by the time she has paid her bills.

"I use the social supermarket regularly and buy most things from the freezer section, it's so helpful when I'm on a low income. I always get two free goodie bags too - one with fruits and one with vegetables."

Amanda is a savvy shopper...

She can be found most days sharing tips and tricks like how to spread 500g of mince across many meals

She's led some cooking classes in our community kitchen, teaching other members how to make dishes like homemade soup!

But sometimes, things change. One day, Amanda had to switch to universal credit. She received a payment of just £1 to live on for the month.

Amanda continued her savvy shopping and was able to access the community fridge at the Social Supermarket. But things weren't easy, and this was right before Christmas!



"MY FOOD PREP"

"Once I've done my Feed shop and my batch cooking, I can now save about a tenner in my money box for any extras I need throughout the month.

I would be lost without my little Feed shop!"



COMMUNITY CAFE & KITCHEN



854 people
took part in our
wellbeing
projects.



255 people attended
drop in sessions such as
workshops with Your Own
Place and Shelter,
community meals,
community led mornings
such as Wellbeing
Wednesday, and our very
own Santa's grotto.

BACK TO THE OLD ME - STELLA'S STORY

"All the projects have helped me get back to my old self. The support with no pressure or judgement has given me confidence to be more comfortable with myself. I'm back to the old me!"

When Stella joined the social supermarket, she was feeling socially isolated, with anxiety about meeting up with people.

She was struggling with the rising cost of living and household bill payments, while raising a little one. These issues were compounded by her dyslexia.

Though overwhelmed, with the right support, Stella started to think about what was in her control. She wanted to make a change.

She set herself some goals to work on with us...

To reduce social isolation.

To meet up with people, even if it was anxiety producing.

To be able to deal with finances for the future.

We worked with Stella to help her achieve her goals. Together we...

- Got her in touch with Get Me Out The Four Walls, a local service that supports parents experiencing isolation and mental health difficulties.
- She sought support from Your Own Place when they did a drop-in workshop at our community cafe. They supported her with budgeting and debt.
- She signed up for some 1:1 sessions with us to support her overall wellbeing.
- Through building her confidence with 1:1 support, she started to attend our community-led group project, Wellbeing Wednesday. She now regularly attends, and many of our regulars are people that she calls friends.
- We gave her details and information about a free maths course through Adult Learning which she signed herself up for.
- She joined our Cook, Eat, Grow project which has given her more ideas around what she can cook, and the motivation and confidence to cook more and cook on a budget. She has now cooked the lentil bolognese for a friend, and has brought home-cooked oat cookies to Wellbeing Wednesday!
- She participated in our co-design workshops, which help us deliver our services better, contributing to loads of fantastic ideas including some about accessibility for dyslexia.
- We connected her with a work experience placement through the Bell Group, which boosted her confidence.
- She has started to lead our local community gardening project, completing a level 1 horticulture course at Easton College.

"I'm a lot happier, I'm not as down anymore, and I'm more able to tell people when I am down. It's nice to know that you are just down the road!"

FIRST STEPS

Over the past year...

-  343 people received 1:1 support.
-  245 successful referrals were completed to support services, ensuring our community members get the right support, at the right time.
-  £3830 given away in store credit, allowing our members to settle in to the hub and grow their financial resilience while not having to think about whether they can afford to eat.
-  With support from the Hardship Support Fund, we were able to support members with items such as new wheelchairs, new mobile phones, slow cookers, air fryers, helping with necessary building works, and at times, even with cash!

"I'M NOT FROM 'ROUND HERE..." MARIA'S STORY

Maria had had a tricky few months before getting to us. She was ill with Tuberculosis, having recently been discharged from hospital away from her home area. Prior to her stay in hospital, she had been homeless. On discharge, she was placed in temporary accommodation by her home council, but in Norwich. She knew no one here.

In her hometown, she had support from Turning Point, an organisation offering support to people wanting to deal with their drug or alcohol issues. Her family, friends and dog were also in her hometown.

"I was lost. Literally lost. I knew no one. I happened to come across you while visiting the pharmacy. I came in. You sat me down. You fed me. You reassured me that you'd help me."

M-C sat her down, gave her some food, and worked with Maria to create a "to do" list and tick things off, one by one...

Maria set some goals.

To get access to all her medication and attend to her medical needs

To find appropriate support in the Norwich area

To make sure that she was in contact with services at home, particularly housing

Together we:






- Contacted the Vulnerable Adult Service, a GP service for people with complex needs. An appointment was made for assessment
- Made contact with her local council and ensured all the paperwork was completed.
- Made a referral to Change Grow Live, a Norwich-based drug and alcohol behaviour change service.
- Made a referral to the foodbank. She was also then able to access a Housing Adviser from Shelter.
- Gave her an air fryer and a foil container to cook food.
- Contacted the British Red Cross for some clothes, because she only had the clothes she was wearing.
- Signposted her to Quakers for a hot meal that night.
- Made a referral to a dentist who were accepting people for emergency dental care.
- Made a referral to a local advice agency to get ID because the only ID she had was the wrist band from hospital, which she was still wearing.
- Planned to apply for a new bank account with a sympathetic bank. She had a building society account, but no card and no branch in Norwich.

"I am so grateful to you. I was ill and didn't know what else to do. You welcomed me and gave me confidence that there was support out there and you helped me find that. I was really low when I came in. Things are still uncertain, but there is a plan and we're working on that together. At a time where I was feeling worried, you were there for me."



BLOOM WOMEN'S PROJECT

Over the past year...

-  We supported 26 women through our trauma-informed 10 week programme for unemployed women.
-  78% had increased their skills to return to work.
-  67% were seeking a volunteer placement or work experience placement as a first step to getting back into employment.
-  We trained two previous participants to support our Community Project Lead with delivering Bloom, creating a beautiful full circle.
-  We supported past participants of Bloom to set up their own community project, continuing to meet for social interaction and creative practice.

"LIFE FEELS MORE HOPEFUL NOW AND I'M BEGINNING TO SHAPE MY 'NEW NORMAL'"

Bloom helped me feel valued again. I've started to heal from burnout. I've reconnected with my creative side (especially writing and poetry) and begun exploring ways I might volunteer during term time, ideally doing something outdoors or community-based. I'm now co-creating a journalling group for previous Bloom participants, so that creativity and connection can continue.

I found out about the Bloom project when I was attending a SEN event for carers.

Before engaging with Bloom, I felt quite lost.

I met a previous participant who shared her own positive experience. At the time, I was feeling very low in confidence and mentioned that I didn't feel ready to look for work. She encouraged me to apply, saying that Bloom was supportive, understanding, and could help me rebuild at my own pace. Her encouragement gave me the nudge I needed.

I was burned out from years of work, caring responsibilities, a family bereavement, and managing my own health conditions. I'd gone through a period of betrayal and emotional upheaval, and I felt like I'd lost my sense of self. Turning 50 seemed to bring everything to the surface, and I had to acknowledge just how worn down and unrecognisable to myself I'd become.

I'd tried various things to help myself—support groups, short courses but nothing really seemed to stick, there was never any continuity. A lot of the support I'd encountered before felt too clinical, rushed, or targeted at people in very different situations from mine. I often felt like I had to present a more "together" version of myself than I really felt.

Emma's goals when starting Bloom were...

→ To rediscover my confidence and identity

→ To feel more positive about the future

→ To feel better equipped to make choices for myself again

→ We worked with Emma to achieve her goals...

Emma felt she was a long way off being ready for paid work again, but was ready to explore what her future might look like. She wanted to feel connected with other people who understood that there are good days and bad days.

Emma shared that she wasn't aiming for a big outcome, however, she loved all the different activities, especially the baking, creative journalling and dance.

"The dancing was unexpectedly powerful. Hearing music again (after years of avoiding it) unlocked something in me emotionally and since Bloom I have listened to music every single day. It has brought me such joy!"

The impact of the support I received has been lasting, it's like there is a thread that has kept me connected to the community, including the social supermarket and the drop in sessions at the cafe. Bloom gave me a foundation to start imagining what's next as I navigate the reality of my new post-50 life. Thank you for everything.

Since completing Bloom Emma is now co-creating a journalling group for previous Bloom participants, so that creativity and connection can continue and has attended interviews and has secured a volunteering opportunity she enjoys.

COOK EAT GROW


Over the past year...

- 🍊 159 community members have attended our fortnightly cooking sessions.
- 🍊 100% of those who attended said that they had improved confidence in cooking, increased knowledge around healthy food choices, and were more likely to cook than buy Ultra Processed Foods
- 🍊 We have hosted tailored sessions for people with long term health conditions, such as a cooking class run by a public health nutritionist called “Eating for Energy.”
- 🍊 The community have provided direction and guidance on what they want to learn how to cook, and at times have self-led sessions, sharing their cooking skills with one another.


COOK EAT GROW **IN WORDS**



“We really look forward to these sessions. It’s great fun, we’re learning how to cook new foods and the best part is getting to enjoy it all together at the end.”







“I love that these sessions bring us all together. It’s the highlight of our week!”



“The sessions are fun and we learn at the same time. Even when we don’t follow the recipe exactly!”

COMMUNITY GROWING

Over the past year...

-  We ran seed and sprouting workshops at our community hub with the intention to help people feel connected food.
-  We took over the garden beds at Jubilee Park, around the corner from our hub. Our community members have been taking ownership of the beds, planting everything from vegetables to flowers.
-  We partnered with community assets such as the Community Enabling Team at Norwich City Council, Lakenham Primary School, and other organisations such as Edible East to teach our community about gardening.
-  4 of our community hub members are now completing their NVQ in horticulture.





COMMUNITY GROWING

“Let me tell you that it was your enthusiasm that brought me back and kept me there! You’ll be pleased to hear that I’m not long back from a dog walk and going down to water the beds. The flowers are all blooming too!”



VOLUNTEERING

Over the past year...

-  We had 78 new applications to volunteer with The Feed
-  Our volunteers contributed a total of 16,640 hours to help us run our preventative projects.
-  Our volunteers made up the equivalent of 8.5 full time members of staff.
-  Our volunteers have completed training in Food Safety, Learning to Advise, Safeguarding, Mental Health Awareness Training and Domestic Abuse Training

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH FOOD

Brian is a self-proclaimed home cook and volunteer at The Feed Community Cafe. He believes the power of food can bring people together. He puts this into practice weekly by cooking quality, home-cooked meals.

Brian first supported us by walking a marathon, during which he tried one of our sausage rolls, which stuck with him.



Brian had volunteered at other organisations but hadn't yet found that right fit.

He recalled the marathon he'd walked, and when he found out about our aims at The Feed, it resonated with him and so he applied to volunteer at the shop.

Brian first supported us in our run up to Christmas, but his passion for food was apparent. We then booked some shifts for the cafe, which led to Brian cooking delicious meals on a weekly basis, from turkey tikkas to classics like cottage pie.




- Since volunteering, our cafe has become a space where our members come not only to eat – but to discuss food and build relationships.
- His support has also allowed us to deliver our Community Meals more regularly – these allow us to give back to the community and provide freshly cooked food for our members on a monthly basis

Brian's experience here is just one example of how our volunteers are at the heart of what we do – food is something that can bring people together, and Brian's experience has done just that.

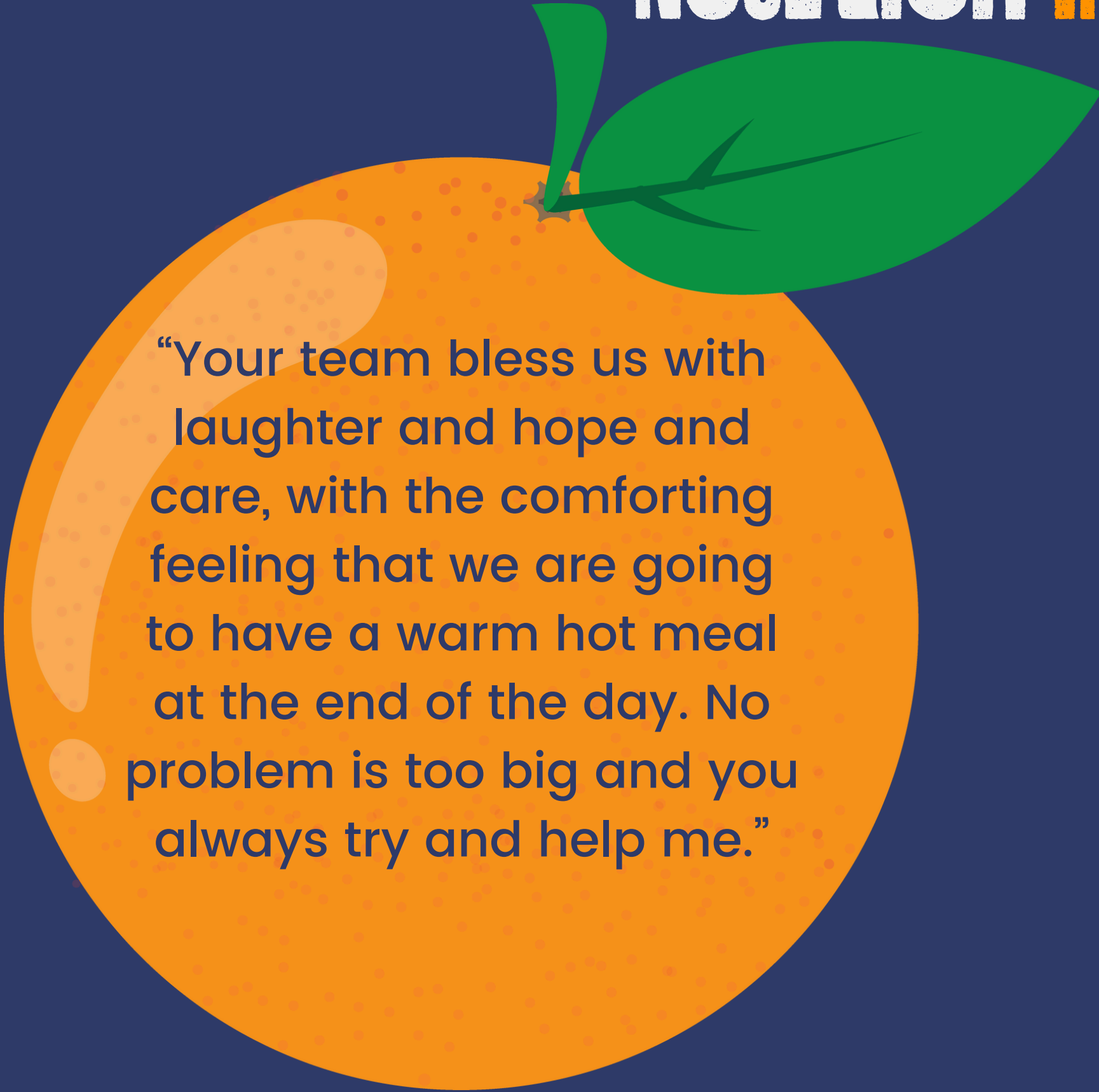
We rely on our volunteers to create the impact that we strive for. When we give them the space and support to use their strengths, they do the rest – and it shows in every meal.

NOURISH

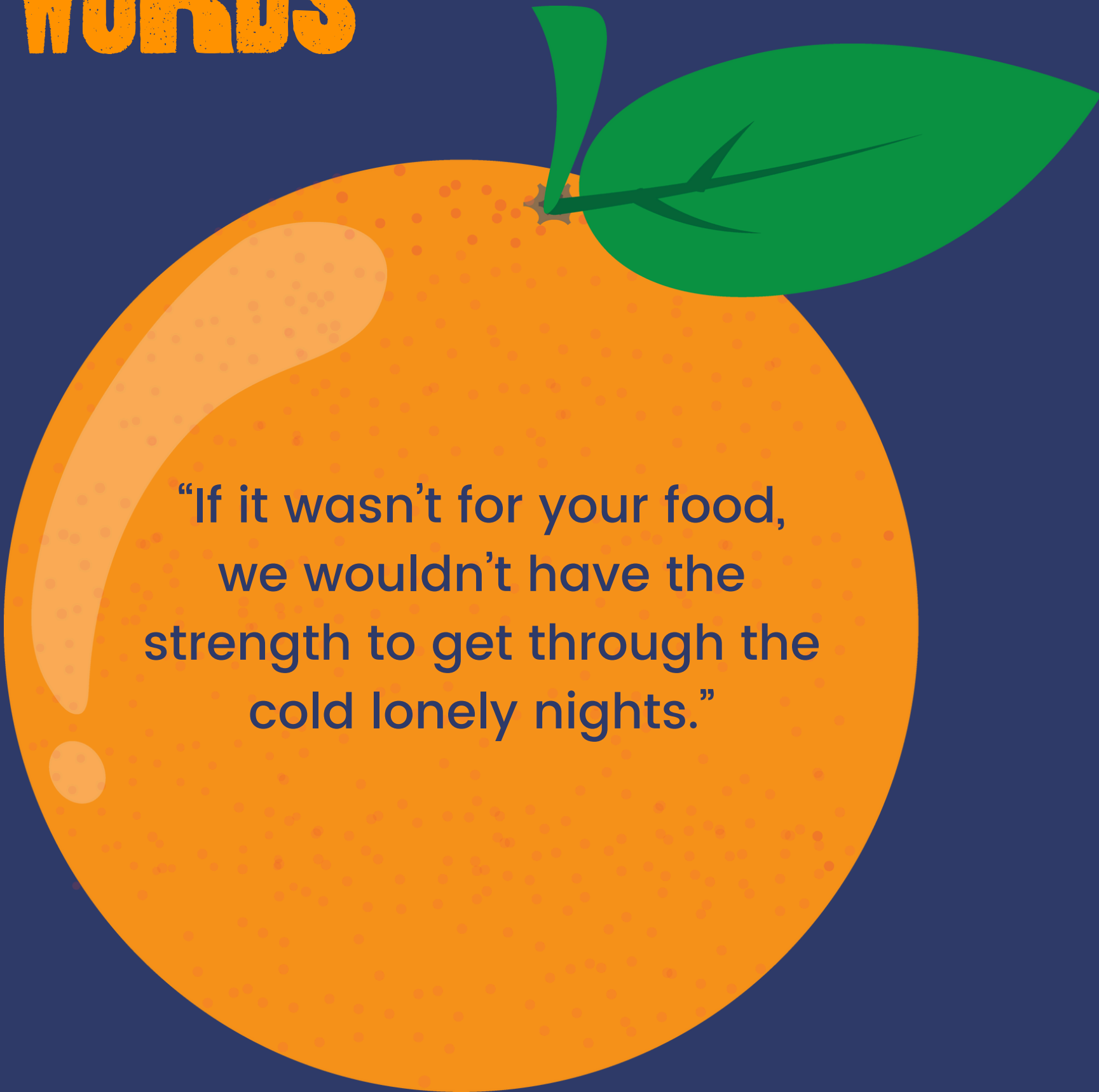
This year, we...

-  Provided a total of 1858 hot meals to people without access to cooking facilities, such as those who are street homeless or living in supported accomodation.
-  Connected 84 people (many who were street homeless or living in supported accomodation) with health services such as Doorway and the Vulnerable Adult Service.
-  Hosted a free Christmas dinner for our Nourish participants, offering a quiz and a sense of community during the difficult winter months.

NOURISH IN WORDS







“Your team bless us with laughter and hope and care, with the comforting feeling that we are going to have a warm hot meal at the end of the day. No problem is too big and you always try and help me.”



“If it wasn’t for your food, we wouldn’t have the strength to get through the cold lonely nights.”



COMMUNITY VOICES

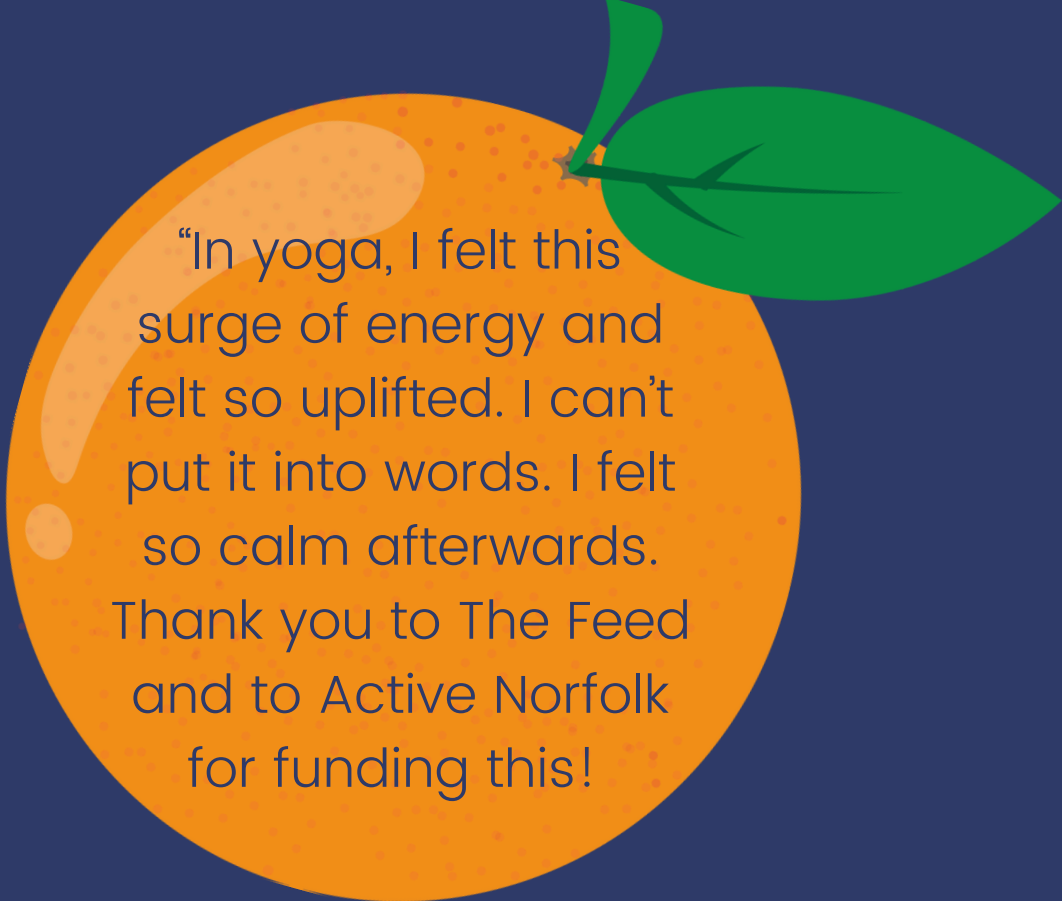
This year, we...

-  Collaborated with Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Service as trusted communicators, to help them understand what barriers women in our community face when it comes to healthcare.
-  Held focus groups at our community cafe with women. We started the conversation about menstrual health, sexual health, cancer care, and the menopause.
-  We highlighted feelings of mistrust between the women in our community and the healthcare system as a whole.
-  Our findings were used as a part of the Women's Health – Community Voices report and will help shape the future of local health services going forward.

ACTIVE FEEDIE

This year, we...

-  Offered guided meditative wellbeing walks, accessible yoga classes for adults, and family yoga for children and their parents for our community members.
-  100% of children who took part said that they now “enjoy moving their body” and feel “able to relax” after learning yoga.



“In yoga, I felt this surge of energy and felt so uplifted. I can’t put it into words. I felt so calm afterwards. Thank you to The Feed and to Active Norfolk for funding this!”

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS



Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership

British Humane Association

Septagon Trust

THANK YOU TO OUR FRIENDS OF THE FEED



PIOTAL™



LEATHES PRIOR
SOLICITORS



sélect'
RECRUITMENT



Artlist



Lovewell Blake
Chartered Accountants and Financial Planners



Paul Macro
PHOTOGRAPHY