

S2 Food Poverty Network- Newsletter No 19, March 2026



Welcome to the nineteenth newsletter. I make updates every couple of months following our Trustees'/ Managers' meeting.

I begin by repeating a plea made in each newsletter:-

- If you are a regular donor, please send your contact email address to me. Please also indicate whether you would like a personal invitation to see Food Bank at work. My email address is: jtrhull@outlook.com

This plea has already solicited supportive, interesting replies. Several long-standing donors have taken up my invitation to visit Food Bank and Shop and see them in operation. I now send a personal e-copy of this Newsletter to some 40+ donors who have made contact.

The Food Bank Trustees met in mid-March. We reviewed early data for 2026. Our financial year coincides with the calendar year. The last Newsletter (No 18) summarized comparisons of 2024 and 2025 full year data. We are about to submit our financial records for 2025 to Voluntary Action, Rotherham. They act as our external auditor as per Charities legislation.

1. Our rich data

We keep very good, but simple, data. We use the data to monitor our impact.

1a. Incoming food and items to Food Bank and Shop

Donations of food and money in January and February 2026 are slightly less than in 2025. This Newsletter will praise, and thank, some new donors.

1b. Stock out (kilograms)

Foodbank has given out slightly less so far in 2026 than 2025. The Food Shop has given out more in the same period.

	Food bank	Community Shop	Community Kitchen	Total out
Jan	1622.67	2871.23	99.4	4593.3
Feb	1620.27	2968.7	42.2	4649.17
Totals	3242.94	5857.93	141.6	9242.47

1c. A note on the Community Kitchen

Here is a reminder of the way the, relatively new, Community Kitchen now operates. The kitchen is led by one of our trustees, Sarah Short. It recycles

and uses any food stuffs left over and close to sell-by from Food Bank or Shop. It now provides free food and tea/coffee to waiting Wednesday Food Shop clients. It opens in the church on Thursdays providing good meals for which locals pay what they wish.

S2 Food Poverty Network makes a small contribution to the Kitchen's costs. In December the Kitchen served 182 Thursday meals.

This is really good. Clients meet new people as they sit and chat. Thursday diners may be single people who are somewhat isolated. Here they meet and talk.

In February the Kitchen served 295 meals. 257 local people "ate in" and 38 chose "take-away".

1d. Numbers of people being fed

Please remember what we mean by "people being fed". A mother with three children coming one week to Food bank or Shop counts as four people being fed.

Foodbank fed, in January and February, 41 more people than in 2025. We think this increase is due to two other local foodbanks and the Library Pantry closing.

Community Shop fed 90 fewer. This drop is largely explained by the success of Duncan (our Personal Independence Payments specialist) who has won 6 PIP tribunals. These resulted in £42k arrears payments. For now, these beneficiaries do not qualify for Community Shop as they have sufficient in savings.

	Food Bank	Community Shop	Total fed
Jan	214	501	715
Feb	198	537	735

2. Reviewing numbers of referrals

January and February saw 30 professional referrals and 81 self-referrals. A pattern is sustained: 42 are in trouble for debt and 26 for lack of money.

The Shop currently helps 74 households. Typically 25-30 households come weekly to Food Bank.

3. Monitoring our attempts to address causes of food poverty

• Debt Advice:

Our team of debt mentors completed 27 DROs in 2025. These are Debt Relief Orders which, after due process and by agreement, write off most debts and allow a fresh start. The 27 DROs wrote off debts of £225,354.

8 more DROs are now in process.

We continue to value the partnership model with Community Money Advice. CMA is about to complete an audit of this partnership working.

- **Benefit Access**

My last Newsletter gave detail of our work in this area. We shall shortly welcome a new benefit mentor in April who will bring expertise from the closing Food Bank where she worked previously.

4. Budget 2026

Cash donations for February are £1302 less than forecast. This, helpfully, is offset by receipt of the first instalment (£2500) of a grant from Comic Relief. Thanks to good work by Mick and Rosie, expenditure on food for Bank and Shop are within budget.

We have had two major donations of food. One follows a Facebook appeal by an S2 supporter and another from a nearby Foodbank which is closing.

Mick is coordinating a group to focus on strategies to increase our food donations. Overall variance from planned expenditure for the year to date is positive at £1081.

Three trustees (John Le Corney, Sara Short and John Hull) are working on a forward plan for further applications for grant aid. In the course of 2026 it is likely we shall apply again for grants from Coop Local Community Fund, Freshgate Trust, Sheffield Church Burgesses and Graves Trust.

5. Staffing

In recent Newsletters I have explained the retirement of Karen Kinsella, our Administrator and Rosie, our Coordinator (now renamed as S2 FPN Manager). I can now report that we have made two very promising appointments. **Jess Downs** is our new Administrator. She is already working alongside Mick and Rosie. **Katelyn McKeown** will be our new S2 FPN Manager.

Katelyn will commence work shortly. There will be a planned 4-week overlap with Rosie.

Our gratitude to, and respect for Rosie, Mick and Karen is always worth repeating! I should also praise the group of Trustees who oversaw the interview/selection processes for Jess and Katelyn.

6. People to thank

I make a point, in each Newsletter, of naming and thanking supporters who have recently helped us greatly. One of our volunteers is Sarah Lynch. She is a member of **Sheffield's 500 Together Group**. Please look at their informative website.

Members make a weekly donation of £1. The group then, monthly, makes a donation of £500 to a Sheffield charity. We were chosen last month. Thanks to Sarah and 500 Together.

20th March 2026