

Lichfield foodbank



Annual Report for the period 1 January 2025 to
31 December 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Foodbanks provide emergency food, collected from the local community, to local people in crisis. Lichfield foodbank was launched in late March 2014. It was developed under the auspices of Churches Together in Lichfield and is part of the national foodbank network seeded by Trussell.
- 1.2 Lichfield foodbank became a charity in its own right operating as a charitable incorporated organisation in June 2015. This paper identifies the work undertaken during our financial year from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025.
- 1.3 The charity's name is Lichfield foodbank and has been entered onto the Register of Charities with the Registered Charity Number of 1162359.
- 1.4 The registered address of the charity is Lichfield foodbank, c/o Saxon Hill Academy, Kings Hill Road, Lichfield, WS14 9DE

2. The Need

- 2.1 The district of Lichfield has a population of circa 106,000. As well as the city of Lichfield, the district includes the town of Burntwood which is served by the Cannock and district foodbank. The area served by Lichfield foodbank is a relatively affluent area but it does contain some pockets of deprivation. Financial crises can impact on anyone, not just those in the most deprived areas or on income related benefits.
- 2.2 Nationally, the need for foodbanks has grown significantly in recent years. The need for a foodbank in Lichfield was identified from information provided by foodbanks in neighbouring areas that residents of Lichfield had needed to call upon them for assistance in times of crisis. In 2025, Lichfield foodbank fulfilled 3,557 food vouchers which is a 7% decrease compared to 2024. Despite the decrease in vouchers, it is clear the number of people approaching Lichfield foodbank for help confirms that there is an ongoing need to have a foodbank in the city.
- 2.3 Demand, in terms of individuals fed, decreased by 18% compared to 2024, but increased by 55% compared to 2021 and a total of 1,506,082 meals have been distributed since we started in April 2014. We have only been able to feed so many people because of the support we have received from individuals and groups across the city and surrounding villages, plus local churches, businesses and the supermarkets Tesco, Morrison's, The Co-op and Waitrose.

3. Highlights of the Year

Warehouse and Operations

In 2025, the foodbank made the strategic decision to invest in a new warehouse facility to improve the sustainability, safety and efficiency of its operations. While the overall floor space remained unchanged, the new layout and infrastructure provides a safer working environment for volunteers and a more effective system for storing and moving fast-flowing stock. This investment supports the long-term resilience of the foodbank and reflects a commitment to good operational practice.

Buying and Managing Stock

Alongside generous food donations from the local community, monetary donations continue to play a vital role in enabling the foodbank to purchase essential items needed for food parcels. During the year, changes to supermarket purchasing arrangements, particularly the loss of a bulk buying process with Aldi, required a review of how stock is sourced. The foodbank adapted by exploring alternative wholesalers and suppliers, with a focus on securing high quality, essential items, including meat and UHT milk, at the best possible value while ensuring the process remained practical for volunteers.

Review of Food Parcels

The contents of food parcels were reviewed and updated to provide a full seven days of food whilst previously it consisted of just a 3-day food parcel. This change has had a positive impact, with many clients now requiring support less frequently, in some cases attending fortnightly rather than weekly. This reflects a more sustainable model of support whilst continuing to meet the needs of those facing food insecurity.

Additional Household and Toiletry Support

To further support clients, the foodbank introduced a monthly household and toiletry bag, distributed during the first week of each month. These bags include essential items such as cleaning products, shampoo, shower gel and soap. Feedback has been very positive, recognising that people experiencing food poverty often struggle to afford these essentials as well. Many of these items are donated, allowing the foodbank to extend its support beyond food and respond more holistically to community need.

4. Ongoing Support

Each foodbank distribution centre maintains an agency database and manual for use in signposting a client to additional support.

5. Additional Support

In 2025, Lichfield Foodbank continued to work in partnership with Citizens Advice South East Staffordshire (CASES) on two key projects: the Organising Programme and the

Financial Inclusion project. Together, these initiatives aimed to address both the immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity by supporting individuals to access advice, maximise income and build collective community power to influence change.

- Lichfield Foodbank continues to receive funding for the Organising Programme. The current funding period is due to conclude in April 2026. Since March 2024, Lichfield Foodbank has been in receipt of a yearly grant, £53,698 in 2025, from Trussell to support the employment of two part-time campaign coordinators who are employed by CASES. As part of the Trussell Organising Programme, CASES has contributed to strengthening community power and supporting collective action on locally identified concerns, empowering foodbank clients to take action on issues that matter to them.
- In April 2025, Lichfield Foodbank received a further £45,000 grant from Trussell to fund a CASES representative at every daytime foodbank session, providing tailored support to clients with a focus on income maximisation. This initiative has helped clients address the challenges that have led to reliance on food parcels, enabling them to feel better equipped to move forward with reduced dependence on emergency support.
- Throughout 2025, CASES provided support to 187 clients across 340 cases. The majority of clients presented with complex and multiple needs, resulting in 1,957 issues being addressed during the reporting period.
- It is not unusual for clients to have more than one problem, for example welfare benefits, debt and energy costs
 - 83% of clients had issues with welfare benefits
 - 25% of clients had issues with debt
 - 36% of clients had issues with utilities and communications
 - 15% of clients had issues with housing
- In addition, 84% of clients had a disability or long-term health issue.
- The top Welfare Benefit issues were general benefit entitlement, localised social welfare and personal independence payment. The top debt issues were fuel debts and council tax arrears.
- The average income gained for clients was £2,407 per year, some £127,584 in total.
- While some clients were able to move towards reduced reliance on the foodbank, most continue to face significant and ongoing barriers. Prolonged welfare benefit processes and long-term health conditions remain key factors limiting improvements in long-term financial resilience.

6. Volunteers

- Lichfield foodbank is a volunteer run organisation; we do not have any paid staff. We have 204 volunteers who helped to operate the foodbank in 2025.
- There are teams of regular volunteers staffing the warehouse and distribution centres and conveying food to and from our warehouse. All of our volunteers use their own vehicles to carry food to and from our warehouse, which means we can operate without the expense of having our own van, as many other foodbanks have to do. There are a large number of volunteers involved in the supermarket collections. We thank all our volunteers for their ongoing commitment.

7. Supporters

- We continue to be delighted by the level of support, both financial and in kind, that the foodbank has received. We are grateful to all those who have enabled the foodbank to operate as it does.
- Our thanks go to our other supporters, namely Life Church, Lichfield, Wade Street Church, Lichfield and Curborough Community Centre for hosting the distribution sessions and for providing office support and food collections; Saxon Hill Academy for providing the premises for our warehouse facility, plus the support of staff and students; Tesco in Lichfield, Shenstone and nationally; Morrison's in Lichfield and nationally; Waitrose in Lichfield and nationally; Central England Co-operative in Lichfield for accommodating our collection baskets and their direct donations.

8. Distribution Centres

There are operational distribution centres at Life Church, Netherstowe, Wade Street Church, Frog Lane and Curborough Community Centre in Reynolds Close and we cover a total of four sessions each week. We are grateful to our partners who allow us to use their premises to run these distribution centres free of charge.

9. Governance

- The purposes of the charity are defined in the constitution as follows:

“to relieve persons in Lichfield and the surrounding areas that are in financial hardship in such ways as the trustees from time to time think fit, in particular, but not exclusively by: a) providing emergency food, essential toiletries and household items to individuals and families in need and/or for distribution by charities or other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty and: b) such other means, including (but not limited to) the provision of support or signposting to relevant information and other advisory services.”
- Lichfield foodbank was granted formal charity status as a charitable incorporated organisation on 23 June 2015. It is constituted under the Foundation Model which means that its only voting members are the Trustees.

- During the year, the foodbank welcomed a newly formed Board of seven volunteer trustees: Verity Ashley (Chair), Danielle Leigh, Trish Thompson, Nick Arthur, Ian Chatham, Jane Middleton and Kate Coplestone. Trustees bring a broad range of skills and responsibilities, including warehouse operations and stock management, safeguarding, public relations, governance, agency relationships and liaison with Citizens Advice South East Staffordshire. The majority of the Board joined in the final quarter of the year and significant focus has been placed on strengthening governance and embedding the new team's understanding of foodbank operations. Trustees have been actively involved in front line activities such as purchasing stock, Tesco collection days and each distribution centre now has a linked trustee to support oversight and communication. The Board would also like to record its sincere thanks to the outgoing trustees; Ann Schwarzenbach, Peter Westwood and Hilary Dunphy for their valued commitment and contribution over many years of service.
- The Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers and duties.
- The Trustees are supported by a leadership operational team whose role is to ensure that the foodbank operates smoothly with good governance, to report to and support the Board of Trustees and to keep volunteers, clients and partner organisations appropriately informed.

10. Chair's Report

Why We Are Here – People Supported and Demand

Lichfield Foodbank exists to provide emergency support to people facing food insecurity, often during periods of unexpected crisis. While Lichfield is often perceived as a relatively affluent district, our experience continues to show that financial hardship can affect people from all backgrounds.

In 2024, demand showed a modest reduction compared to the previous year, with 3,832 vouchers fulfilled, supporting 6,259 adults and 2,911 children. However, demand remained significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels and almost double that seen in 2021, confirming the ongoing need for our services.

In 2025, we fulfilled 3,557 vouchers supporting 5,321 adults and 2,162 children. While this represents a further reduction in voucher numbers year-on-year, this should not be interpreted as reduced need. Instead, it reflects a combination of:

- more effective support models,
- improved parcel provision, and
- successful intervention through advice and income maximisation services.

Crucially, the nature of demand has become more complex, with many clients facing multiple, overlapping pressures rather than short-term crisis alone.

The Wider Context – Cost of Living and Policy Impacts

Throughout 2024 and 2025, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis continued to place significant pressure on households. Rising food prices, energy costs, housing pressures, and changes or delays in benefit payments have all contributed to financial instability for many of our clients.

We continue to see foodbank use linked to:

- delays or changes in welfare benefits,
- insecure employment or reduced hours,
- health conditions and disabilities,
- debt, particularly fuel and utility arrears.

These pressures mean that while some people access the foodbank briefly during a crisis, others require more sustained support while underlying issues are addressed.

Food In, Food Out – Stock Donated, Purchased and Distributed

The generosity of our local community remains extraordinary.

In 2024, Lichfield Foodbank collected and purchased 80.3 tonnes of food, including 67.5 tonnes donated through supermarket collections, harvest appeals, and community collection points. In 2025, total donated food amounted to 46.9 tonnes, supported by targeted purchasing of 17.6 tonnes of food to ensure parcels remained nutritionally balanced and met client needs. This included:

- 2.8 tonnes donated through Harvest appeals,
- continued strong support from supermarket collections,
- increased strategic purchasing to fill gaps in essential items and to ensure food parcel contents are nutritionally balanced.

A total of 62.5 tonnes of stock was distributed in 2025, with 59 tonnes provided directly through Lichfield Foodbank distribution centres and the remainder shared with other charities and partner organisations, including Tamworth Foodbank, Burton Salvation Army, and local community groups. This approach ensures that donated food is used responsibly, efficiently, and never wasted.

Improving Support – Not Just Food

A key development over the past two years has been our continued partnership with Citizens Advice South East Staffordshire (CASES), supported through funding from Trussell. In 2024, CASES advisers supported 216 clients across 376 cases, addressing issues including welfare benefits, debt, utilities, housing, and disability support. As a

result, 77 clients increased their income by an average of £2,501 per year, helping many move towards greater financial stability.

This work continued and strengthened in 2025, reinforcing our belief that food support must be paired with practical advice and advocacy if people are to move away from food insecurity long-term. We continue to see clear evidence that this joined-up approach reduces repeat reliance on emergency food.

Adapting Our Model – Learning and Improving

During 2025, several important operational improvements were introduced:

- A new warehouse facility was established, improving safety, efficiency, and long-term sustainability.
- Food parcels were expanded from three days to seven days, reducing the frequency with which some clients need to attend.
- A monthly household and toiletries bag was introduced, recognising that food poverty often exists alongside an inability to afford basic essentials.
- Continue to provide free sanitary items.

These changes reflect our commitment to dignity, effectiveness, and responsible stewardship of donated resources.

Volunteers – At the Heart of Everything We Do

Lichfield Foodbank is entirely volunteer-run. Volunteers continued to play a vital role throughout 2025, adapting to operational changes and increased complexity in client needs. Without their time, compassion, and commitment, our work simply would not be possible. The Trustees extend their sincere thanks to every volunteer for the professionalism, kindness, and non-judgmental support they offer to clients week after week.

Final Reflection

None of us want to live in a society where foodbanks are needed. However, until the underlying causes of food poverty are resolved, Lichfield Foodbank remains a vital source of support for people facing difficult circumstances.

We serve people from all walks of life — some briefly, some for longer — always striving to provide help with dignity, respect and without judgement. We are deeply grateful to our volunteers, supporters, partner agencies, and funders who make this work possible and we remain committed to supporting our community while continuing to work towards a future where foodbanks are no longer necessary.

Verity Ashley
Chair of Trustees

11. Treasurer's Report

11.1 In 2025 we received very generous monetary donations of £71,019.18. Included within this figure is £3,691 in top-up payments received from Tesco following our supermarket collections and other public food donations at the store. We are grateful to all those who purchase food at all our supermarket collection points and donate it to the foodbank.

11.2 We received some extremely generous donations from individuals and organisations during the period for which we are extremely grateful. Organisations that we would like to formally thank for their tremendous support in this way are:

- Aldi Research Centre
- Christchurch, Lichfield
- Defence Medical SE
- Kembla Ltd
- Lichfield Ladies Tangles
- Lichfield Lions
- Lichfield Methodist church
- Lichfield Sheriff's Office
- PCC of Kings Bromley
- Peppermill Antiques
- Platform Housing
- Rotary Club Lichfield St Chad
- St Chad's church
- The Worshipful Company of Smiths
- Three Spires Morris Club
- Wade Street church

together with dozens of individual donors whose donations often amounted to three or even four figure sums.

11.3 By the end of 2025, we had 63 donors who had committed to regular payments via a standing order mandate. We also receive donations via JustGiving many of which are donated on a regular basis.

11.4 We are registered as a charity for tax purposes and are able to claim a further 25% of the value of the donation, from donors who have signed up, via the Government's Gift Aid scheme. A Gift Aid payment of £6,516.11 was received during 2025 for qualifying donations received in 2024.

11.5 The foodbank had to buy top-up food to the value of £40,986 in 2025. This is compared to £37,473 in 2024, £14,000 in 2022 and just £3,200 in 2021

- 11.6 Lichfield foodbank remains on a sound financial footing, is well placed to consolidate and develop its work going forward and will continue to manage its money responsibly. We have a six-month reserves policy in place to hold £65,217 in the account. The reserve calculation is based on 2025 distribution data and assumption that demand would remain as is in the eventuality that all donations and funding ceased the foodbank would still be able to service the clients for a further six months and pay for associated operating costs such as energy and utilities. At the same time, it provides assurance that the charity would be viable in the short to medium term if it became necessary to pay rent for warehousing or distribution centres in the future.
- 11.7 At the end of 2025, the foodbank had assets in the bank and cash in hand of £133,983.39 which is 6% lower than at the end of 2024 and a trading deficit during the year of £8,795.94.

LICHFIELD FOODBANK

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2025

INCOME		2025	2024
Donations	¹	71,019.18	97,093.69
Grants (local council)		0.00	1,200.00
Grants (Trussell for CASES community campaigners)	²	53,698.47	50,991.00
Grants (Trussell for CASES support)		45,000.00	45,000.00
Fund Raising		1,407.72	395.34
Bank Interest		0.00	0.00
Gift Aid		6,516.11	7,421.74
TOTAL INCOME		177,641.48	202,101.77
EXPENDITURE			
Food Purchases	³	40,986.69	37,472.98
Volunteer Expenses		4,929.86	7,256.58
Volunteer Training		0.00	0.00
Trussell Franchise	⁴	0.00	0.00
Insurance		423.34	157.00
Bank Charges		0.00	0.00
Telephone, printing, postage and stationery		637.76	963.50
Equipment Purchases	⁵	30,539.66	951.31
Equipment Maintenance		0.00	0.00
Accommodation		0.00	0.00
Non-food Purchases	⁶	10,221.64	1,465.69
CASES (distribution centre advice for clients)		45,000.00	45,000.00
CASES (community campaigners)		53,698.47	50,991.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		186,437.42	144,258.06
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)		(8,795.94)	57,843.71

Notes to the Accounts

Note 1 - excludes food donations

Note 2 - CASES stands for Citizen's Advice South East Staffordshire

Note 3 - excludes donated food

Note 4 - Trussell's franchise fee was waived in both 2024 and 2025

Note 5 - the Trustees decided to purchase a second warehouse in 2025 to offset container rental expenses

Note 6 - non-food purchases included essential items such as toiletries, nappies, etc.

LICHFIELD FOODBANK

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	31/12/2025	31/12/2024
ASSETS		
Cash at bank and in hand		
Bank	133,778.52	142,658.92
Cash in hand	204.87	150.26
Supermarket vouchers	0.00	153.50
	133,983.39	142,962.68
LIABILITIES		
Creditors	0.00	0.00
	133,983.39	142,962.68
NET ASSETS		
	133,983.39	142,962.68
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		
Balance 31/12/2025	133,983.39	142,962.68
Surplus (deficit)	(8,795.94)	57,843.71

EXAMINER'S REPORT

I have examined the above Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2025 and the annexed Receipts and Payment Account for the period ending on that date and certify them to be in accordance with the books, records and information supplied to me.

Signed by: J J Shanahan, FMCA, CGMA. Dated 28 January 2026

LICHFIELD FOODBANK

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2025

INCOME	2025	2024
Donations	¹ 71,019.18	97,093.69
Grants (local council)	0.00	1,200.00
Grants (Trussell for CASES community campaigners)	² 53,698.47	50,991.00
Grants (Trussell for CASES support)	45,000.00	45,000.00
Fund Raising	1,407.72	395.34
Bank Interest	0.00	0.00
Gift Aid	6,516.11	7,421.74
TOTAL INCOME	177,641.48	202,101.77
EXPENDITURE		
Food Purchases	³ 40,986.69	37,472.98
Volunteer Expenses	4,929.86	7,256.58
Volunteer Training	0.00	0.00
Trussell Franchise	⁴ 0.00	0.00
Insurance	423.34	157.00
Bank Charges	0.00	0.00
Telephone, printing, postage and stationery	637.76	963.50
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J J Shanahan,