

Building Hope Together

MK Food Bank Impact Report 2025

@Stephanie O'Callaghan Photography

MK FOOD BANK

Emergency food. Real support. Building hope.



Our Vision

A hunger-free Milton Keynes where everyone has enough food, and no one is left behind.

Our Mission

We provide food and support with care and respect, restoring hope and helping people regain stability.

Contents

5. Introduction
6. Kindness
7. Dignity
8. Community
9. Respect
10. Empowerment
11. Hope
12. Information



@Stephanie O'Callaghan Photography





Introduction - A year of significant change

2025 marked a significant shift for **MK Food Bank** - not only in how people accessed our services, but also in how we show our community who we are. While overall need fell by **14%** the balance between our services continued to evolve. Emergency parcels dropped by **21%** and visits to our Top Up Shops increased by **4%** telling a powerful story: **more** people are moving from crisis to dignity, choice and stability.

This year we also refreshed our Vision, Mission and Values, along with a new strapline: **Emergency food. Real support. Building hope.** These are more than just words or a new logo; they represent a deeper commitment to supporting people with kindness, dignity and respect, and to building solutions that last. As we present our **2025 Impact Report, Building Hope Together,** I'm proud that our refreshed values reflect the way our services are evolving - from emergency response to a community working side by side to create a hunger-free Milton Keynes."

~ Louisa Hobbs, Head of Operations

Building Hope Together

MK Food Bank Impact Report 2025

1. KINDNESS - Meeting People Where They Are

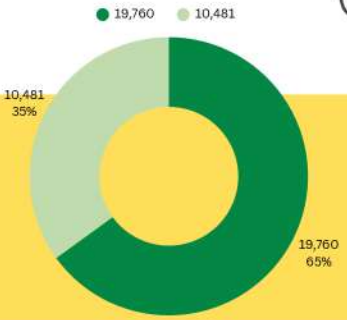
Changing demand - from emergency to sustainability



Kindness and compassion sit at the very centre of our work, and last year this meant meeting people with understanding when they need us most, as well as helping them to move step-by-step towards independence.

In 2025, we provided:

- 19,760 emergency parcels (65% of all support)
- 10,481 Top Up Shop visits (35% of all support)



The three-year trend shows **emergency parcels** down **28%** since 2023 and **Top Up Shop** visits up by **39%**

These figures demonstrate long-term progress towards our goal of achieving a more balanced approach between immediate crisis intervention and the more sustainable support of **Top Up Shops**: clear evidence that crises are becoming shorter and stability more achievable.

"For the first time in ages, I felt like someone actually listened and understood what I was going through. It made a big difference to how I felt in myself."

-Food Bank service user

2. DIGNITY - Fair Access and Choice

Who we supported and how



To us, **dignity** means giving people choice and fair access to support, and our service model in 2025 prioritised fairness, choice and meaningful engagement:

- **Households receiving emergency parcels: 3,106**
- **Households visiting Top Up Shops: 1,029**
- **Households using both services: 360**
- **Total households supported: 4,495**



In **2025**, we supported **4,495** households with our food services representing **10,788** individuals across Milton Keynes. These figures are almost identical to the previous year - showing stability and reach even with fewer emergency parcels.

Top Up Shop customers visited on average **7.5** times throughout the year, compared with an average of **2.6** vouchers for emergency parcel recipients, showing that the model supports ongoing stability.

"People light up when they see the fresh fruit and veg. It means they can choose healthier meals and plan ahead, not just make do. It's a small thing but it makes a big difference."

-Top Up Shop Volunteer

3. COMMUNITY – Supporting Everyone Through Collective Effort



Food Supply - maintaining impact with fewer resources

We work with our community to support each other and make sure help is there when it is needed. Last year, our community played a vital role in ensuring that every household who needed us received support, even as resources became more stretched. Fewer parcels and increased use of **Top Up Shops** meant we could maintain impact with fewer food items, while local organisations and supporters helped fill the gaps through donations and fundraising.

Key impacts in 2025:

We distributed **20%** fewer food items, largely because more people used our **Top Up Shops**, which require significantly fewer items per visit than emergency parcels - making our support more efficient and reducing waste.

Donated food covered only **41%** of what was needed across the year, reflecting both rising pressures on households and national trends in declining food donations. To meet the shortfall, we bought **59%** of our food stock using funds raised by local businesses, churches, schools, community groups and individual supporters.



This combination of donated food, community fundraising and a more efficient service model enabled us to provide reliable, dignified support to 4,495 households across Milton Keynes.

"In our business, we know some of our colleagues - or their neighbours, friends or families - might be going through a tough time themselves. That's why coordinating our food collections feels so important. Seeing the donations come in is genuinely heart-warming - like people are quietly looking out for one another."

-Corporate supporter

4. RESPECT – Ensuring Everyone Is Seen, Heard and Valued

The impact of the Top Up Shop approach



Top Up Shops provide a respectful, choice-based alternative to emergency parcels. The data shows clearly that when people can access support in a way that treats them as capable and autonomous, their need for crisis parcels falls rapidly and sustainably.

In 2025:
Over three-quarters of Top Up Shop customers needed no emergency parcels at all, showing that dignified, choice-based support helps prevent crisis. Among households who used both services, the more they visited the Top Up Shop, the fewer crisis parcels they required — falling from 9% of all support for light users to just 1.5% for regular users.

After their first **Top Up Shop** visit, **93%** needed no emergency parcel within 90 days, and **89%** remained crisis-free for six months or more.

31% of **households** who used both services had already used all six annual emergency parcels and were continuing their support through the **Top Up Shop**, maintaining stability without further crisis intervention.

Together, these outcomes show that **Top Up Shops** not only reduce immediate need, but also support people through financial difficulty in a way that honours their dignity, strengthens their independence and reflects the respect that is fundamental to our work.

Case study:

A working mum of two came to us when she suddenly became unwell and had to take time off work. We supported the family with emergency parcels while she recovered, helping ease the immediate pressure. As soon as she was able to return on a staggered basis, she chose to use the Top Up Shop, because it gave her more choice and felt far more normal to her.

5. EMPOWERMENT – Helping People Build Confidence and Take Control

The impact of the Beyond Food advice service



Our new **Beyond Food** advice service supports households facing the greatest and most persistent financial pressures. By offering personalised guidance and practical interventions, the service enables people to understand their options, maximise their income and take steps toward long-term stability. For many, this isn't just about solving immediate issues, it's about gaining the confidence and tools to move forward independently.

Key impacts in 2025:

211 individuals were offered face-to-face appointments with our **Beyond Food** coaches and of these **123** attended

46% exited food support services entirely, and **29%** reduced their need for food support, demonstrating the transformative impact of sustained advice.

A total of **£58,542** in additional income was generated for households through successful benefits claims, debt adjustments and income-boosting interventions.

These outcomes demonstrate a significant and lasting impact. **Beyond Food** helps people regain control, build financial resilience and break the long-term cycle of reliance on food support.

Case study:

One man who we supported through Beyond Food had been unemployed for a long time and was struggling to move forward. Our team helped him secure backdated benefits and referred him to the Council's Local Welfare Provision, which funded clothing and a bike so he could start a new job. He's now working, using the Top Up Shop to stay on track, and even made a small donation to the Food Bank before Christmas.

6. HOPE – Belief in Better Days Ahead

Our priorities for 2026







Our refreshed messaging brings us into a new year with a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to the changes that will make hope a reality for more households.

We will:

- **Secure the future of food support by addressing donation decline** through targeted community and corporate engagement
- **Expand Top Up Shop provision** to meet growing demand for dignified, longer-term support, opening new shops and continuing to promote these as a viable and attractive alternative to parcels
- **Secure ongoing funding** to sustain and grow Beyond Food's impact in breaking the cycles of poverty and reliance on food support.

Emergency food. Real support. Building hope.



mkfoodbank.org.uk

Join our mailing list on our website to keep up to date with MK Food Bank news!

@mkfoodbank

office@mkfoodbank.org.uk

@Stephanie O'Callaghan Photography
@joeGilbert @poppycheetham