



ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

Vision

Our vision is for a vibrant and thriving community, putting an end to hunger and poverty while fostering an environment of resilience and prosperity. We are guided by deep compassion and unyielding commitment, and we aspire to create a community where every individual receives crucial support with dignity and compassion.

Mission

At Foyle Network Foundation, we are dedicated to eradicating hunger and poverty within the Foyle area. We are committed to providing essential support while fostering dignity, respect, and empowerment within our community.

Values

At Foyle Network Foundation, our brand values are deeply rooted in dedication, dignity, and a commitment to providing essential help, care, and support in the North West. Our overall vision is to end hunger and food poverty in the Foyle area. Our values reflect an understanding of the diverse needs within the North West. We strive to create a positive and inspiring environment where compassion and dedication meet and strengthen the community. We approach individuals with empathy, honour their dignity, and show respect, all while upholding confidentiality and offering assistance without fostering dependence. Foyle Network Foundation is committed to leading the way to driving impactful change and fostering a brighter future for all. Our dedication to innovation, collaboration, and community involvement ensures a holistic approach towards creating lasting change and uplifting those affected by poverty.

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WELCOME

Karen Mullan - Director



2024/2025 was a transformative year for Foyle Network Foundation—one of growth, collaboration, and new opportunities to support our community. With more people reaching out for assistance, we remained committed to ensuring the right support was in place at the right time. This past year, Foyle Network Foundation experienced its busiest year yet—providing food and household support to over 10,000 people.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to listening to and championing the voices of people with lived experience. As an Anti-Poverty Organisation, we believe that real change comes from working alongside those who know the realities of poverty firsthand. Their insights shape our services, ensuring that every initiative—from the launch of The Network, an affordable food shop closer to the City centre, to the publication of *The Flight of the Swallows*, a book created by members of The Swallows participation group—reflects the needs and aspirations of our community. These milestones stand as a testament to what's possible when lived experience guides meaningful action.

We are grateful to our funders, whose generous support and investment enable us to continue providing vital services. Thanks to funding from the Department for Communities, with additional support from Derry City and Strabane District Council, we secured shop premises on Strand Road to establish The Network. This new initiative extends our support services and is inspired by the insights gained from the Feeding Britain Network, who are also assisting in the operation of the service.

Ongoing support and funding from Trussell has helped us advance our mission to address the underlying reasons people require foodbank support while striving toward a future where foodbanks are no longer needed. Their investment has enabled us to maximise people's income by £425,190.78, working in collaboration with local advice services to provide this crucial financial assistance.

Even in difficult times we were totally overwhelmed with the donations and support we received from the public and businesses. People knew how tough it was for others and wanted to support them where they could, and we are extremely grateful to those who donated.

I want to thank our team at Foyle Network Foundation, the staff, volunteers and board of directors for your commitment and hard work, I have no doubt by working together we will be able to face the challenges and developments of the coming year.

I want to thank the team at Trussell, in particular Julianne.

On behalf of us all, I want to thank those who donate, give their time to help at our events or organising your own, the businesses who have donation points, APEX who support us with our premises, our funders, our community partners, referral agents and everyone who has helped us, we look forward to working with you all again in the coming years.



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

Denis McGowan

3 years ago, Foyle Foodbank joined the Trussell Pathfinder programme, the aim was to find a more dignified and confidential way of getting food to those in need without creating dependency.

We embraced the Pathfinder vision and concept and it is with some sense of pride, that I can say that the outcome of that very challenging and at times difficult and stressful journey has seen us successfully establish Foyle Network Foundation. A wrap around community-based partnership project. At heart, we are still a local foodbank where those in need of emergency help can get much needed food.

The Foyle Team have taken a visionary concept and turned into an operational reality. I want to recognise the hard, challenging, difficult and at times stressful but very successful journey that has been for our, staff and volunteers.

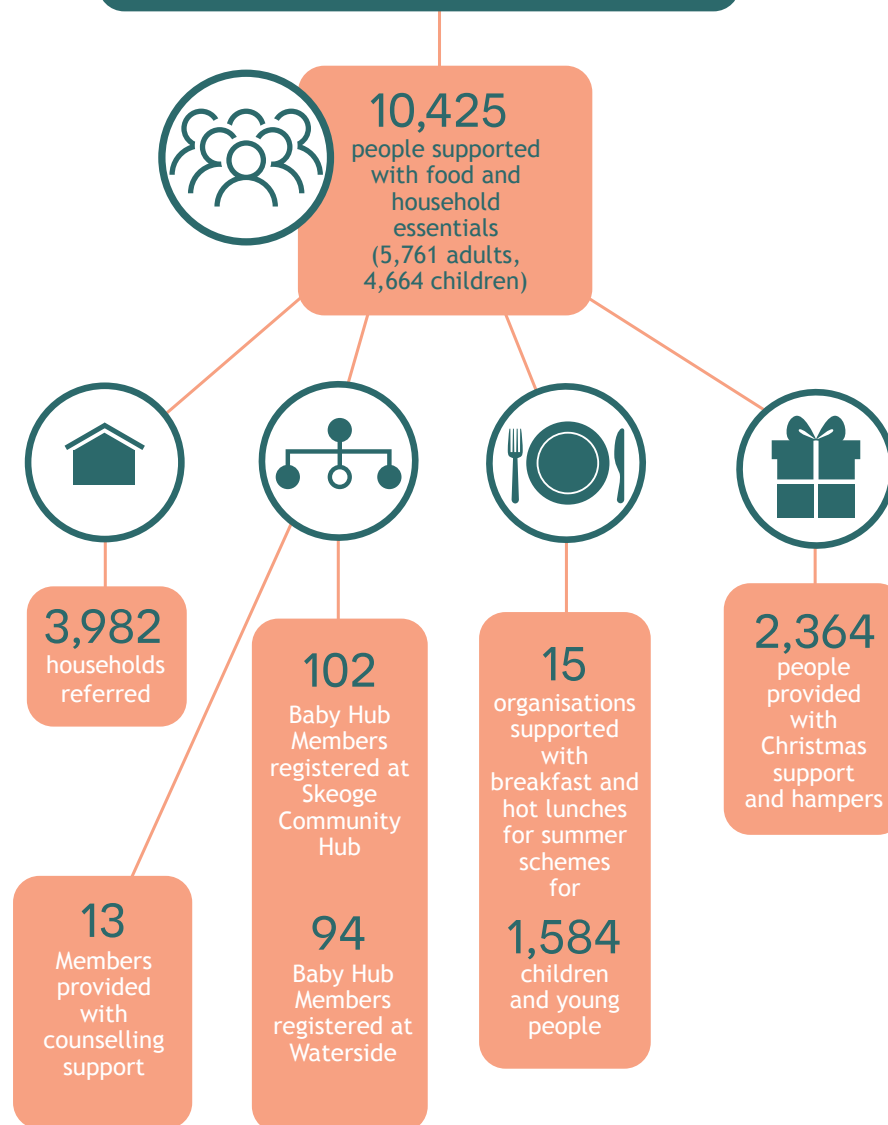
It would be wrong for me not to highlight the support and help from other community-based organisations, Trussell, the Department for Communities, Derry City and Strabane District Council and Feeding Britain. Despite all that we have become, there is still a high demand for a foodbank in the Foyle and wider Northwest area. An emergency source where, when poverty happens, families and individuals can still get much needed support and help. Food poverty hasn't gone away, nor will it, until the underlying root causes are properly dealt with.

I want to acknowledge the support that I have received from my fellow board members as we travelled into somewhat unknown territory and for a time along a road we were not sure of.

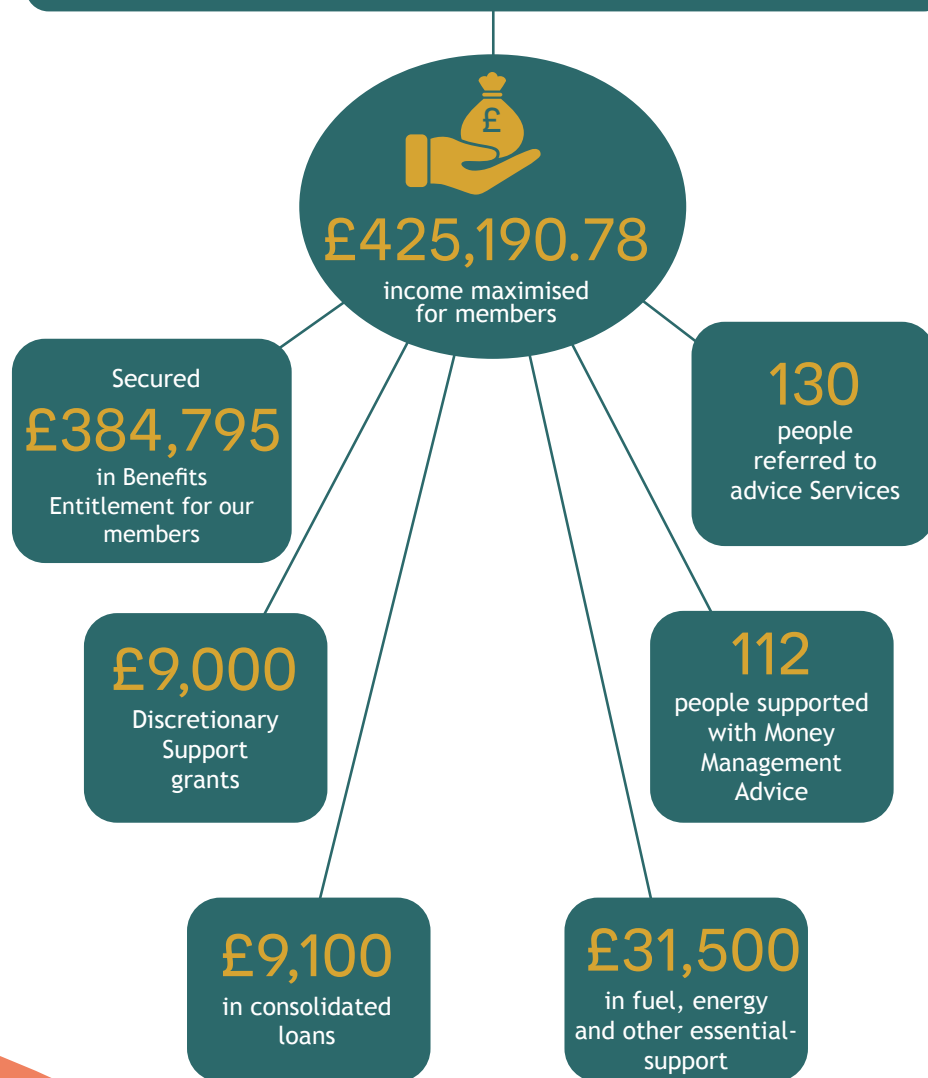
Finally, we exist only as the expression and conduit for the tremendous generosity of the people and patrons of the wider Northwest area, we could not exist without your ongoing support.



SUPPORT PROVIDED



FINANCIAL INCLUSION ACHIEVEMENTS



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



THE Network



In November 2024, we launched The Network, an affordable service dedicated to providing quality goods and essential services at prices accessible to those facing financial hardship. From carefully selecting our products to designing a welcoming and supportive space, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that The Network embodies our values.

The Network operates as a members-only service, providing a welcoming space for individuals to shop at their convenience. Open every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, it allows members to drop in once a week, ensuring access to affordable, quality goods in a supportive environment.

More than just a shop, it is an experience.

Referrals for membership contact ellenharper@foyle.foodbank.org.uk



THE SWALLOWS

Foyle Network Foundation recognises the importance of involving people with lived experience to help us improve our service. Over the past year, we have been working closely with our participation group members, known as The Swallows, to create a book of their lived experience stories.

As a food bank in the Trussell Network, we have created a participatory culture where those with lived experience feel seen, heard, valued and empowered. The Swallows decided they wanted to tell their stories, in order to combat stigma. They also wanted to raise awareness of the different support services that Foyle Network Foundation offer, to give others living in poverty a sense of hope.

Flight of the Swallows can be purchased directly from Little Acorns Bookstore, our centre in Springtown, The Network on Strand Road or from Colmcille Press for £10 <https://www.colmcillepress.com/product-page/flight-of-the-swallows-journeys-of-lived-experiences>



CAMPAIGNS

School Holiday Food Grant

Following NI Executive cut to School Holiday Food Grant and the impact this cut was having on families, Foyle Network Foundation identified a local campaign issue. We called on the NI Executive to:

- Reinstatement of the School Holiday Food Grant with an increase to reflect an increase in food costs
- Deliver a budgeted anti-poverty strategy
- Implement the recommendations from the reviews of welfare mitigations and discretionary support
- NI Executive to call on the UK Government to implement an Essentials Guarantee

Harmful Money Lending

A local issue that is driving poverty in Foyle is Harmful Money Lending. Foyle Network Foundation has seen an increase in people who are struggling with rising household costs accessing loans from un reputable bodies and being charged extortionate high interest rates.

In order to respond to this, we set up a Steering Group. Members of the Steering Group are: Community Restorative Justice, APEX, ASK Advice Service, Skeoge Community Hub, Derry, Waterside and Pennyburn Credit Unions.

Christmas can be one of the most stressful times for those facing financial hardship. To promote safe lending and spending, we launched our Christmas Billboard Campaign on 19th November with the support of Mayor Lillian Senoi-Barr.



In February 2025, we hosted an event to raise awareness of this issue and informed over 50 people from a range of statutory and community organisations how Harmful Money Lenders are operating.

Lay it All on the Table

Over the summer we hosted community stalls as part of Trussell's "Guarantee our Essentials" campaign, where we were joined by local elected representatives to discuss the impact of the low rate of Universal Credit.



As part of this stall, members of the public were invited to "lay it all on the table" and tell us what they think of the current benefits system. People shared their opinions by writing on a tablecloth which will be used to lobby the Labour government to implement an Essentials Guarantee and begin reforming the social security system.

The overwhelming consensus from these stalls was that the public felt no one should have to rely on a foodbank.

HOW WE HELPED

Michael self employed father of two children, had to reduce working hours to care for one of his children who has additional needs. We made a referral to ASK advice service, who helped him apply for benefits his family was missing out on. His claim was successful in securing him £1,156 per month.

As well as the fortnightly support, Michael joined the credit union and starting on our savings scheme. Michael said “I have nothing but good words to speak of the Foyle Network Foundation and everyone involved there, went above and beyond for us, they got us into a position now where we are financially able to leave the Foodbank. I will continue to support and save with them in my credit union. They are a much needed and invaluable service in today’s world.”

“I loved my time at the Foyle Foodbank everyone was so understanding and helpful. Learning to be a single mum of two was a struggle and trying to afford life.”

Grace, single mother of four children and carer of parent, recently experienced a bereavement, struggling to make ends meet.

We made a referral to ASK advice service for a benefits review, who made a PIP application. This claim was successful and Grace was awarded £440 per month. Referrals were made to Surestart and family hub, where Grace and her children attended various programmes.

“I am very happy this service exists; I have been treated with respect & dignity.”

Grace said “I came to the foodbank to get support with food not expecting to get support with everything else. I was suffering with my mental health & Louise advised me to go to speak to my doctor to tell them how I was feeling. As a result, my medication was reviewed & I was referred to the primary care team. I started attending programmes with Surestart which got me out of the house and talking to other mums.

Ethos family hub supported my older children. We had a great Christmas with the support I received from the foodbank and the other organisations that I was referred to. Going to the foodbank changed my life in unexpected ways. If it hadn’t been for Louise encouraging me to get support for my mental health, I would never have made the first step. I wouldn’t have gone for a benefits check. I am now in a position where I no longer need to use the foodbank.”

“The support and kindness I received was greatly appreciated. Nobody plans or wants to be in a situation where they need to be at a foodbank but everyone is so welcoming and reassuring. The items and range of products for myself and my children were excellent and was such a great help.”

“The Foyle Network shop is brilliant. The variety of food is great, it caters for everyone’s needs. The savings on the cost of a family’s shopping bill is unbelievable. The staff are always kind and courteous and are very easy to chat to. It’s an amazing place with amazing people and I am very grateful it’s there”

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS

We launched our second Baby Hub at Irish Street Community Centre in collaboration with Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership and Irish Street Community Association, welcoming families from across the Waterside.

Waterside Credit Union signed up babies as new members, alongside parents and other relatives who also became members.

Skeoge Baby Hub continued to experience strong engagement throughout the year, with new parents joining. Babies attending the hub were also registered as members of Pennyburn Credit Union, helping families start their savings and good financial journey.



FOYLE NETWORK FOUNDATION BECOMES A LIVING WAGE EMPLOYER

We officially became a Living Wage Employer.

At Foyle Network Foundation we see the real impact of inadequate incomes every day. Paying our employees the Real Living Wage is about more than just fair compensation; it's about practicing the values we advocate for. We're proud to lead by example and encourage others to join us in ensuring dignity and financial stability for all.



FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Thank you to our Funders and Partners



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cille & Strábane
Deistrick Cooncil



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk



Trussell
Ending hunger together



STAFF



Karen Mullan
Director



Louise Kane
Project Support
Worker



Lynn Connolly
Financial
Inclusion Officer



Seanan Walker
Finance
Manager



Ellen Harper
Community
Development &
Food Coordinator



James McGrady
Operations
Supervisor



Bethany Moore
Community
Campaign
Coordinator



Helen Cooper
The Network
Supervisor



Barry Condren
Centre
Assistant



Patricia
O'Donnell
Fundraiser



STAFF EMAIL CONTACT DETAILS

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helencooper@foyle.foodbank.org.uk

barrycondren@foyle.foodbank.org.uk

patriciaodonnell@foyle.foodbank.org.uk

VOLUNTEERS

Thank you! Our incredible volunteers generously give their time daily and weekly, supporting every aspect of our service. From assisting in our office, warehouse, and welcome area to helping in our shop, packing spaces, donation collections, and deliveries. We are grateful to our volunteers, whose commitment enables us to provide essential services to those in need. Additionally, volunteers from various businesses and workplaces lend a helping hand at different times throughout the year, further strengthening our efforts.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Helen Cooper

Helen began volunteering with Foyle Network Foundation in November 2023. Her initial role involved supporting office operations—welcoming visitors, manning reception, processing payments, and making appointments. This experience soon extended to volunteering at the Baby Hubs in both the Waterside and Skeoge areas. In January 2025, a staff vacancy arose within The Network, and Helen was successfully appointed to the role. She continues to offer her time and energy as a volunteer across the Foyle Network Foundation office and the Baby Hubs.

Reflecting on her journey, Helen shared: “I have found my work with The Network to be extremely fulfilling. I enjoy positive relationships with staff, volunteers, and members, and feel privileged to support some of the most vulnerable in our community in living with dignity. Volunteering was incredibly rewarding—it led me to discover an organisation I truly wanted to be part of.”



VOLUNTARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Denis McGowan
Chairperson



Alison Wallace
Vice Chairperson



Des Reid
Treasurer



Karen Mullan
Secretary



Teresa McCloskey
Board Member



Gerry Kelly
Board Member



Clare McLaughlin
Board Member



Alan Rodden
Board Member



Damien McAdams
Board Member

DONATIONS

Thank you to our Donation Points for their continued support:



Sainsbury's
Strand Road



Tesco
Quayside



Tesco Express
Crescent Link



Lynch's Eurospar
Trench Rd/Skeoge



Kelly's Eurospar
Rathmor/Hatmore



Spar
Belt Road



Bradley's Pharmacy
Northland Road/
Eglinton



Spar Maxol
Eglinton



Pets At Home
Crescent Link



McGinley's Spar
Buncrana Road

JOIN US IN CHANGING LIVES

Your Support Makes a Difference!

At Foyle Network Foundation, we believe that small actions create big impact. Every day, families in our community struggle to afford basic necessities—food, housing, and essential care. At Foyle Network Foundation, we believe that everyone deserves dignity, nourishment, and support.

We work tirelessly to support local people who are struggling, ensuring that hope, opportunity, and dignity remain within reach. But we can't do it alone. Your support makes all the difference.

Ways you can Make an Impact:

- **Donate today** - Every £ helps us provide food and essential household items and support services
- **One-off financial donations** can be made at our Office in Springtown Industrial Estate. Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm and Friday 9am - 3pm or through our official website: www.foyle.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/Give-regularly or through PayPal: info@foyle.foodbank.org.uk or Bank Details: Foyle Network Foundation Ltd, Account Number: 90109568 Sort Code: 95-06-79
- Become a **monthly donor**, sign up through our website www.foyle.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/ or email info@foyle.foodbank.org.uk
- Make your gift worth an extra 25% by **Gift Aiding** your donation
- Payroll giving - **Give as you Earn**, if you're a local business/workplace your employees can donate straight from their gross salary (before tax is deducted). Anyone who pays UK tax through PAYE can donate through Payroll Giving.

An employee on the basic 20% tax rate - for every £1 that you earn, 20p is paid in tax. That means a pledge of £10 a month, we'll receive the full amount but only £8 will be deducted from net pay. If you are an employee or employer and interested in making a regular donation through your salary please get in touch with Patricia on 07704975901 or email patriciaodonnell@foyle.foodbank.org.uk

- **Sign up to our newsletter** and spread the word - if you would like to receive our newsletter please email bethanymoore@foyle.foodbank.org.uk
- **Volunteer** - Join our team, contact Jamesmcgrady@foyle.foodbank.org.uk to apply

WE ARE LOOKING FOR BUSINESSES AND CORPORATES TO PARTNER WITH US

Why Partner with Foyle Network Foundation?

At Foyle Network Foundation, we believe in the power of community to tackle poverty. By partnering with businesses, local organisations, and compassionate individuals, we can create real change. Your support isn't just about providing food - it's about giving hope, dignity, and opportunity to those in need.

If you are interested in supporting our work, contact Patricia on 07704975901 or email patriciaodonnell@foyle.foodbank.org.uk



PHOTOS



PHOTOS





CONTACT DETAILS



Unit 15, Springtown Industrial Estate, Derry, BT48 0LY



info@foyle.foodbank.org.uk



02871 263 699



foyle.foodbank.org.uk



@foylefoodbank



@foylefoodbank



@FoyleFoodbank

OPENING HOURS

Foodbank service available - Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri 11am - 2pm

Office hours - Mon to Thurs 9am - 5pm / Fri 9am - 3pm



110-112 Strand Road, Derry, BT48 7NR



0287 1163 855

FREE CAR PARKING AT RIVERFRONT COMPLEX CAR PARK BT48 7NR

Opening hours - Tues 10am-4pm, Thurs 12noon-6.30pm, Fri 10am-1pm