

Working together to break the poverty cycle

31 March, 2025

Witney and West Oxfordshire Food Bank and Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire have successfully secured funding from Trussell Trust to continue an initiative that seeks to address the underlying causes of food poverty and low income. The Trussell Trust “Financial Inclusion Project” helps people by providing them with the tools and resources needed to improve their financial situation, reducing reliance on food banks and ultimately breaking the poverty cycle.

Each of the Trussell Trust food banks in Oxfordshire can refer people directly to advice specialists around the county, offering telephone or local appointments to provide information and advice. This includes budgeting, debt management and income maximisation amongst other things. Since April 2022, some 445 in people in West Oxfordshire have been helped by the initiative, resulting in an income gain of some £437,700. This includes nearly £215,000 in debts written off resulting in many service users no longer returning to Witney Foodbank.

Mick Morris, Chair of Witney and West Oxfordshire Food Bank said:

“This has been a transformative project for many of the people who have received assistance so far. We are very pleased to have received further support from Trussell in year four as the UK government threatens even more welfare cuts when existing benefits are not enough to live on. We can continue helping people in crisis for another year and that’s very pleasing news.”

Teresa Archer of Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire said:

“This funding has made it possible for us to provide dedicated staff that are helping to reduce individual reliance on food banks, which ultimately, we are all aiming for. The current economic situation has led to a significantly higher use of food banks, and our aim is to help people manage their income and expenditure in the best way they can and ensure that they are receiving all the income that they are entitled to.

We are so pleased that we have funding for another year and thank the Trussell Trust for this ongoing support.”

Many people who visit food banks are not aware of all the benefits they are entitled to. Some 766 issues dealt with in West Oxfordshire under the initiative have involved access to benefits. A further 264 cases involved Universal Credit and successfully appealing incorrect decisions by DWP.

Another focus of the initiative is reducing the overwhelming burden of debt, enabling individuals to achieve financial stability and peace of mind. It aims to help individuals facing food poverty and low income by providing them with the tools and resources needed to improve their financial situation, reduce reliance on foodbanks, and ultimately break the cycle of poverty.

Witney and West Oxfordshire Food Bank led a joint bid for the funding for the project with Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire, alongside Bicester, Abingdon and Banbury food banks. Trussell Trust awarded £250,000 for three years from 2022, which has now been extended for a fourth year.

Ends

Notes to editors:

1. The Trussell Trust Financial Inclusion project is a partnership initiative between The Trussell Trust, an anti-poverty charity that runs a network of food banks across the UK, and Citizens Advice. It provides a critical safety net for individuals facing financial hardship, combining practical financial support with empowering education. The collaborative approach with Citizens Advice creates a more holistic service that helps people build financial resilience, reducing their need for emergency food provision and breaking the cycle of food poverty.
2. Witney Foodbank www.witney.foodbank.org.uk, Citizens Advice communications@cawo.org.uk
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