

# Your Local **PANTRY**

More than just  
a full tummy:  
social impact report

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# About us



Church Action on Poverty is a national ecumenical Christian social justice charity, committed to tackling poverty in the UK. We work in partnership with churches and with people in poverty themselves to find solutions to poverty, locally, nationally and globally.

Further information can be found at [www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk)  
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Proud to be part of SHG

Stockport Homes (SHG) is passionate about not only providing housing and building new homes in Stockport, but helping to transform the lives of our customers through a wide range of social inclusion projects, including Your Local Pantry.

Further information can be found at [www.stockporthomes.org](http://www.stockporthomes.org)

# Acknowledgements

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# Executive summary

**With the launch of Your Local Pantry as a national movement, this report shows the social impact that has already been made by the first Pantries in Stockport and Greater Manchester.**

Food poverty is a reality as incomes stagnate with little prospect of increasing. The Pantry model is an effective way to make sure that people's budgets go further.

The benefits of Pantries are numerous: they provide breathing space for struggling families; they offer fresh food to households that would otherwise be limited to cheap, less healthy food; and they tackle social isolation.

The Pantries are used by members in different ways. For some people they are an added extra, a way to improve their weekly shop. For others the Pantries are a safety net: if they are struggling for money at a particular time, they know they have the Pantry to 'fall back on' so that they will not go without food. Some people dip in and out of using the Pantry as and when they need to. For others on very limited budgets the Pantry is an ongoing essential source of food; without it, people would be going without food or living on very limited diets.

**"It is really a safety net as well, in case you do have to pay out an unexpected item. It's thinking well 'I got to buy this, but I got the Pantry on Friday, so I know I will get food in'."**

One of the distinguishing features of Pantries is that the requirements for membership are minimal and there is no pressure for people to move on. Continued membership is not seen as a problem: as one member pointed out, continued membership benefits the Pantry, it brings in regular funds and maintains the number of members.

**"I say to people don't wait until you hit rock bottom ... you paying in money each week benefits everyone, use it as a way of stopping yourself getting into financial trouble. The hardest thing is getting people to use it as a resource rather than wait for a disaster and use it as a crutch."**

Food insecurity does not just depend on unemployment – people in food poverty may be retired, affected by illness, disability or other circumstances that will not necessarily change, and therefore their financial situation will be unlikely to improve. If people continue to be Pantry members for the long term that is not a problem.

The Pantries in Stockport have had significant benefits for their members, not only the expected financial impact but also improved health and wellbeing and reduced social isolation.

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# Key figures

## Members

**£2.50**

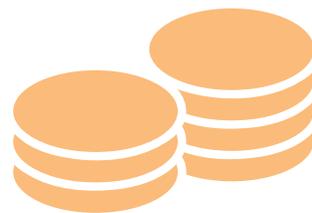
WEEKLY FEE FOR MEMBERSHIP



A TYPICAL FOOD BASKET IS VALUED AT **£15** – SAVING MEMBERS **£12.50** EACH WEEK

HOUSEHOLDS CAN SAVE UP TO

**£650**  
PER YEAR



MEMBERS WHO PAY BY STANDING ORDER SAVE AN ADDITIONAL

**£30** PER YEAR

## Volunteers

**4,549**

**HOURS**  
CONTRIBUTED BY  
**45 VOLUNTEERS**  
IN ONE YEAR



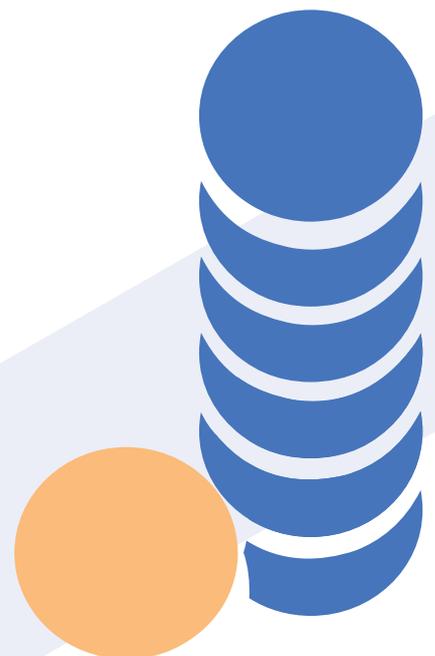
**25-30**

VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE FOUR LOCAL PANTRIES EACH WEEK



**TEN**

VOLUNTEERS HAVE MOVED INTO EMPLOYMENT SINCE 2013



EVERY £1 INVESTED IN YOUR LOCAL PANTRY EQUATES TO OVER

**£6** IN SOCIAL VALUE

# Introduction

## The Poverty Premium

The Poverty Premium is the additional cost for everyday goods and services that people living in poverty pay as a result of their low income. These costs may add up to more than £1,500 per year for an average family, and arise from a variety of sources including: pricing strategies; lack of competition; and differing payment methods. A range of markets are affected from funeral services to white goods; however, the most common examples affect everyday essentials such as food, fuel and finance.

Church Action on Poverty has been exploring innovative ways for poorer communities to avoid these unfairly high prices since 2014. After a year of research and scoping out potential responses, Your Local Pantry emerged as the best solution – delivering actual cost savings of around £10-15 per week to households struggling to make ends meet, and also being a relatively straightforward model which could potentially be replicated widely. Over the past two years we have worked with Stockport Homes to promote the development of Pantries in Manchester, Rochdale and across Greater Manchester. We are now at the start of an exciting new phase of work: developing a network of Local Pantries in low-income communities across the country, under the umbrella of the Your Local Pantry social franchise.

## How does a Pantry work?

Pantries operate as membership schemes designed to help people make their money go further. Members can join without being referred and can remain members for as long as they wish. To this extent, Local Pantries are a 'step on' from food banks in a number of important ways:

- **Member-run:** Pantries are run very much along cooperative lines, by and for their members, with many of the volunteers who run the Pantry also being members.
- **Open to all:** Membership is open to anyone within the local neighbourhood who satisfies a basic 'low income' criterion, with no requirement to be referred by a professional or other third party.
- **Choice:** Members are entitled to choose what food they want, using a colour-coded system to ensure that this includes a balance of fresh, packaged and 'high-value' goods.
- **Quality:** Central to the Local Pantry model is the provision of good quality food, including fresh fruit and veg, frozen and chilled food (including meat and dairy products) as well as the usual supplies of tins and packets.
- **No time limits:** Local Pantry membership is not time-limited; members can choose to come every week (or not) for as long as they want.

Pantries aim to:

- reduce food shopping bills;
- provide advice and support;
- develop skills and bring communities together.

Potential members must live locally and are asked whether they struggle to pay the bills, whether they have cut back on shopping in the last three months, and whether they ever run out of money towards the end of the week or month. Financial, housing, energy and health support services are invited into the Pantries to promote their services and offer help and advice where appropriate.

For £2.50 a week, Pantry members can choose at least 10 items of groceries, with the average shopping basket often worth in excess of £15, which is a potential saving of £650 a year. [Since we carried out our interviews in February and March 2018, the fee at Stockport Homes' Pantries has risen to £3.50.]

Grocery items might include baked beans, tinned tomatoes, meat, frozen ready meals, pasta, tea and coffee and milk, as well as one-off items that happen to be available from week to week. In January 2017, Your Local Pantry introduced free fresh fruit and vegetables to all the Pantries – funds generated by the membership fees are invested directly back into the Pantry and are used to provide fresh produce on top of the usual £15 basket of goods.

The food stocked by the Pantries is provided by FareShare, a charity that distributes 'food waste' from industry surpluses ([www.fareshare.org.uk](http://www.fareshare.org.uk)). Stockport Homes has also developed partnerships with other suppliers to create a sustainable supply of food for their local communities.

Each Pantry is run by volunteers and provides opportunities for people to gain work experience, give something back to their community, or just spend a few hours getting to know their neighbours. Members are offered training courses, cooking demonstrations, and seasonal competitions and events.



## Pantries in Stockport

Stockport Homes set up the Pantry scheme in 2014 as a way to help tenants who were struggling after the implementation of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (which included the introduction of 'Bedroom Tax', Personal Independence Payment, reform of Housing Benefit and changes to the Social Fund). Stockport Homes had worked with local food banks (and continues to do so). However, they realised that food banks could not help everyone.

**“We found people weren’t using food banks even though they got a referral, because of stigma. ... we wanted something that provided dignity and choice.”**

*Simon Welch, Director of Neighbourhoods and Support, Stockport Homes*

Greater Manchester FareShare supplies the Stockport Pantries, providing over 70 tonnes of food over the last three years. An estimated 1,200 households have benefited from membership, each potentially saving £650 a year on food bills.

Stockport Homes now have four Pantries up and running: Mottram Street, Penny Lane, Brinnington and Pantry at Number 5.

Stockport Homes have a dedicated member of staff whose role it is to set up new Pantries and oversee the day-to-day running of the Pantries.

Stockport Pantries offer the option to pay by standing order as a way of supporting members to prepare for the transition to Universal Credit, where household finances must be managed monthly. Several members found this option particularly useful; it allows them to save money and offers them the security of knowing that the money goes out automatically each month, meaning they do not have to plan and save their Pantry money:

**“... I don’t think ‘I’ll have to save this for the Pantry’, it’s already taken care of.”**

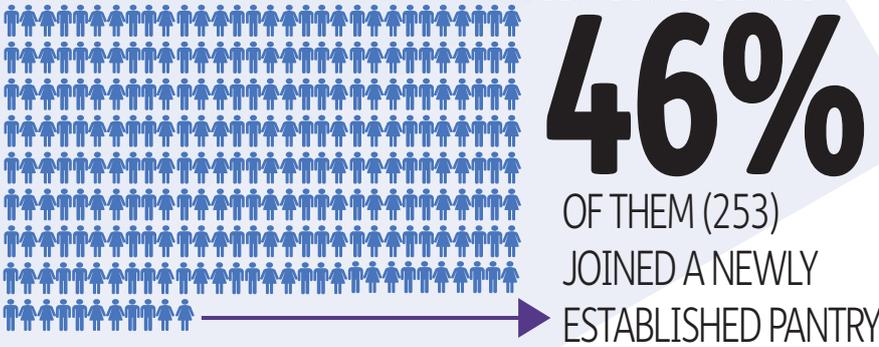
As an incentive, members who pay by standing order receive a 25% monthly discount – saving an extra £2.50 per month. From April 2016 to March 2017, 23% of members paid in this way, saving an additional £2,497.50.

**1,191**  
HOUSEHOLDS HAVE  
BENEFITTED FROM  
THE PANTRY SCHEME

**25** TONNES OF  
FRESH FRUIT &  
VEGETABLES  
DISTRIBUTED

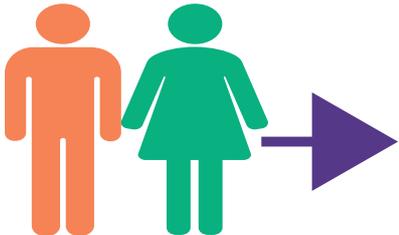
**70**  
TONNES

OF FOOD REDISTRIBUTED  
FROM FARESHARE



**10,231 VISITS TO STOCKPORT'S FOUR PANTRIES IN 2016-17**

SAVING MEMBERS A TOTAL OF UP TO **£128,000**



STOCKPORT HOMES **SURVEYED**  
**PANTRY MEMBERS** IN 2017-18...



**100%** SAID THE PANTRY HAD HELPED THEM FEEL THEY BELONGED TO THEIR COMMUNITY



**89%** WERE MANAGING BETTER FINANCIALLY



**45%** FELT THEIR HEALTH HAD IMPROVED

“With the food bank I feel like I’m lowering myself. I’d rather go without food. And it’s local so people I know are there ... The Pantry feels different because you have paid and you are making a choice on the food you take home.”

## Who uses the Pantry?

We interviewed people from a range of backgrounds and contexts, including people who were unemployed, retired, carers, single parents, single individuals and families (some with young or school-aged children, some with grown up children still living at home).

Some people were living on as little as £10 a week after rent and bills, others had more flexibility in their budgets, but the Pantry was still an important part of their grocery shopping; people particularly depended upon it when 'times were hard'. Interviews were held with people from Brinnington and Mottram Street Pantries.

Agreements are in place with Stockport Local Assistance Scheme, Equity (Housing Group) and Children's Social Care, to fund membership or refer households in need. Households that have been referred to a Pantry get their first month's membership paid. By March 2017, 52 households had accessed membership via this route.



Brinnington Pantry was established in January 2015 and is based in the largest social housing estate in Stockport, with a mixture of property types including family housing and smaller flats suitable for single-person households.

- 72% of members are female and 28% male.
- 52% of members have children.
- 70% of members are aged between 25 and 44 (Brinnington has the lowest proportion of over-60s of all the Pantries, at 10%).
- 8% of members identify as disabled.
- 5% of members are from a BME background.



Mottram Street Pantry was established in September 2015 and is based within an estate which features several high- and low-rise blocks of flats. The Pantry is within one of the high-rise blocks, so it is convenient for residents from the estate but does not benefit from the same footfall as some of the other Pantries.

- 68% of members are female and 32% male.
- 28% of members have children.
- 30% are aged below 45, 16% are aged over 60.
- 26% of members identify as disabled.
- 3% of members are from a BME background.



# Social impact: main findings

For this evaluation report, 13 Pantry members were interviewed to explore how being a member of the Pantry had affected their finances, health and wellbeing, and social life.

## Financial benefits

Food is a daily necessity, prioritised by many households above all other high-priority expenditures (e.g. heating the home, paying rent, buying clothes). However, the rising cost of living and stagnant wages and benefits have put further pressure on household finances – leaving many people with difficult choices to make about both the quantity and quality of food they can afford.

**“The Pantry is a lifeline for me; I don’t have much money. If I didn’t have this I would not have food on some days, there’s many a time I would have gone without.”**

Pantry members reported that the financial saving they make by using the Pantry allows them to have money to cover other things, such as the gas and electricity or the water bill. For others it freed up money so they could diversify their shopping, getting staple items at the Pantry and then buying food at the supermarket to supplement their goods from the Pantry.

**“It’s been good because I don’t have to spend my last penny on food, I feel like I have always got something in by going to the Pantry because I am on a really low budget of Jobseeker’s Allowance, it has helped tremendously in that respect.”**

The financial impact varied for different Pantry members; for single people it had a more significant impact because they could make the food last for a number of days. One person said that most of the food he eats comes from the Pantry:

**“I live on my own and don’t have a big appetite so it goes a long way.”**

For larger families the supplies would not go so far:

**“So it does help a bit ... it should be if you are a bigger family, you get more ... I have to feed four on what I’m getting ... for a bigger family they should let us pay say £5 and get double.”**

**“It has relieved the food bill ... when I had my granddaughters overnight we got a huge pasta bake, instead of having to buy something special.”**

A number of Pantry users reported that they would go without food if they did not have the Pantry.

**“It’s been essential; it meant I could eat proper.”**

Most people interviewed did not usually spend much money (or in some cases any money) on clothes, social activities, treats, etc.

For some Pantry members the financial saving allowed them to purchase items they would

not usually be able to buy. Items viewed as luxuries such as make-up could be purchased to help people feel that they were not at rock-bottom.

**“I think it’s important to mental health to get myself something, even a small thing ... my lipstick was down so I was putting my finger in it, and I just thought ‘I’ll just get one’. It’s a little thing but it does make you feel a lot better.”**

**“It’s saved me a bit of money, so I can do things on a weekend with the kids like go swimming or go to the park and get an ice-cream, just little things you don’t think of...”**

Other members put their savings generated by being a member of the Pantry into Christmas clubs so that Christmas would be less of a financial strain. One member was slowly saving up to visit her children overseas.





## Mary's story

Mary is 67 and lives alone. She receives a state pension, with over a third of it being spent on household bills. She has been a member of the Pantry for nearly a year.

For Mary, being a member of the Pantry is not a question of survival, but it helps her live a better quality of life: "You can manage on your pension, but you can't live on your pension. So, anything that helps to reduce your outgoings, then you take part in it. I can feed myself, I can clothe myself on my pension, but treats are out of the question."

Being a member has had a positive impact on Mary's mental health: she feels lighter as she now worries less about money. Mary can now cook special meals for her grandson when he comes to visit, without worrying about the food bill.

Mary is also able to save the extra money she was previously spending on food. She puts it into a Christmas saver scheme and uses it to help with unexpected bills.



**"If you imagine being at home and thinking right I have £3.50 to my name, I don't know how I am going to manage for the next week or 10 days ... If you've got Pantry you know it's just £2.50, it's not a problem, you are going to eat properly."**

## Megan's story

Megan is 34 and lives with her partner and their two primary school-aged children. Her partner works but has recently had to lower his hours. Megan receives benefits, including disability living allowance for her son. She has been a member of the Pantry for just under a year.

On weeks when money is tight, Megan goes to the Pantry to "stock up on things for the kids". Being a member of the Pantry helps her to reduce the cost of her weekly food shop. She has been able to spend the extra money on treats for the kids, taking them swimming or buying them an ice cream in the park: "just little things that you don't think of ... it's a bonus".

There have also been unexpected benefits of being a member of the Pantry. Megan suffers with poor mental health. A volunteer at the Pantry encouraged her to consider volunteering at a local charity shop. Through volunteering Megan feels a part of the local community; she says her self-belief has significantly improved. Megan now encourages others to volunteer in their communities. She hopes her new skills will help her to get a job in the future.

## Improving health and wellbeing

### Financial stress and mental health

The stress people experience when in poverty can be immense and have a negative impact on mental health. The constant fear of where the next meal is coming from or how you would cope with an unexpected bill or change in circumstances takes a toll on physical and mental health. Coping with the daily reality of being in poverty leaves little energy for activities such as making a meal from scratch or longer-term financial planning. This results in a dangerous circular relationship between low and precarious household income, and poor physical and mental health.

Pantry members reported that being a member “takes the stress off, financially”, and provides some security in terms of knowing they can get food from the Pantry each week. Pantry members said knowing they have food in

the cupboard means they don’t have to worry about feeding their families and takes the strain and worry away.

**“Psychologically it helped me. I knew I was getting something to eat, not having to ask my daughters ‘oh I need this, I need that’.”**

### Food poverty

Food poverty can result in a poor diet, which in turn is linked to ill health. Living on an inadequate diet for the long term can cause illnesses such as diabetes, cancer and coronary heart disease. The Faculty of Public Health has recently issued warnings about people suffering from malnutrition as a result of worsening food poverty. The Pantries aim to provide a selection of food to people who are experiencing food poverty and insecurity.

The extent to which the Pantry helps members varies, from those

who report that they would not be able to afford food without the Pantry, to members who are coping but the Pantry enables them to top up their food shopping and have ‘treats’ that they would not otherwise afford.

**“I was in such a no-money situation [when I got out of hospital] I actually relied on it ... it was a lifesaver ... It gave me my independence because I was getting food for myself.”**

Pantry members who were struggling with food poverty found that using the Pantry helped them to put food on the table when they would otherwise not be able to, which in turn improved their physical health and overall wellbeing.

**“It’s been nice to have that extra warm meal through the week. When you get paid you might go and get potatoes, vegetables and a bag of sausages, but you get a full meal ... and that might be the only full proper meal you get for four or five days. But with the Pantry you can come away with lovely things, and you know you have at least two or three proper hot, nourishing meals.”**

**“I go without and feed my husband and kids first. ... At the moment my finances are stopping me from shopping like I would like to shop, but it [the Pantry] helps to cover a few meals.”**

For Pantry members who are currently experiencing food poverty, the Pantry is one of a number of strategies used to cope; other strategies include using the food bank, skipping meals to make food stretch over a longer period, or supermarket shopping for discounted items.

**“I am actually eating three meals a day now instead of one a day. I used to think ‘what’s the point of eating?’ ... now I have boosted up my confidence and stuff I am actually eating more, like three meals a day and obviously in between will have fruit and stuff like that.”**

### Kevin’s story

Kevin joined the Pantry a year ago, and he says it has transformed his life.

Before joining, Kevin, aged 25, was living off ready meals, “no fruit, no veg, nothing like that”. He was sometimes only eating one meal a day. Suffering from depression, Kevin spent most of his day indoors on his computer.

Since joining, Kevin says he has become healthier. He is eating a wider variety of food including protein, fruit and vegetables. Kevin now eats three meals a day. He also makes his own food, including soups and smoothies.

On Employment Support Allowance, Kevin’s finances are tight. However, since joining the Pantry he now has more money to spend on other necessities, such as clothes. He is also now able to save.

Being a member of the Pantry has had unexpected benefits. At the Pantry, Kevin has made new friends, across the generations. He now feels part of a community. Kevin met another member who has depression. Sharing their stories encouraged Kevin to tackle his illness and get out of the house. Alongside his weekly Pantry visits Kevin now spends time at the gym – attributing his new-found confidence to becoming a member of the Pantry.

Looking to the future, Kevin is hoping to join the Army.

**“[Before] ... my daughter was having to come get me once a week and take me to her house and feed me up and I was coming away with a bag of shopping and it got to a point when I was thinking ‘I can’t carry on like this’.”**

## Fresh fruit and vegetables

For many households, eating healthily – getting enough fruit, vegetables and protein in their diets – is prohibitively expensive. When budgets are tight, healthy food takes a back seat to food that is high in calories and therefore will make you feel full for longer. This results in an often poor and repetitive diet. This affects both physical and mental health, and in the long term lowers life expectancy.

**“I was repetitive eating, you get to a point where you get sluggish and tired and you go ‘I can’t be bothered’, so you eat rubbish.”**

Access to fresh fruit and vegetables, and the related health benefits, was important to the Pantry members. People reported that having fresh ingredients available made it easier to cook from scratch; having fresh fruit and vegetables and staple ingredients from the Pantry meant that people could plan and cook a meal. Some members said that they would look online for recipes using the ingredients they had that week:

**“I’m cooking more healthily; I’m doing Slimming World ... so it really helps.”**

A number of people reported that they now cook more; before joining the Pantry, they would rely more on microwave meals.

**“There’s amazing soup, fresh and frozen, so that’s really healthy for me. I suffer with depression and anxiety, it’s terrible cooking for one all the time, and it’s such a healthy meal.”**

**“It made me cook better... I am far more adventurous, I eat far more sensibly ... whereas before you’re restricted with what you can buy, you find you’re repetitive and you don’t have the things you should have as part of your diet. It’s made it possible for me to eat properly.”**

The free fruit and vegetables scheme was highly appreciated by members; many people reported that they were able to try things they would not normally buy such as butternut squash. Other members reported that they would not normally buy fruit and vegetables, so getting them from the Pantry was a bonus.

**“I got healthier, I am eating more ... because I go to the gym ... I am eating more protein, fruit, veg, yoghurts, stuff like that.”**

**“I get better variety, so I am eating healthier.”**



## Reducing social isolation

Poverty can be isolating. When budgets are tight there is often little or no money available to be spent on social activities such as a drink with friends or a bus pass to attend an event or activity. The exhaustion of poverty, the perceived stigma of having a low income, and a two-way correlation between poverty and poor mental health can also contribute to social isolation and exacerbate feelings that you are struggling alone.

### Accessibility

Pantry members live fairly close to the Pantry – one of the requirements for membership is that people must live in the local area – so for most people the Pantry is not more than a 20-minute walk away. Accessibility and proximity is important so that members do not have to spend extra money on transport to reach the Pantry.

One member said that she lives three miles from the Pantry and walks there to save money (“the bus is expensive”). She uses a shopping trolley to carry the food home.

### Social life

A significant by-product of the Pantries is the social aspect that has developed. Being a member and attending every week has helped people to make new friends and get out of the house more often.

One member commented on the unexpected benefits the Pantry has brought to his social life: previously he spent most of his time at home and was depressed; now he has made friends and started socialising with people. This Pantry member was a young man in his early twenties, which demonstrates that the Pantries are able to help people of all ages – it’s not just for older people who are lonely at home.

**“...it helped because I’m getting out a bit, I used to be stuck in all the time. I suffer with depression, so it’s actually brought a light.”**

Another member reported that she was previously struggling with mental illness; after becoming a Pantry member she talked to one of the volunteers about the

problems she was experiencing and as a result of her advice she decided to start volunteering at the café next to the Pantry. She has since benefited from getting out of the house more often and feeling part of the community. She has grown in confidence and feels able to offer help and support to other people who are struggling and has started to look for paid employment.

**“It’s given me another chance to be part of the community, working in the café, people coming and going, trying to help them. You’ve been there and you’ve thought to yourself ‘I was at this point once, I’ve moved up, why not offer it to someone else?’ I just got a job interview tomorrow!”**

The peer support offered by volunteers and fellow Pantry members has been an unexpected benefit of the Pantries; in the small sample of people that were interviewed we came across a number of examples of this type of support, with people sharing their



## Audrey's story

Audrey is 64 and lives alone. Before receiving state pension, she was struggling on Jobseeker's Allowance. Thinking back on this time, Audrey shared how being a member of the Pantry gave her hope.

Before joining, Audrey remembers she would often have only one full, hot meal per week. She was "repetitive eating", eating "rubbish" which was making her "tired and sluggish". Audrey was reliant on weekly visits to her daughter's house "to feed me up; I was coming away with a bag of shopping and it got to a point where I thought 'I can't carry on like this.'"

Becoming a member enabled Audrey to have "at least two or three proper hot, nourishing meals" a week. It has enabled Audrey to eat a more varied diet. She is also now a more adventurous cook – experimenting with the wide variety of foods the Pantry stocks each week.

Being a member of the Pantry has also impacted Audrey's social life. She has made new friends – drawing comfort and receiving advice from others who also know what it is like to live off a restrictive income. Audrey feels part of an "amazing community" who look out for each other – walking each other to their gates on winter nights.

Audrey describes the Pantry as the "heart of the community"; for her "it is more than a full tummy, it's a massive link in the community."

**"It's more than just a full tummy, it's a massive link in the community."**

experiences and helping each other to move forward.

At Brinnington Pantry in Stockport, members arrive a number of hours before the Pantry opens, not just to get a place at the top of the queue, but also to socialise with their friends, old and new. Brinnington Pantry is situated in a council-run community building including the local library, credit union, job club, arts and craft club and a community café. Since the Pantry opened it has steadily grown and has had to move from its location upstairs in the community building to a bigger space downstairs. Pantry members make it a social occasion and get there early, to chat, have lunch and wait for the Pantry to open. A number of Pantry members talked about the social benefits:

**"We come here on Thursdays for 10:30am, it doesn't open until 3:30pm ... we meet up here and have a coffee and chat ... I have made lots of friends."**

**"They come to the café and have a chinwag, come to the café and have a brew. It's a proper social event now ... for people who were stuck in on their own."**

**"We will walk home together and when it's winter time we will walk up to the gates with people, see them in, everybody does it for each other. It's an excellent community, I am very, very fortunate to be part of it."**

Some Pantry members reported that they do not really like to socialise, some due to mental health issues, others because they prefer to stay at home or have caring responsibilities. For some members going to the Pantry is one of the few times they go out, other than shopping.

**"It pulled me out of the crapper ... at the moment I go just to go."**

**"People were really friendly. Some of the old dears really just came for a chat. If you were there**

**for the first time you wouldn't get the feeling of being left out."**

Even members who were already happy with their social lives say that going to the Pantry is a positive experience for them:

**"It's one more place to go, I look forward to it. ... I wouldn't miss it for the world."**

**"The ladies that work in the Pantry are lovely, very helpful."**

One Pantry member became a volunteer and now helps to run his local Pantry. He has mental health issues which mean he does not like to go out much or socialise, but he enjoys volunteering at the Pantry and helping the local community. Volunteering at the Pantry has been a way for him to get involved with issues he is passionate about, such as food waste, and at the same time give something back to the community.

# Volunteering at the Pantry

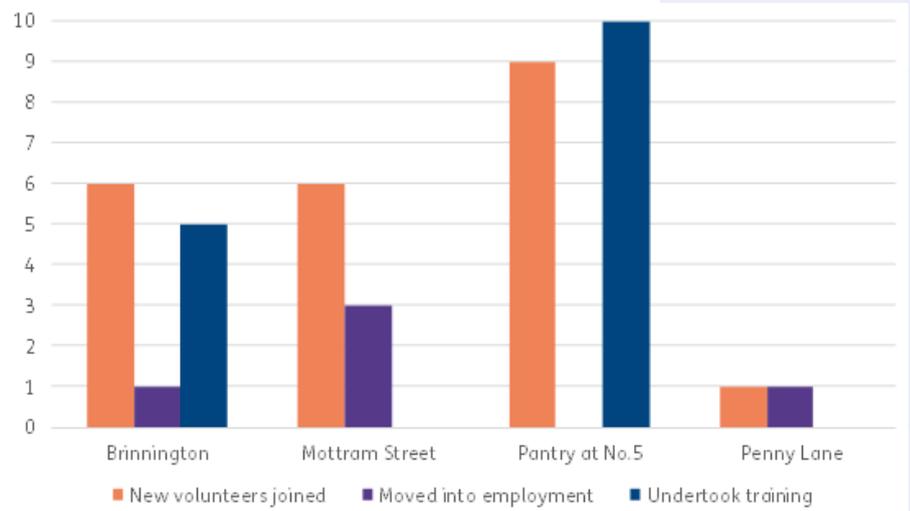
Each week, 25-30 volunteers support the work of the four Pantries run by Stockport Homes.

Volunteers play a significant part in the running of Pantries; 45 volunteers contributed 4,549 hours to Pantries from April 2016 to March 2017. Volunteer roles include operating the Pantries during their opening hours, being available to receive deliveries from suppliers and conducting administrative work. Volunteers also have the opportunity to take part in the Your Local Pantry committee, influencing the running of the Pantries.

All volunteers receive regular training, with new volunteers undertaking Food Hygiene Level 2.

Since 2013, 10 volunteers have moved into employment, often assisted by the experiences they gained whilst at the Pantry.

Volunteering outcomes, 2016-17



See page 7 for more statistics on the contributions made by volunteers since Your Local Pantry was launched in 2013.





### A good investment?

Your Local Pantry recognises the value of demonstrating the social impact of projects such as these. Regular volunteering, associated training and employment outcomes can all have a social impact.

Using the HACT Social Value calculator (a tool used by social housing providers), Stockport Homes have calculated the impact of Your Local Pantry (see table), concluding that every £1 invested in Your Local Pantry equates to at least £6 in social value. Figures are based on statistics recorded between April 2016 and March 2017.

These calculations reflect the fact that Stockport Homes employs a dedicated member of staff to support Your Local Pantry; they also provide premises and support with some associated overheads e.g. utility costs. Your Local Pantry also actively applies for external funding to boost training and skills outcomes for volunteers and members.

### Social value of Pantries, 2016-17

Activity	Overall budget	Overall social impact	Analysis of benefit	
			Budget: social impact	Net benefit
Volunteering	£31,938	£101,663	1:3	£69,725
PLP Cookery Course	£1,081	£25,754	1:23	£24,673
Food hygiene training	£980	£30,130	1:30	£29,150
Employment	£0	£62,519		£62,519
Committee skills training	£3,600	£11,193	1:3	£7,593
Retail skills training	£150	£2,131	1:14	£1,981
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£37,749</b>	<b>£233,391</b>	<b>1:6</b>	<b>£195,642</b>

It is worth noting that the HACT social value calculator does not take account of other types of social impact such as the financial benefits and improved health and wellbeing that have been identified in our evaluation. It only calculates the 'additional' value of being involved in volunteering and training.

# Your Local Pantry: over to you

**Your Local Pantry is a proven model, developed by Stockport Homes over the past four years, and already replicated by a number of other social landlords across Greater Manchester.**

Local Pantries could achieve the same transformative social impacts on the lives of local people in neighbourhoods across the country. Our vision is to work with partners to develop a network of Local Pantries across the UK over the coming years. Could you be one of them?

Local Pantries are relatively cheap to set up (typical start-up costs are substantially less than £10,000), and are able to cover the majority of operating costs from weekly membership fees.

We have developed a package to make the process of setting up and running new Local Pantries as easy as possible.

## The Local Pantry package

Pantry Handbook	A comprehensive 75-page operations manual giving step-by-step instructions to guide you through setting up and operating a Pantry.
Pantry visit	An opportunity to visit an existing Pantry, to see at first hand what it looks like and how it works in practice.
Set up and development support	One-to-one support from a dedicated Development Officer, including help with site appraisals, contacts and initial set-up.
Training support	Advice and guidance from the Development Officer, and shadowing opportunities at existing Pantries.
Pantry management software	A bespoke volunteer, operations and membership management system enabling automated processes and comprehensive reporting.
Procedures and templates	Documents relating to day-to-day Pantry operations and performance management.
Marketing materials	Personalised PDF templates of literature and operational materials including membership forms and flyers.
Website	Advertising of each Pantry site, good news stories and key messages via <a href="http://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk">www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk</a>
Peer learning	Annual conference, networking opportunities and ongoing communications across the Your Local Pantry network.



## Contact us

If you are interested in finding out more or setting up a Local Pantry, please contact Laura Jones, Pantry Development Officer at Church Action on Poverty, to discuss how we can help.

[laura@church-poverty.org.uk](mailto:laura@church-poverty.org.uk)  
0161 872 9294

Church Action on Poverty, 28 Sandpiper Court, Water's Edge Business Park, Modwen Road, Salford M53EZ



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it’s a massive link  
in the community.”**

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