



**Transforming lives through  
food and cooking**



# **Impact Report 2025**



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Images in this Impact Report are for illustrative purposes only and not related to individual stories. All photographs by Rob Wicks unless otherwise stated

# Introduction

**Hello and welcome to Square Food Foundation’s first ever Impact Report!**



2025 has been a transformational year for Square Food Foundation, and I could not be prouder of the team and the work we have achieved over the past 12 months to build a vision for the future of food education.

Returning to work in January 2025 after my maternity leave provided the perfect opportunity for the whole team and me to reflect on our incredible portfolio of work since we started in 2011. Spending time looking back at how food and cooking have the power to change lives has made us even more determined to prove that food education deserves to be recognised as a tool for positive social change.

But we know that Square Food Foundation can’t do this alone. Therefore, a cornerstone of our plans for the next 3–5 years is to ensure that we work in partnership and synergy with all the food educators in Bristol, as well as continuing to strengthen our links with businesses and individuals who share our motivation. Collectively, we can move Bristol towards becoming a more food secure city.

This report shows how our expansive work – from teaching classes in the kitchen to delivering recipe kits, community outreach programmes and more – is making a real difference.

While there’s always more to be done, I hope you enjoy reading about what we’ve achieved, and that you’ll feel as inspired as I am for our next chapter ahead.

Eloise

**Managing Director**

[www.squarefoodfoundation.co.uk](http://www.squarefoodfoundation.co.uk)

# Why does Square Food Foundation matter?

At Square Food Foundation, we believe learning to cook can give people the opportunity to be in control of their health, wellbeing and budgets. Rooted in our local community of Knowle West and Filwood in South Bristol, we work with people who often face multiple barriers to these opportunities.

Barriers might include:

- Food insecurity
- Mental health challenges
- Exclusion from mainstream education
- Learning disabilities and differences
- Limited access to knowledge or experience of cooking.

Food is a foundation for life. Through our activities, we equip people with valuable life skills that form the building blocks to sustain a healthy and happy life.

**1 in 12**  
households in  
Filwood rely  
on emergency  
food services

**29.4%**  
of single parent  
households in  
Bristol  
experience food  
insecurity

**20%**  
of children in  
Year 6 in the UK  
are living with  
obesity

**2025**  
saw Bristol's  
highest recorded  
number of families  
accessing food  
banks

**Our mission**  
is to make cooking from  
scratch accessible for people  
of all ages and abilities

**Our vision**  
is a community where  
everyone has access to  
nutritious, affordable food  
and the skills to prepare it

Sources: JSNA Quality of Life Survey 24/25, JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 25/26 and National Child Measurement Programme 24/25





# 2025 at Square Food Foundation: a snapshot



**370**  
classes  
taught

**21**  
one-off  
community  
cookery  
sessions hosted



**475**  
students  
engaged



**11**  
Batch for Good  
team building  
days

**25**  
people  
supported  
as  
monthly  
donors



**260**  
meals  
eaten  
together  
around  
our table



**3**

Corporate  
Partners  
signed up

**£20,056**  
raised via the  
Big Give  
Christmas  
Challenge

**1000+**  
batch meals  
cooked



**1,750 kg**  
surplus food  
saved via  
FareShare



**6,410**  
recipe kits  
distributed,  
generating  
over 25,000  
meals



**52**  
volunteers  
supported  
us in the  
kitchen

# Our impact

Square Food Foundation's vision of a better future for food education is ambitious – but with 15 years of experience under our belt, we're more equipped than ever before. Our work is focussed in six key areas, designed to support our community at every stage of life and build resilience for those most at risk of food insecurity.

## Children's food education

By empowering school-age children to develop positive relationships with food, we aim to enable the next generation to live healthy and joyful lives. We do this by working closely with our local network of schools, teachers, parents and carers to deliver food education and enrichment opportunities.

### Oasis Academy Connaught

This year, we ran **13 school classes** reaching a total of **56 children aged 7-11** who access free school meals. Children worked together to create delicious meals from scratch, with enough food to take home, using our weekly recipe kits.

### Holiday classes

**20 holiday cooking classes** via the holiday activities and food (HAF) programme, reaching **68 children aged 8-14**. These fun, hands-on sessions took place at the Square Food Foundation kitchen and at Redcatch Community Garden, helping food insecure children stay nourished during the school holidays.

*"In the past my daughter has been very picky with foods, but she is bringing things home to show me and try."*

**Holiday class parent**



# Supporting young people

To encourage young people to realise their full potential, we support them when it matters most – during the key transition from secondary school into the adult world. Our goal is to create a welcoming learning environment that is as much about building confidence and enthusiasm as it is about achieving new skills.

## How to be a chef

Our flagship programme engaged **18 young people aged 16-25**, supporting pathways into the hospitality industry. Since completing the course:

- 8 landed work in hospitality
- 5 went back into education
- 5 secured further training

**83% of our students** reported feeling confident about their next steps after the course.

## Toolkit for independent living

• **11 students** in Year 10 at Belgrave School completed a year-long course, achieving a BTEC in Cooking Skills and gaining confidence in teamwork and communication.

• At Cabot Learning Federation, 18 students in Year 10 completed a 12-week course, across 3 cohorts – taking part in structured learning outside the classroom, with the aim of improving self-confidence for those who often fall through the gaps of mainstream education.

**82% of CLF students** reported feeling confident in their ability to learn a new skill.

*“At my last educational institution, I never felt listened to or cared for, and the difference coming to Square Food was black and white.”*

**How to be a chef student**



Finding the right path –

## Rhys's story

Photograph for illustrative purposes only

Rhys was one of the youngest participants to take part in How to be a chef, turning 17 on the course. Since leaving school at 16 he had little sense of what he wanted to do.

For someone like Rhys, who lacks confidence leaving the house and meeting new people, this course was transformational in widening his horizons. With a core focus on teamwork, Rhys met new people in a welcoming environment. This helped him gain a new perspective about people's life experiences, as well as learning about himself and his potential.

As part of the course, Rhys was paired with Max Kohn, Director of The Jolly Hog, as his mentor. Through monthly meetings, Max shared professional guidance and

*“Max [the mentor] encourages me to think outside the box and consider different options. There are certain things you need an outside perspective for. Max has different experience and it's really helpful to get his perspective.”*

**How to be a chef student**

industry insight, helping Rhys set personal goals and review his progress together.

Since taking part in How to be a chef, Rhys has started volunteering at Café Lido as well as taking on work with the Jolly Hog team.

# Tackling food-related health issues

We believe that eating well and learning how to cook from scratch can improve our health, both physically and mentally. While this idea informs all the work we do, two of our programmes aim to address this issue directly, seeking to empower people to make informed choices about what they cook and eat.



## Cooking connections

- **11 adults** living with learning disabilities and mental health challenges completed the 12-week course.
- **22 new recipes** taught, supporting steps towards independent living.
- Learners gained skills in kitchen hygiene, safe knife skills and gained confidence recognising the link between what they eat and their physical wellbeing.
- **85% of our learners** have cooked a meal for someone else since completing the course.

## Back in the kitchen

- 15 regular attendees came to **33 weekly classes** for over 55s, tackling isolation and loneliness in older age.
- This year, we also **launched a monthly lunch club**, inviting the wider community to socialise and eat together.
- We introduced monthly **community batch cooking**, where our participants helped to prepare over 500 meals for the local Food Clubs.

*“Really enjoyed myself, first ever course I have stuck to... cannot explain how much the course has helped me, without it I would be sat at home doing nothing.”*  
**Cooking connections student**

# Connecting with our community



We're proud to take an active role in our local area of Filwood and Knowle West. For us, this means fostering relationships with other groups, offering volunteering, and supporting our community with our recipe kit programme.

## Recipe kits

We provide ingredients and recipes in kits to help local people at risk of food insecurity. This year **6,410 free recipe kits** were distributed – each serves four, so that's an amazing **25,000 meals!**



*“It has really helped me to try new things that I felt nervous about trying before. It's helped me gain confidence with how to cook with unfamiliar ingredients.”*  
**Recipe kit recipient**

## Volunteering

2025 saw **52 volunteers** support us in the kitchen, donating an incredible **2,900 hours** of their time. Our 11 Batch for Good team building sessions also generated over **1,000 batch cooked meals** for the community.



## Community events

Based at The Park Centre, we collaborate regularly with local groups who champion community wellbeing. This year saw **100 homemade pizzas** created at The Park's Wellness Day, plus we hosted cookery classes for The Southmead Project's Active Recovery Programme.

# Championing city-wide initiatives

Bristol has an incredible food scene, from award-winning chefs and restaurants to pioneering grassroots projects – and we work hard to champion these at every opportunity. As well as providing clear pathways for our learners to find work in hospitality, we've built meaningful partnerships with community groups, food charities, restaurants and businesses who share our vision.



Photo by Mark Simmons

## Removing barriers to hospitality

Across the year, we created multiple opportunities for learning and collaboration.

- Our How to be a chef students visited **Springfield Allotments, The Community Farm** and **The Pony Chew Valley** to learn about seasonal and local produce.
- They also enjoyed a **Bianchis** pasta masterclass and learnt about spice from **Jikoni East Africa**.
- Square Food Foundation hosted the cookery school at **Feast On** festival, running an impressive 21 classes.
- We also collaborated with **FODA Festival**, running a series of kids' pasta making workshops on Bristol's harbourside from The Pony Bus.

## Our commitment to sustainability

Reducing our environmental impact is a core principle.

- We were the first to join **Lush Greens** Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programme, to improve equality between farmers and consumers, and continued to receive their fresh produce grown less than 2 miles away.
- We joined **Generation Soil CIC** – a new initiative founded by How to be a chef graduate Alex Montgomery, converting kitchen waste into nutrient-rich compost.
- As a longstanding member of **FareShare South West**, we received 50kg of surplus food each week – turning potential waste into nourishing meals.

# Sharing our knowledge

Square Food Foundation brings 15 years of experience to the table – and we want to spread our knowledge far and wide for real, impactful change. This means being part of the food education conversation throughout Bristol into the South West and beyond, ultimately influencing UK policy and advocating for a better food system.

## Food education training

Our 'train the trainer' model partners with Feeding Bristol to increase city-wide food education skills by working with existing community groups and leaders.

- **5 community groups** – including Bristol Somali Youth Voice and Hartcliffe Club – joined our **Food Leaders course**.
- In partnership with Coexist Community Kitchen, we reached a further **12 groups**, including Black2Nature and the Ranch Adventure Playground.
- Our online version of the course engaged **17 people**, widening access to food education training.
- We also worked with Milestones Trust, helping **26 social care support staff** learn how to prepare healthy and balanced meals for the people they assist.



*"I'm going to be more thoughtful with the food I throw out, and I now have the knowledge to plan ahead and time my roast dinners better."*

**Milestones Trust care worker**

## Advocacy and influence

We play a key role in amplifying the importance of food education. This year's highlights include:

- Joining the **Food Education Network**, bringing our impact to a national level.
- Continuing to work with Feeding Bristol to inform the **Bristol Food Education Charter**.
- Hosted **3 Lunch & Learn talks** for staff at Triodos Bank, BART Ingredients and Kate's Kitchen.





# How our work is funded

Square Food Foundation is funded by a range of different sources, including grants from trusts and foundations, individual donations, Corporate Partnerships and our own Catering & Events team. We'd like to share a special thanks to the generous funders who, quite simply, make all our work possible.

## Individual donations

Thank you to the **25 individual donors** who signed up as monthly supporters this year, generating an incredible **£4,500**.

In December we took part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge and raised an amazing **£20,056!**

## Trusts & foundations

We received grants funding from:

- 29th May Charitable Trust
- Arnold Clarke Community Foundation
- Denman Charitable Trust
- The Dormywood Trust
- Focus Foundation
- Foundation for Children
- The Grateful Society
- The Hargreaves Foundation
- Holidays, Activities and Food Programme (HAF)
- Household Support Fund
- The Linbury Trust
- The Nisbet Trust
- Stoke Park Group Friends Fund
- Yellow Wood Foundation



## Corporate supporters

We're so grateful for the support and donations received from:

- Agile Chilli
- Arthur David
- Bristol Beer Factory
- Feast On
- Hobbs House Bakery
- The Jolly Hog

Visit our website to find out ways you can support  
[www.squarefoodfoundation.co.uk/fundraising](http://www.squarefoodfoundation.co.uk/fundraising)



# Introducing our Corporate Partnerships

This year, we appointed Dan Ford as Head of Partnerships to develop meaningful ways for local businesses to support our mission. We're proud to have secured three Corporate Partners who have joined our newly launched scheme.

Beyond providing financial support, our Corporate Partnership scheme creates opportunities for purpose-led businesses to connect with the local community. Employees can enjoy volunteering, Batch for Good team building sessions, Lunch & Learn talks in their offices and more. Here's what our 2025 Corporate Partners had to say about their experience...



"Our partnership with Square Food Foundation has been a great way to bring our values to life while also building strong, meaningful relationships locally. Everyone at our Bristol site has taken part in volunteering sessions which has genuinely engaged those who've taken part."

- **Barts Ingredients, Legacy Partner**



"We support Square Food Foundation as there is a strong alignment in our shared values. Promoting cooking skills and encouraging healthy eating habits – especially among young people is essential for the wellbeing of future generations and the long-term health of our society."

- **Kate's Kitchen, Impact Partner**



"It was particularly important for us to join a multi-year corporate partnership so we can make a long-term impact and lasting connection between Square Food Foundation and those within Triodos. We know guaranteed, long-term funding is crucial for smaller charities."

- **Triodos Bank, Community Partner**



**Interested in becoming our next Corporate Partner? Get in touch with [dan@squarefoodfoundation.co.uk](mailto:dan@squarefoodfoundation.co.uk) to learn more.**





# Catering & Events

Our professional catering division provides delicious, bespoke and ethical food for corporate lunches, private parties, weddings and more – offering a more conscious choice that helps tackle food insecurity in Bristol. Operating as a separate CIC, all profits go directly back to Square Food Foundation.

## Food with purpose

This year, the Catering & Events team provided work experience for How to be a Chef students, and even hired one of the course graduates Sarah Walsh as a vital member of the chef team. They

also appointed the team's first operational role outside the kitchen – Donna Beresford, Head of Catering Operations – who now leads on client outreach and managing bookings.



Since its launch in 2022, the company's client list has continued to grow year on year. Their ambition is to grow the Catering & Events offer into a dependable income stream for the charity, while creating reliable employment opportunities for our graduate chefs.



*"Everyone was saying how delicious and wonderful the food was and asking for the recipes."*

**Catering client, NHS Bristol & North Somerset**

**To find out more, visit our website or get in touch [catering@squarefoodfoundation.co.uk](mailto:catering@squarefoodfoundation.co.uk)**



# A message from Sian

**Our Chair of Trustees, Sian Flynn, reflects on our work and achievements.**

In my final year as Chair of Trustees at Square Food Foundation, I am reassured that the charity is in a stronger position than ever before with a strategy in place to deliver its mission and support those who need our help.

In the face of the challenging funding landscape, I am proud of the charity's ability to move forward with optimism and ambition, including developing an income stream based on our efforts, underpinned by our values. When many organisations have been forced to scale back, Square Food Foundation is moving forward with a credible plan for the future.

I've seen firsthand, within the small and resilient team, the awareness of how their expertise can make the greatest difference and how



to deliver our stated aims. Now, more than ever, Square Food Foundation's work feels relevant and responsive to meeting the challenges facing so many in our communities.

I'd like to thank everyone who has worked alongside us this year. I remain optimistic about the role Square Food Foundation can play in driving positive change. With many new partnerships in the pipeline, it feels as though, from our firm base, we are only just getting started.

Sian

**Chair of Trustees**



# SQUARE FOOD FOUNDATION

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food and cooking**

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