



Much more than a food bank

SPRING COMMUNITY HUB Follow On Visit

Progress Made Since Last Visit

Situation Update

Signposting, Advice Given



SPRING IS  
HERE





## FOOD BANK SESSIONS

### MONDAYS

Foursquare Church,  
177 Walworth Road SE17 1RW  
Time: 13:00-15:00.

### TUESDAYS

New Covenant Church,  
506-510 Old Kent Road SE1 5BA  
Time: 12:00-14:00.

### WEDNESDAYS:

St Paul's Church,  
4 Lorrimore Square SE17 3QU  
Time: 11:30-13:30.

### THURSDAYS

Spring Community Hub,  
64 Wilson Road SE5 8PE  
Time: 10:00-13:00.

### FRIDAYS

Spring Community Hub,  
64 Wilson Road SE5 8PE  
Time: 10:00-13:00



### SPRING COMMUNITY HUB

formerly known as Central Southwark Community Hub

64 Wilson Road, Camberwell, London SE5 8PE.  
020 7703 1653  
office@springcommunityhub.org.uk  
springcommunityhub.org.uk

Thank you to Tom Leighton and Matt Brearley for their excellent photography. Some of the names we've used in the report have been changed by request.

🐦 @SpringCommHub  
📷 @springcommunityhub  
📘 springcommunityhub

Charity number: 1172789

**When I started Central Southwark Community Hub I wanted to help people solve the issues that contributed to them needing to use a food bank.**

I never imagined one of those issues would be a global pandemic.

But as it exploded and lockdown hit, long queues began to form at our food bank sessions. On a Wednesday in April I was stunned as the queue got longer and longer, eventually coiling out of St Paul's Church and around Lorrimore Square.

The next Wednesday we had food piled high up to the ceiling but it was not enough and we scrambled cars to deliver more. Each day, each week we managed to send everyone home with a food parcel.

As we fought to keep hundreds of people from going hungry, the heavy toll of the pandemic hit my family as my children lost their father to coronavirus.

Amid the chaos and the loss it could have been completely overwhelming. But it wasn't, thanks to our community.

A sea of passionate, determined volunteers gave their time, financial donations flooded in, Southwark Council, charities and local businesses found ways to support us.

We have always been more than a food bank and, thanks to our community the pandemic didn't stop us. We found ways to run our holiday club for children and quickly moved our other support online.

As we grew we moved to a new home and in the next year we will be opening new services in Southwark and beyond.

And it is for this reason that we decided to change our name.

After an exhausting year, a sad year, we chose a name offering hope and bright new beginnings, Spring Community Hub.

This report shares our story, our work and our plans for the future.

Thank you for your support.

**Felicia Boshorin**

CEO of Spring Community Hub





**We are a small charity who, over the past 18 months, have been called on to do extraordinary things.**

Before the pandemic, over the course of a month, we would work with around 200 families. During its peak – over a period of two months – we made more than 200 food parcels every single week.

We were able to do this thanks to an influx in volunteers and through a constant stream of financial and food donations from our community and partners.

Southwark Council gave us the responsibility of supporting people who were unable to afford food while isolating or shielding. They recognised the importance of our work in preventing hunger by providing us with valuable funding.

Through it all we found a way to continue all our other services and make sure we gave everyone the same warm, caring welcome and support we have always prided ourselves on.

As we have grown we have had to learn, change and improve the way we do things so we keep running smoother and meeting the needs of the people we help.

As we make our systems and finances more robust we have plans to grow so we can continue to help more people facing food poverty.

As we embrace our new name and new challenges we hope you will continue to be an important part of our community.

Best wishes,

**Selina Boshorin**  
Chair of Trustees



“I would like to personally thank Spring Community Hub for the remarkable contribution they have made to our borough's response to COVID-19, bringing people from across the local community together to support those who have been hit hardest by the pandemic. Having worked closely with them I know they have worked tirelessly and with huge

creativity to provide support, advice and food for hundreds of local people, helping families not just to get by but to rebuild their future. They have been a real beacon of hope and success during a difficult time.”

**Cllr Kieron Williams**  
Leader of Southwark Council

# SPRING

# IS

# HERE





# FOOD IS A HUMAN RIGHT.

Spring Community Hub exists to make sure no one in our community goes hungry. But we don't just provide food, we work alongside people to help them **escape food poverty, build confidence and find community.**

We run food bank sessions five days a week, providing healthy, fresh and exciting food parcels to people as long as they need them.

As we get to know people we find out how else we can help. We get people the right expertise to solve problems around benefits, immigration and housing. We run skills-sharing sessions that boost self-esteem.

And we run one-to-one sessions to support people back to work.

To keep bellies full and minds inspired, we run holiday clubs for children, providing lunch for the whole family, endless activities and new experiences away from London.

Our community is made up of the people who come to us and the staff, volunteers and supporters who make our work possible.

Together we create a warm welcoming safe place where everyone is made to feel at home and can find friends. **Wherever they come from, whatever their race, religion, sexuality, identity or immigration status.**

# A SPRING FORWARD

In the next year we will help feed more people by opening food pantries in Southwark and further afield. We will begin a gardening club and be finding new ways to fundraise and build our team of volunteers.

As we move beyond Southwark we decided we needed a new name. Having talked to the people who we

support, our volunteers and staff, we chose Spring Community Hub.

We feel each meaning of Spring represents different parts of our work. A spring provides water for life, it is a season associated with growth, hope and renewal and it symbolises energy, power and progress.

## WE ARE SPRING COMMUNITY HUB.



# THE STATE THAT WE ARE IN

As we get to know the people we support we tend to find many of the reasons they come to us are the same: deep inequality.

People's employment is precarious, their wages are poor, their housing costs are high and benefits - where they can be accessed - are simply not enough.

In Southwark 44% of children live in poverty. More than half of these children do so because of the cost of housing<sup>1</sup>.

A lack of affordable housing is just one way government policy has increased poverty. The benefit cap, the two child limit, harsh sanctions and a five-week wait for Universal Credit all pile additional hardship onto our communities.

During the pandemic, as a member of the Independent Food Aid Network, we signed a letter to the prime minister with 10 demands to lift people out of poverty, reversing damaging policies and introducing a real living wage<sup>2</sup>.

The most important change we need is an end to the no recourse to public funds status, known as NRPF. It means anyone who is not a British citizen and is subject to immigration control cannot claim the majority of benefits.

For people who have NRPF there is no social safety net. It is a policy that needlessly pushes already poor communities into further poverty and is especially unfair on children.



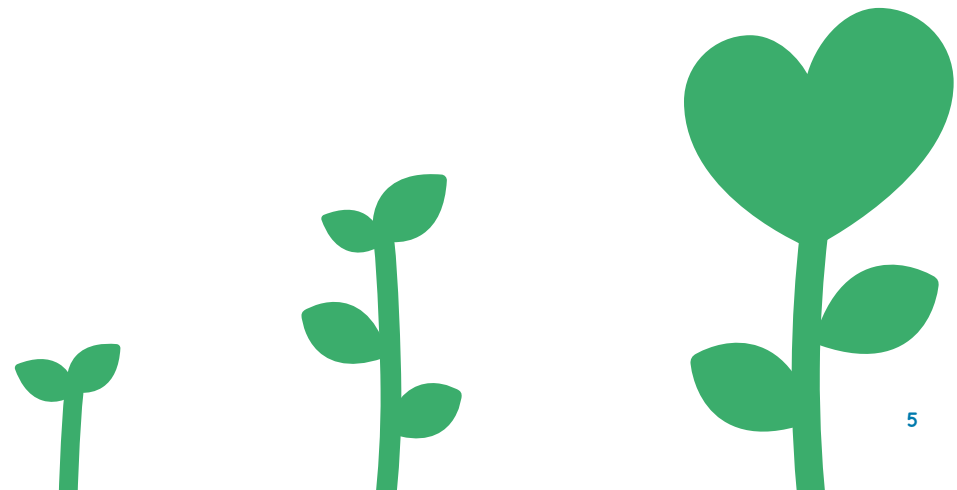
Our food bank manager, Abieyuwa Ehondor, has an NRPF status and understands the damage the policy can do.

“When you can't access any benefits you and your children are put in a perilous position. If anything goes wrong you're on your own.”

“Around 36% of people who come to us for help have an NRPF status,” explains Abieyuwa. “We are their last chance for food, support and advice. Along with providing food, we link people up with partner organisations who can help settle their immigration status or appeal against NRPF. The worst thing about the policy is it hurts children.”

<sup>1</sup> [trustforlondon.org.uk/data/child-poverty-borough/](https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/child-poverty-borough/)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/ifan-s-latest-letter-to-the-pm>





# A FOOD BANK THAT'S ALWAYS HERE FOR PEOPLE

## OUR FOOD BANK

“It has helped us a lot in this difficult time. I wouldn't know what to do without it. It means we can feed our family and have enough money to pay our bills. It's made a really big impact in my life.” – Fatima

Food brings people together, it offers comfort, it shares joy. We always keep this in mind when we prepare each person's food parcel.

But during the pandemic, with shelves empty and demand dramatically increased, finding enough food was often a challenge in itself. In the early days of lockdown we were spending around £2,000 a week, filling trolley after trolley with food, so we could keep everyone well fed.

Fareshare, now joined with the Felix Project, provides us with two deliveries a week that make up a significant proportion of the food we give out. We receive regular donations from individuals and other organisations, like supermarkets, cafes and schools. Often it's a single bag and sometimes it's a van load.

Regular financial donations mean we can pay for bulk deliveries to our door,

far cheaper and less time consuming than the supermarket dashes of old. Most importantly it allows us to buy fresh fruit and veg and items we know people love, like plantains, garri and black-eyed beans.

This keeps our food parcels healthy and varied, while meeting people's dietary and cultural needs.

The pandemic changed the demographics of the people we help with hundreds of people from the Latin American communities coming to us after they lost jobs in cleaning, hospitality, and hair and beauty.

We set up a brand new delivery system after Southwark Council asked us to provide food parcels to those shielding, isolating and unable to afford food.

We did the same for Southwark Pensioners Centre.

Despite the huge increase in the numbers of people coming to our sessions we were able to make sure they were socially distanced and Covid safe.

We were able to respond to all these changes thanks to our volunteers. We are thrilled by the number of people who've joined our community with more than **100 people** volunteering their time to run sessions, pack food parcels, clean, deliver or collect food, translate, take care of admin and help us move to our new location.

We will continue to need their help as we take our next steps in supporting more people to escape food poverty.

## REFERRALS

Everyone who comes to Spring Community Hub needs a referral.

We take referrals from: schools, children's centres, JobCentre Plus, Citizen's Advice, Southwark Council, South London and Maudsley (SLAM) Mental Health Team, places of worship, charities and community groups

| MONTH    | FOOD PARCELS GIVEN OUT |
|----------|------------------------|
| APRIL 20 | 566                    |
| MAY 20   | 877                    |
| JUNE 20  | 987                    |
| JULY 20  | 437                    |
| AUG 20   | 188                    |
| SEPT 20  | 232                    |
| OCT 20   | 261                    |
| NOV 20   | 246                    |
| DEC 20   | 348                    |
| JAN 21   | 345                    |
| FEB 21   | 320                    |
| MAR 21   | 423                    |
| TOTAL    | 5230                   |

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR OUR FOOD BANK

We will:

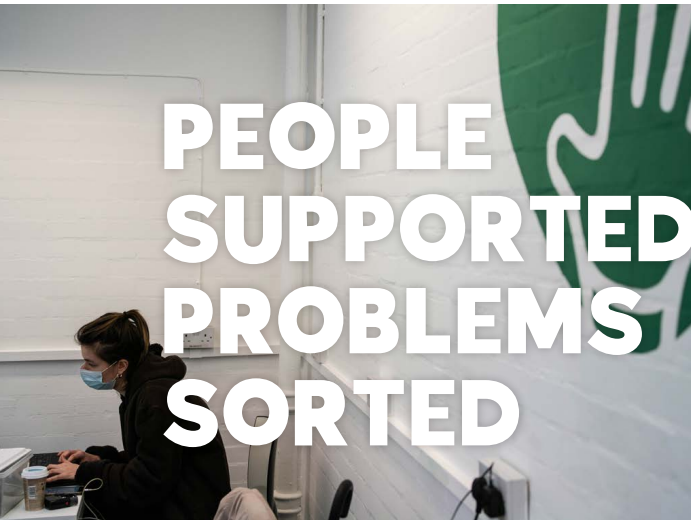
open two new food pantries - offering the same great variety of food for a small membership fee - in Southwark and Havering

build on our relationships with local shops, cafes, restaurants and bars so we can increase food and financial donations

continue to build and train our team of volunteers so we keep meeting the needs of everyone we support.



# PEOPLE SUPPORTED, PROBLEMS SORTED



## OUR BACK 2 WORK SCHEME

As soon as someone comes through our door we start getting to know them and understanding what we can do together to help them move away from food poverty.

When people are out of work we support and advise them in finding and applying for jobs and offer sessions on employability and work skills. We discover what training they might need to find the job they want.

People also come to us with issues like housing, immigration, benefits, law and mental health. These are complicated issues and navigating them is difficult. We cannot solve all of these problems for everyone but as a place people trust we can introduce them to partner agencies and other charities who can.

We recruited a dedicated specialist group of volunteers for this project who run group sessions and provide one-to-one support.

Lockdown meant many people from the Latin American community needed help for the first time. Some people had limited English while many were unsure about what support they were entitled to or how to access it.

Thanks to Spanish and Portuguese speaking volunteers we have been able to support people in the language they knew best and have plans to enhance our support for this community.

This project is in its infancy but it provides a trusted, friendly space for people to share the issues they face and get the support, help and skills they need.

Evert and some of the volunteers at the Back 2 Work scheme

“I lost my job because of the pandemic and was unemployed for over a year. I would have never been able to support my wife and four kids without your assistance. The help given to me was really fundamental.

“The Back 2 Work team helped me with writing my CV and gave me precious information about English language courses. I believe that the team really care for other people and I have always enjoyed visiting and interacting with people there. I really wanted to volunteer but I have found a job recently!” – Evert

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR BACK 2 WORK SCHEME

We will:

find funding for the project so it's sustainable, it can grow and we can increase the help we offer

recruit a volunteer mental health counsellor to support guests and volunteers

develop our support for the Latin American community with all our resources translated and offer English lessons.

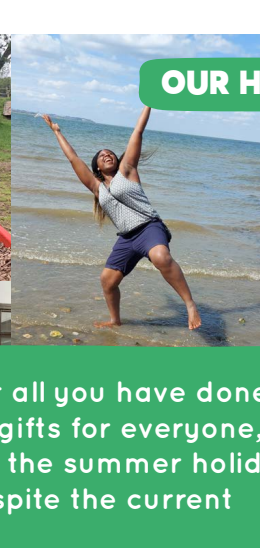
# PEOPLE SUPPORTED, PROBLEMS SORTED

## OUR BACK 2 WORK SCHEME

|                       | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | TOTAL |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| GUESTS JOINING        | 10  | 30  | 38  | 19  | 7   | 5   | 99    |
| GUESTS PUT ON HOLD    |     |     | 0   | 2   | 0   | 22  | 24    |
| GUESTS TAKEN OFF HOLD |     |     | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1     |

| TYPE OF SUPPORT                        | NUMBER WHO NEEDED THIS SUPPORT |
|--|--------------------------------|
| EMPLOYMENT                             | 37                             |
| CV                                     | 29                             |
| BENEFITS                               | 27                             |
| IMMIGRATION RIGHTS                     | 23                             |
| HOUSING                                | 17                             |
| MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT                  | 13                             |
| PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT                   | 12                             |
| ESOL COURSE                            | 11                             |
| MONEY MANAGEMENT                       | 10                             |
| LAPTOPS/LEARNING TECH DEVICES/INTERNET | 9                              |
| VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES             | 7                              |
| WHITE GOODS/KITCHENWARE/FURNITURE      | 6                              |
| CLOTHING                               | 2                              |
| REGISTERING AS SELF EMPLOYED           | 1                              |
| CHRISTMAS GIFTS                        | 1                              |
| ALTERNATIVE FOOD BANK                  | 1                              |





## OUR HOLIDAY CLUB

“Thank you so much for all you have done for us, free trip, food, and gifts for everyone, we are grateful. You made the summer holiday fun for my children despite the current situation.” – Shola

Holiday hunger dominated the headlines at times in 2020 as footballer Marcus Rashford twice forced the government to offer more financial support to families during the school holidays.

Preventing holiday hunger was why we first started our holiday club in 2017. And as schools closed it's why we gave lunch and activities to children for at least one day a week through each lockdown.

During the pandemic how we ran the club had to change completely. We offered lunch for collection and delivery, and provided activity packs and online sessions including dance, exercise and cooking.

The packs included books from BookTrust, and arts and craft kits from the National Gallery and Serpentine Gallery. We celebrated Black History Month with books and posters. The

Mayor's Fund for London gave us Take and Make kits offering families a healthy meal to make at home. They went down so well we made our own giving the children the chance to make pizza, pancakes, pasta sauce and apple crumble.

To make it as safe and convenient as possible families were able to collect lunch and activities from five different locations across Southwark.

And after being stuck in lockdown London, many families spending those long weeks living in cramped conditions, we were overjoyed to offer trips to the beach and a farm in August.

These trips are always the highlight of our year. They give families the chance to delight in new experiences, discover a world away from London, and forget any challenges they face for a day or two. In 2020 it meant even more. Two days of noisy joy was reward for our months of hard work.

Children will be able to attend holiday club in person this summer and it promises to be bigger, brighter and more exciting than ever.

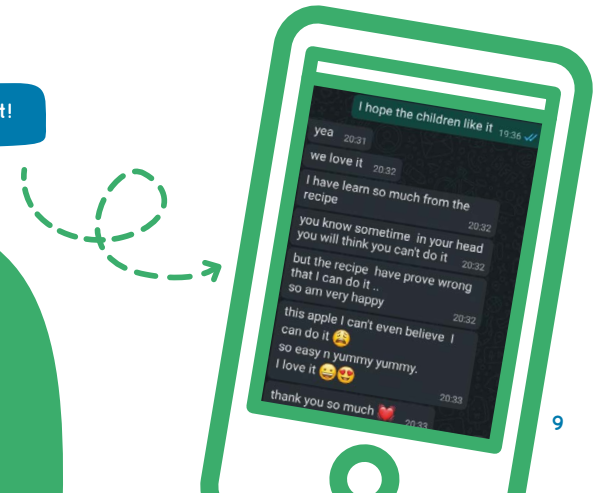
| PERIOD            | CHILDREN | FAMILIES |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| APR-JUN           | 97       | 47       |
| SUMMER            | 237      | 114      |
| OCT HALF-TERM     | 126      | 53       |
| CHRISTMAS         | 170      | 70       |
| NEW YEAR LOCKDOWN | 85       | 35       |
| FEB HALF-TERM     | 78       | 32       |
| EASTER            | 250      | 101      |

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR OUR HOLIDAY CLUB

We will:

- host seven in-person holiday clubs at six different centres across Southwark
- offer trips and adventures outside of Southwark
- apply for longer-term funding to secure the future of the holiday club.

The meal kits went down a treat!





# SKILLS AND FRIENDSHIP SHARED

As a charity we are determined to learn about what the people in our community want and need from us.

And that's exactly how our women's drop-in sessions began. We found some of the women who had become a part of our community, especially ones with irregular immigration statuses, shared similar frustrations and challenges.

Since becoming mothers many found themselves isolated and lacking in confidence.

We worked with them to develop a session which gives them the chance to share in each other's skills, build confidence and find a new support network.

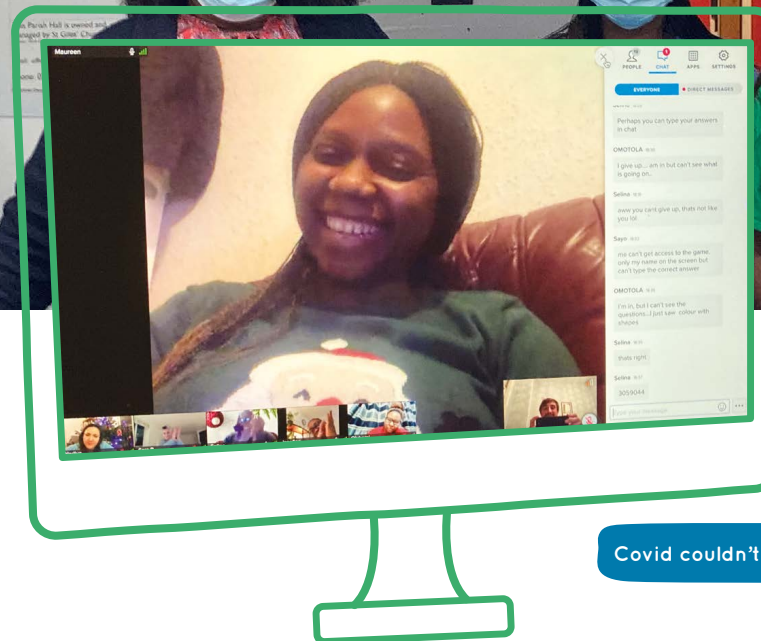
An average of 17 women took part in our sessions which included afternoons on mental health, hair care, skin care, dressmaking, sewing

and even balloon decoration. As Covid hit the sessions moved online, giving people the chance to develop their digital skills.

The sessions do more than build confidence. Practical skills like hair braiding can save them money too.

The sense of community the sessions create encouraged women to volunteer with us. Along with helping us welcome guests, pack food parcels and lead sessions, having people at the heart of our work who understand and have experienced the issues people are facing is invaluable.

## OUR WOMEN'S DROP-IN SESSIONS



Covid couldn't stop these sessions!

“The sessions keep me sane! In lockdown it was a time to interact with people and take your mind off difficult things. It's a few minutes where you can be yourself. I'm a mum of three girls and the hair care session helped me a lot as I can now do the girls' hair myself.”  
- Rashidats

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR OUR WOMEN'S DROP-IN SESSIONS

We will:

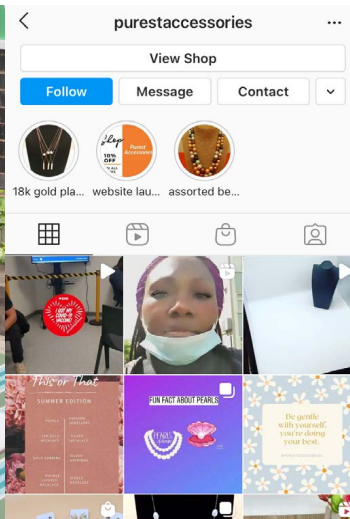
- start having our meetings in person again when restrictions allow

- encourage new guests to take part in the sessions and share their skills

- support more women to start volunteering with us.



# DEVELOPING DREAMS TOGETHER



## OUR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME



This is another new project that developed off the passion and determination many of the women showed in our drop-in sessions.

We found some of the women who shared their skills already use them to support their income while others had plans to develop a small business for themselves once their immigration status was sorted.

Between six and 10 women meet for a couple of hours a week to receive general coaching on starting a business and personal support relevant to their specific skills.

For some women the sessions have allowed them to access the advice they need to take the next steps in making their business a reality. For others it has been recognising the

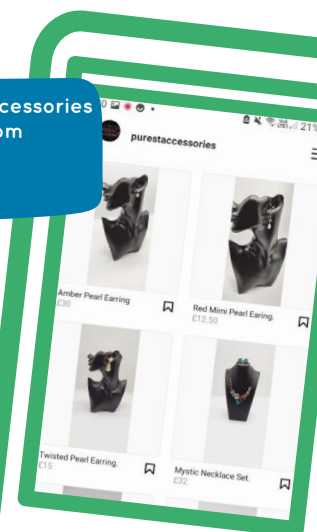
value of their expertise, time spent investing in themselves and a glimpse of what they are capable of achieving.

During the pandemic the group continued to meet online and are looking forward to taking their next steps forward together soon.

Sayo already had plans to turn her talent at making jewellery and wigs into a business when she joined our sessions. Sayo said:

“I love making accessories like earrings, necklaces and bracelets and am a business-minded person so I was really interested to know more. The sessions helped me plan and start my business properly. It was really insightful and I came out of it with a strategy.”

Sayo is now selling her accessories and wigs off Instagram from @purestaccessories and @purestwigs



## WHAT'S NEXT FOR OUR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

We will:

- recruit volunteer business mentors to provide greater support

- identify more people who are keen to benefit from the project

- develop the project into a 12 week programme.

# WHERE WE ARE

The pandemic dramatically increased the number of people we support and changed how we went about our work. We were able to do so much so quickly thanks to volunteers, partner organisations and, of course, a significant increase in financial support and expenditure. Our accounts are still being independently audited and will be shared in a print version of this report later in the year.



## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Our income grew exponentially during the pandemic thanks to a leap in individual donations being matched by funding from several different organisations. In line with our income, our expenditure grew as we spent funds on vital food supplies, storage and logistic systems. We have been able to employ new staff to lead volunteer teams and make sure everyone we support gets the best possible service from us.

## PARTNERS

Over the year we extended our partnerships with existing bodies, in particular Southwark Council, who generously provided more suitable accommodation for our food bank operation and head office. We also extended our partnerships with new funders to make sure the support our team provides is sustainable.

## PEOPLE POWER

Before Covid we had a small team of around 10 volunteers. Since lockdown began more than 100 people have chosen to volunteer with us. The team is now managed by a paid volunteer co-ordinator.





# SPRING RENEWAL

With the exhilaration of growing so fast comes the responsibility of being there for the many people who come through our doors. We know that a return to normal means hunger for too many people in Southwark and across the country.

The amount of support that flooded in from new volunteers, businesses, organisations and other charities has helped us build a stronger, flourishing community. We will use this support to help us tackle more food poverty than ever before.



## SPROUTING NEW WAYS TO HELP

### TWO SPRING PANTRIES

We have funds for two new pantries which will open in Southwark and Havering.

Pantries are a first step away from using a food bank and charge a small membership fee.

We are currently looking for venues to host them.

### DEVELOPING A CASH-FIRST APPROACH

We are studying a pilot project in Scotland exploring ways to make sure people can access any money they are entitled to.

That includes hardship payments, challenging decisions, managing debt repayments and finding cheaper deals on utility bills.

### SPRING MEANS GARDENING

We have funding to begin a gardening club in Southwark.

The project aims to reduce isolation, improve well-being and provide fresh vegetables for our food bank.

## GROWING STRONG ROOTS

### A CHARITY FOR ALL SEASONS

To make sure we can keep supporting more people and improving the services we do provide we have to make sure we are sustainable.

We will continue to make ourselves more efficient by using our new food bank database, our digitised volunteer application process and, now we have staff, a new HR system.

We will keep introducing new systems and processes to make our work simpler.

### SECURING OUR FUTURE

We have been lucky enough to be successful in many of our applications for funds from trusts, grants and public bodies but many of them are very short term.

We are now able to apply for more funding and aim to secure the long-term future of all of our work.

Doing this will free our time and mean we can dedicate more of it to the people who need our help.



# THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT HAPPEN

We are able to help so many people because of the dedication and kindness of our volunteers. As coronavirus raged they gave up their time to make sure everyone who needed a food parcel received one, our holiday club could run and we could move to our new home.

Here's why two of them are part of our community.



## CARLA

Carla is a mum of three and runs our food bank sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays and Fridays. Her ability to speak English, Portuguese and Spanish has been invaluable this year.

“I wanted to make a difference. For me, every day when I finish a session, I feel so happy to help somebody in my community. I discovered skills I didn't know I had. I feel more confident, happy and satisfied.”

## SARA

Sara is a freelance translator who volunteers for us in the warehouse on Tuesdays packing parcels and stocking shelves.

“Knowing that you're a little link in a chain that helps people survive another week is a really good feeling. And everyone here is so nice. Actually, that's a big part of why I enjoy coming here, all the staff, the other volunteers, the people who come to the foodbank, everyone is really awesome!”





# THANK YOU

**We want to thank every single person who made a donation to us. Faced with a crisis we could never have imagined your generosity helped us feed more people than we knew we ever could.**

Our Christmas Hamper appeal raised more than £11,000 and meant we could provide more than 250 Christmas hampers packed with a turkey, all the trimmings, treats and toys. We're especially grateful to Ammot Road Baptist Church for their £500 donation. Notre Dame Catholic High school made us hampers to share while PACT and Salvation Army gave us a huge donation of presents for children.

Local cafes, restaurants, bars and shops donated incredible prizes to our foodie raffle, organised by our volunteer Poppy, which raised more than £5,000. Old Spike Roastery continued to support us by bringing a van of donations from their customers.

Our corridors were filled with food when we received a visit from the 23rd Camberwell Scouts just before Christmas. And as soon as that was sorted a van arrived from The Charter School in Dulwich with just as much again.

And we can't thank enough the churches and organisations who shared their spaces with us. Thank you St Giles' Church, Amott Road Baptist Church, New Covenant Church, Four Square Church, St Paul's Church (Lorrimore Square) and Southern Housing.

We're also grateful to Stephen Carrick-Davies for his mentorship through the pandemic.



**Our visit from the 23rd Camberwell Scouts just before Christmas**

## BE PART OF SPRING

Together we can grow stronger and help more people escape food poverty.

### GIVE YOUR TIME

We're always looking for volunteers and have roles to suit everyone.

### BRING US FOOD

Every item of food we receive prevents hunger.

### DONATE MONEY

From buying fresh fruit and veg to funding our holiday club, your money improves the lives of our community.

[springcommunityhub.org.uk](https://springcommunityhub.org.uk)

