

# Good Company Strategy Renewal

2024 -2027



In our last strategic plan, we stated that we would be bold and innovative in our approach to tackling local poverty. Over the past three years, we have begun several new initiatives which show that it is possible to reduce the need for the foodbank, by offering people the practical and emotional support they need to get themselves out of poverty.

Yet we continue to see the effects of poverty every day in our foodbank centres and pantries - with too many people unable to afford food, energy and other basic essentials.

We are greatly encouraged by Surrey County Council signing our End Poverty Pledge as a demonstration of their commitment to taking action to tackle local poverty.

Our plan over the next three years is to encourage many more local organisations and individuals to join a movement which works together to prevent people falling into financial hardship and helping those that do, with a system of local support built around compassion, justice and hope.

Jonathan Lees  
Founder and Managing Director, Good Company

*Leading our community towards a poverty-free future,  
while supporting those who need our help.*

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## Our Vision

We envisage a poverty-free community, where

Consistent and coordinated advice is accessible to all

Local culture and policy is shaped by people with lived experience

Local resilience is rooted in strong community connections

## Our Values

Our strategy is delivered through our values, which underpin everything we do



### Compassion

Ensuring everyone experiencing financial hardship is treated with kindness and dignity

### Hope

Strengthening community support networks and building resilience

### Justice

Challenging unfair systems and attitudes that keep people in financial hardship

## Who we are

Good Company was established in 2022 and grew out of Epsom and Ewell Foodbank, founded in 2012 in response to local need.

Over the years, as food insecurity in our community has become more entrenched, we have developed long-term, creative solutions to local poverty.

Good Company aims to be a positive force for good, bringing people and organisations together in pursuit of our vision for a poverty-free future.

We are determined to ensure that everyone in our community can afford the essentials and has the opportunity to lead a good, fulfilling life.

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# Key Highlights 2021-2024

This summary of our highlights over the past 3 years shows the breadth of our work to prevent and alleviate poverty in our community.



We ran client surveys in 2022 and 2024 to hear from people about their experience of accessing the foodbank. We held focus groups with volunteers and clients before launching the Choose Your Food model in 2 of our centres



We trained over 300 volunteers and recruited to new volunteer roles to help with research, energy support and administration to increase our capacity.



We continued to provide intensive support based on the 6 Ps: Personal, Persistent, Proactive, Patient and Practical, delivering significant outcomes for clients experiencing complex issues in their lives.



We developed a participation strategy. We ran a second Poverty Truth Commission and established the Cost of the School Day project in 6 local schools.



We increased our research to build up a bank of evidence on the impact of our work and insight into what is helping people out of poverty.



We opened Epsom Pantry in 2022 and set up a Steering Group, a timetable of community activities and a Pantry Savings Scheme. We opened Banstead Pantry in 2024.



Approximately 413 Ukrainian refugees and 40 households from other countries of origin have received support since March 2022. We set up a Help Desk to provide one-off advice service for refugees and asylum seekers not receiving support from a Support Worker.



We worked with over 30 Referral Partners to build a network of 3 Advice Cafes providing coordinated advice, information and support to local residents.

# What we've achieved since the launch of our last Strategy in 2021

We have continued to help people through short-term crises, while supporting those with more complex needs, or those who are stuck on a low income to find sustainable ways to manage and increase their resources.

We now use the term **Supportive Interactions** to show our impact beyond the provision of food, better describing the person-centred approach needed to support people to move out of hardship.

We have developed an **effective evaluation framework** that demonstrates our impact, amplifies the views of people with lived experience and informs our strategic direction.

We have increased our focus on **prevention**, setting up projects like the Energy Support and Pantry Savings Scheme to build people's financial and emotional resilience.

We have **collaborated more** with referral partners to improve access to holistic support and build a network of Advice Cafes, providing advice and support to people before they reach crisis point.

We have **increased the involvement of people with lived experience** across all our work, knowing they are the best placed to help us find sustainable and effective solutions to hardship.

## 36,000 Supportive Interactions a year

Any significant interaction with a client or member that provides financial, practical or emotional support or assistance, or that offers people an opportunity to actively participate in the mission of Good Company through participation or volunteering



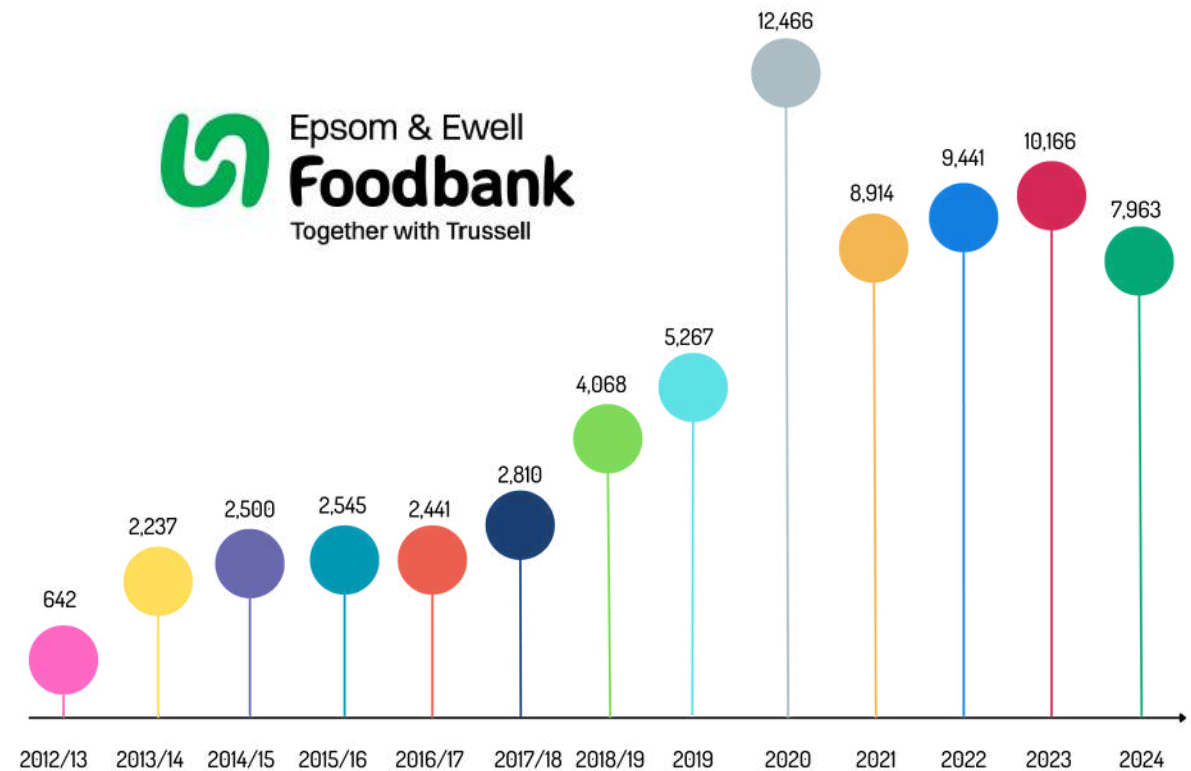
# What next? Continuing to reduce the need for the foodbank

Longer periods of financial crisis and increasingly complex situations, make it more difficult to support people to escape poverty. This means there is a tension between us 'filling the gaps' in statutory services yet not wanting to create a reliance on our projects.

We have worked closely with referral partners to address the root causes of foodbank use. We believe this contributed to a 20% decline in demand in 2024 accounted for by a reduction in the number of people accessing the foodbank over 3 times a month (from 111 in 2023 to 88 in 2024), as well as a reduction in the average number of vouchers going to these households (from 12.7 in 2023 to 10.2 in 2024)

At the same time, there was only a small reduction - around 4% - in the number of people using the foodbank once or twice over the course of the year, suggesting that the foodbank continues to be a vital source of support for people experiencing an acute or short-term crisis.

We will continue to identify frequent visitors to the foodbank and work with referral partners to address the root causes of foodbank use.



**Growth in foodbank use at Epsom and Ewell foodbank**



“ Persuade partners to look up from the immediacy of crisis support and focus on prevention ”

Helen Barnard,  
Director of Policy, Research and Impact at  
Trussell

# Reaching people 'upstream'

We know from Trussell's Hunger in the UK report that 14% of all UK adults have experienced food insecurity but only 7% accessed support from an ecosystem of food aid across the UK\*.

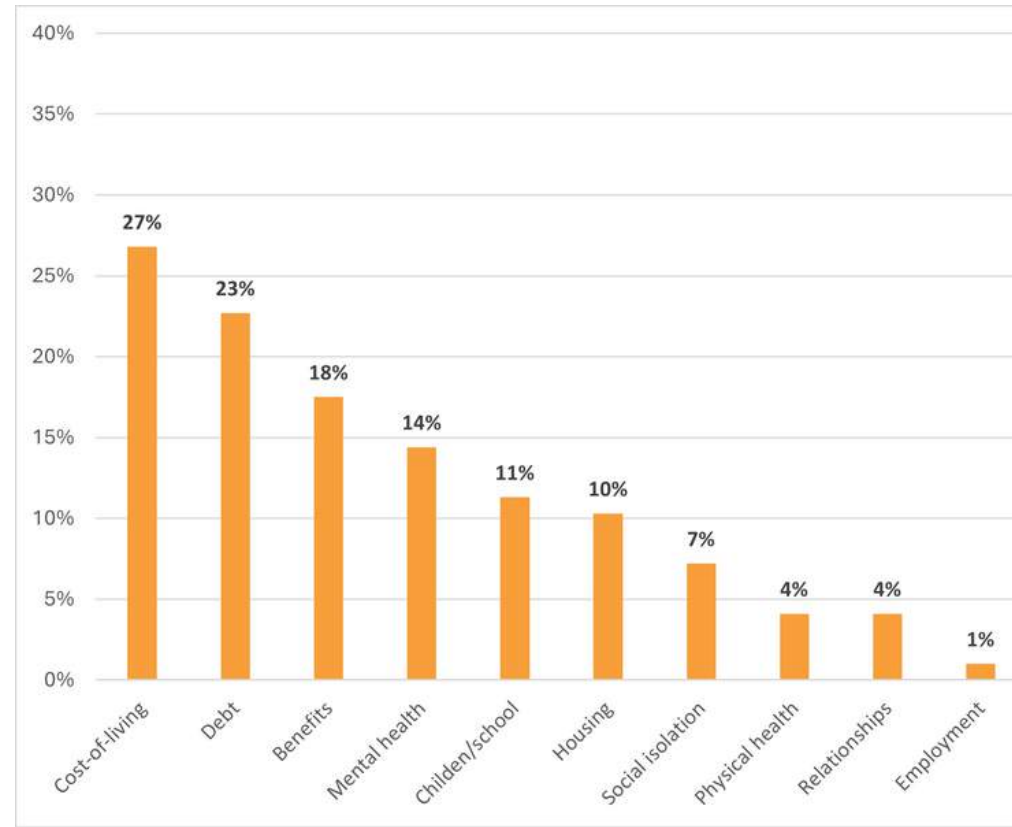
People who access our foodbank often say that they are not getting all the support they need.

There is need for us to reach people 'upstream' to prevent people falling into crisis.

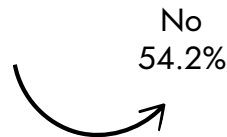
We will do more to raise awareness of the support available through Advice Cafes and work with partners to set up a coordinated online referral system to better support people at risk of or experiencing financial hardship.

We will continue to use our impact and evaluation data to better understand the local context and use our evidence base to advocate for a more effective and compassionate local system of support.

Requests for additional support at Advice Cafes April to July 2024

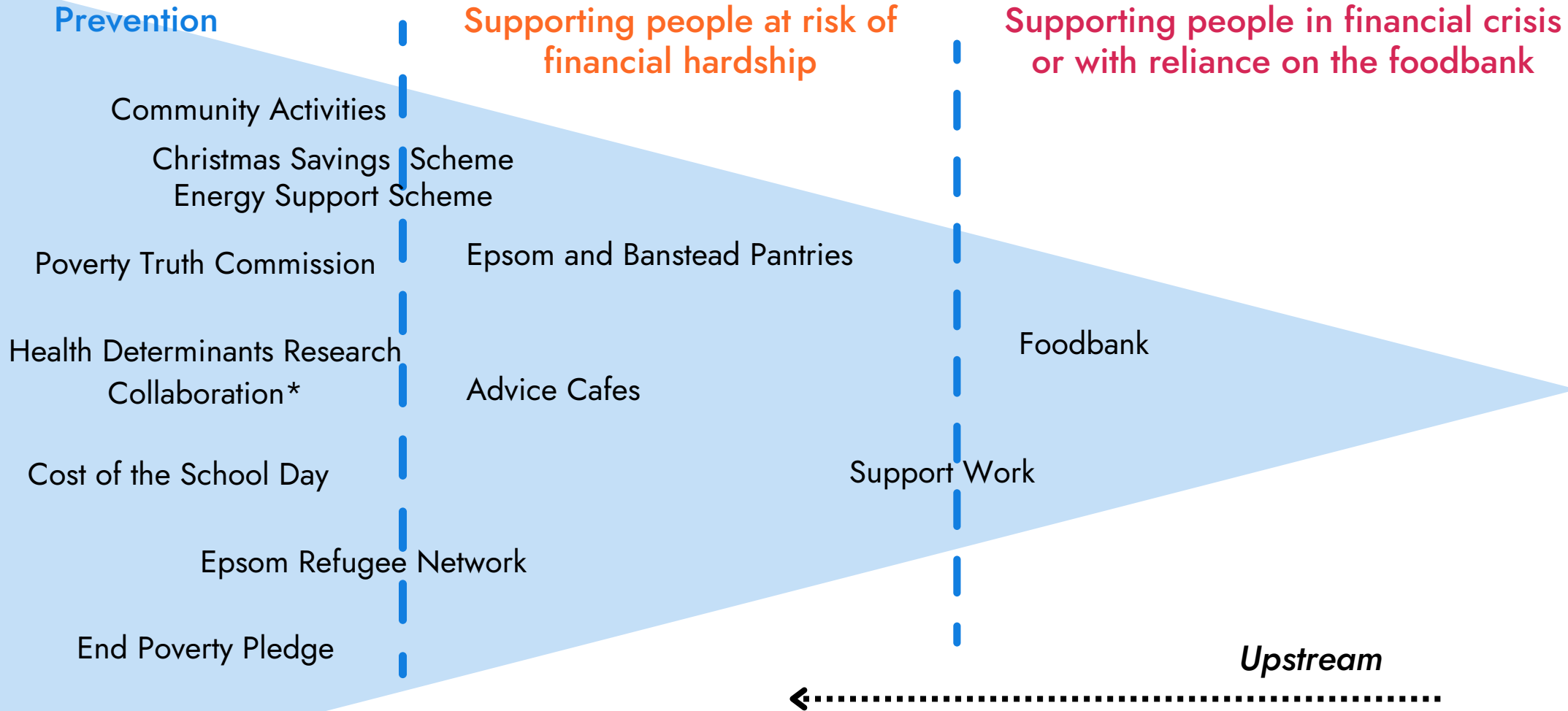


Epsom town centre outreach 2024: Do you know where to go for advice and support if needed?



\*Trussell's Hunger in the UK report June 2023

# How we will support our Community Together



Prevention is far more effective and less costly in the long-term

\*Surrey Health Determinant Research Collaboration brings together experts from the council, the University of Surrey, the voluntary and community sector to ensure a research-led and evidence-based approach to meeting health priorities

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## Compassion

We will continue to provide holistic support through our Foodbank and Pantries.

We will implement an initial support assessment across all our projects to help us to effectively signpost and refer people for additional support.

We will work with our partners to identify people at risk of financial hardship.

We will promote Advice Cafés at local schools, GP surgeries, libraries and local events to help people access advice and information before they reach crisis.

We will provide training to frontline referrers and raise awareness of poverty, change attitudes and create a more compassionate local support

## Hope

We will publicise and run free community events and activities aimed at growing people's skills and capabilities.

We will continue to run projects with a longer-term approach like the Christmas Savings Scheme and the Energy Support Scheme to help people to build their financial resilience.

We will continue to provide Support Work based on the 6 Ps (Personal, Persistent, Positive, Proactive, Patient and Practical) to help people to move forward in their lives.

We will provide support for EERN households to improve access to education and skills for employment.

## Justice

We will implement the recommendations made by our PTC working groups around Mental Health, Domestic Abuse and Joined Up Community Support.

We will expand the Cost of the School Day project to local primary schools.

We will grow participation within Good Company, with client action plans for support, a Banstead Pantry Steering Group and recruiting Trustees with lived experience.

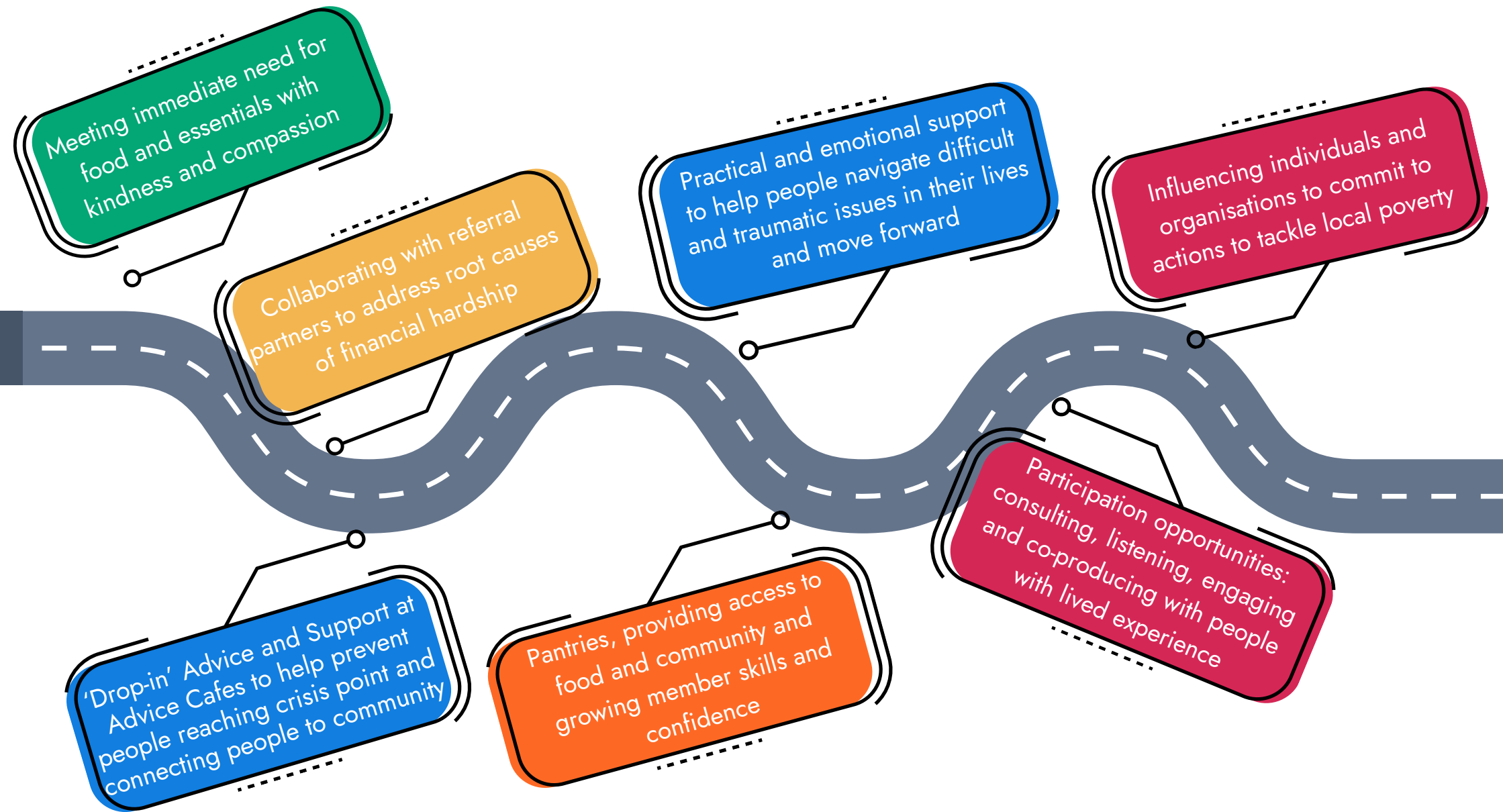
We will support and resource local organisations to grow their participatory approaches.

We will partner with Trussell affiliated foodbanks across Surrey to campaign to #endpovertysurrey

We will work with partners to deliver the Health Determinants Research Collaboration



# How we help people to journey out of financial hardship



# Key Priority 1: Increasing participation and creating a unified system for Good Company's Support Work.

We aim to be the **voice alongside** people with lived experience, as they determine their own path and contribute their own skills to help us towards our vision.

In-depth interviews with supported clients in 2024 showed that Good Company's support work plays a vital role in helping people navigate difficult and traumatic periods in their lives. However, In recent years we have seen the demand for support grow alongside the complexity of the issues people experiencing financial hardship face.

To **help to manage the demand** for support, we have decided to create a **unified system** of support across all our projects, to ensure equity and to increase client **participation** in personalised support plans.

We will also recruit Trustees with lived experience and set up a Steering Group at Banstead Pantry.



“When you talk to them, there's always an answer, it can be sorted out. It's always been a very calm way of doing it as well. I like that, I respond better to that.”

Support Work client, Impact Report 2023



“The biggest difference is to my mental health. I used to sit and cry. Now my mental health feels better, because I don't have those pressures.”

Support Work client, Impact Report 2023

## Key priority 2: Prevention; creating a strong local 'social safety net'

We know that people experiencing financial hardship are more likely to suffer isolation and can find it difficult to access or connect with community spaces.

We have seen the positive impact of the Pantry in **reducing social isolation** with 87% of members saying that they feel more connected to the community since becoming a member [Epsom Pantry Survey 2024]. The PTC has also created a strong peer to peer support network.

The majority of respondents to the Refugee Network client consultation in 2024 said that they would like to meet new people and spend more time with British people.

One of the aims of the Advice Cafés is to **connect people to existing community activities** at those venues.

We will continue to run a range of community activities aimed at growing capabilities and building resilience. This will provide a **stronger local community 'social safety net'**.



“ Honestly, I can say that every opportunity, conversation and laugh I have had with the PTC group has made me a strong person and I feel really loved and valued ”

Yssy, PTC Community Commissioner

“ Being part of the lovely community. If I have any worries, I can always come and talk to somebody. ”

Pantry Member, Impact Survey 2024



## Key priority 3: Influencing others to #EndPovertySurrey

We aim to influence our stakeholders to take 'new' or 'different' actions aimed at reducing local poverty.

So, we will continue to develop our End Poverty Pledge campaign, to **build a movement** of organisations and individuals committed to doing what they can to reduce poverty and improve the lives of people experiencing hardship.

We will provide **leadership and support** by producing resources to equip local organisations to adopt and prioritise anti-poverty strategies.

People with lived experience are helping to shape what we do. Over the past 3 years 120 unique people have been involved in Good Company's participatory work.

We will implement PTC recommendations and **increase the number of people co-producing what we do**. This will demonstrate the effectiveness of co-produced local policy changes, which we hope others will mirror within the context of their organisations.



Do you agree that everyone in our community should be able to afford life's essentials?

Take the Pledge!

good company supporting our community

Charity No. 1197493

A large graphic on a blue background. At the top, there are three colorful question marks (yellow, red, green). Below them is a white speech bubble containing the text "Do you agree that everyone in our community should be able to afford life's essentials?". Underneath the text are three icons: a shopping basket with groceries, a credit card, and a first aid kit. Below the speech bubble, the text "Take the Pledge!" is written in a large, black, cursive font. At the bottom right, the "good company" logo is displayed, with "good" in a large, bold, lowercase font and "company" in a smaller, lowercase font below it. To the right of the logo, the text "supporting our community" is written in a small, uppercase font. Below the logo, the text "Charity No. 1197493" is written in a small, uppercase font.

# What we will do over the next 3 years

We will reduce high dependency on the foodbank (people visiting more than 3 times in 6 months) by

**1/3**



We will reduce the number of clients not receiving all the support they need by

**10%**

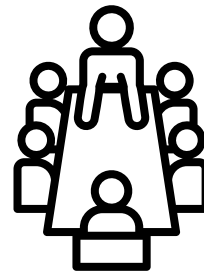
We will engage **60** people with lived experience in co-production



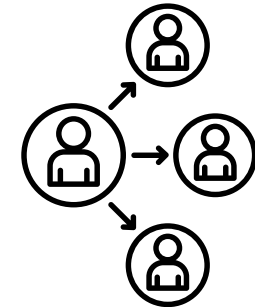
We will increase the number of people accessing Advice Cafes by

**50%**

We will recruit **2** trustees with lived experience



We will establish an online coordinated referral system



We will produce an online library of case studies



We will increase client skills and capabilities

We will influence organisations to commit to End Poverty Pledge actions by 2025 and another 50 by 2027.

**50**