

# STATS & STORIES



2024 - 2025

# WE CAN'T FIX EVERY PROBLEM. WE CAN SORT DINNER.

**This year** saw many changes within St Mark's Meals. Although staff and premises have changed, we remain committed to providing meals to our partners across the city. Over the years, we have introduced teen recipe cards, created a new recipe, fundraised, campaigned and made tutorial videos as well as packed and delivered over 7,000 meal boxes.

We have seen an 18% increase in demand for our meal boxes in the last year. Whether you have given to us financially, volunteered, or cheered us on, we are so grateful. It's because of this that we can continue to ensure that children who would have otherwise gone hungry are fed. Together, we can build a more caring community where every child has enough to eat.



**The most** recent MK Community Foundation Vital Signs report 2025 has shown an increase over the last year in the number of children living in poverty in Milton Keynes. At St Mark's Meals, we have seen this reflected in the demand for orders and communications with our partners in how many families in our city are struggling.

Shockingly, and yet not unsurprisingly, the Food Foundation food security statistics for the UK have shown that 18% of households with children experience food insecurity. 41.9% of households receiving Universal Credit were food insecure, while 10.6% of households not receiving Universal Credit were food insecure. These last statistics interest us as we have seen a rise in those needing meal boxes from working families not receiving benefits. We have worked alongside MK Community Foundation on a campaign highlighting invisible poverty to help alert our partners that food poverty could affect anyone within their community.



Families that are struggling to feed their families due to lack of money or jobs. This eases the burden for them.

Family Support Worker - 2025



**32%**

**OF CHILDREN  
IN MILTON  
KEYNES ARE  
LIVING IN  
POVERTY**

\*According to the latest MK Community Foundation Vital Signs report 2025

# THIS YEAR.

Meals Boxes packed & delivered

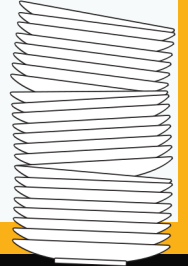


7556



which provides  
**30,224**

Plates of  
delicious  
dinner



**29**

**NEW**

partner  
schools,  
family centres,  
and community  
hubs

total  
partners



**139**

most ordered box

1,330 TUNA  
meal boxes  
ordered



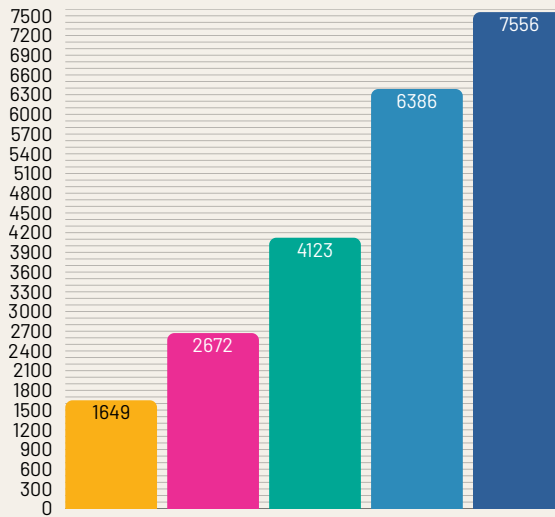
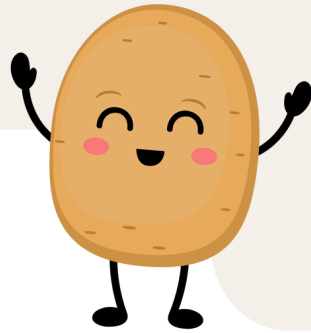
most  
popular box

44% of schools  
reported  
Bolognese as a  
favourite

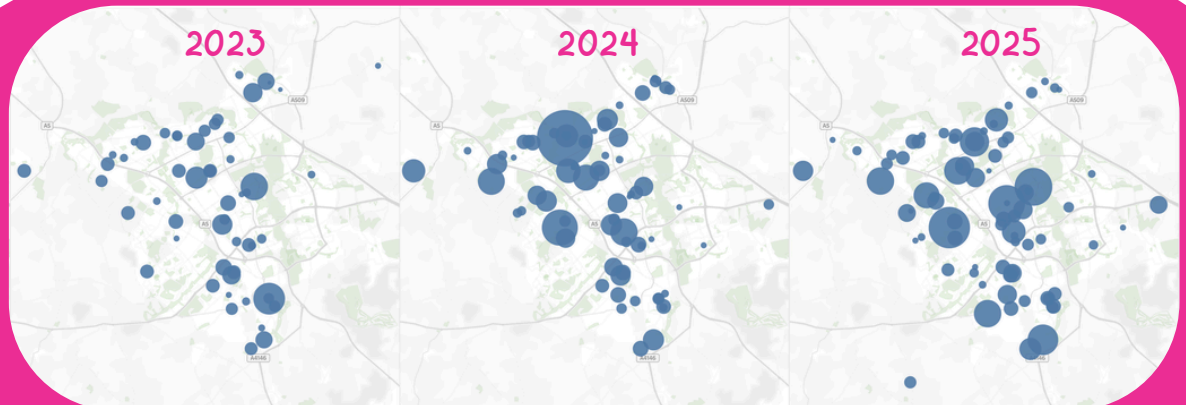


# HOW WE HAVE GROWN.

We increased our partners and packed and delivered more meal boxes every year. We suspect that the next year would follow the same trend.



**We partnered** with 29 new partners this year. Most of this year's new partners are preschools and nurseries, and we're certainly making a splash across the city; however, there is still much work to do to ensure no child is missing out on a box when needed. Each setting is very different, and this year we have been working on resources to help our partners continue to spot when a child may need one of our meal boxes






**A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE  
IMPACT ST MARKS MEALS IS HAVING.**

# PARTNER SURVEY 2025.



We asked our partners about their experiences working with hungry children and St Mark's Meals. Here's a summary of their responses.



-  **98% of those** responding to the survey said that the cost of living was the primary reason for needing a meal box. Staff give out meal boxes to children during difficult times, and the results show that families living in temporary accommodation, needing support for the holidays, waiting for universal credit, sudden job loss and family circumstances were also high up in the reasons for needing a meal box
-  **We asked** our partners if they have seen a rise in food poverty, and 72% have seen an increase in this need. Partners are reporting that more and more families are struggling to make ends meet and the need for additional support from St Mark's Meals, Community Larders and The Food Bank are becoming more prevalent.
-  **Parents are** often going without food to make sure their children have dinner. Schools often find that families can be too embarrassed to ask for a meal box as there is still perceived stigma and judgement attached to living in food poverty. Many partners are working alongside families to help break down these barriers and some schools are seeing that with open communication they can ensure fewer children are going to bed hungry.



Father had not been paid for 3 months so money was extremely tight. We provided meal boxes to support the family until the wages back pay was resolved.

Family Support Worker - 2025



-  **Families who** have taken a meal box home have fed back that they have enjoyed making the meal together. Our Meals are easing the burden and providing vital support during difficult times.
-  **Our boxes** have been particularly beneficial to families who have found themselves in temporary accommodation. When there is so much uncertainty our meal boxes not only provided a hot meal, but a feeling of stability and care during difficult times.

# NEW IN 2025.

## SAUSAGE HOTPOT

Our latest recipe was released late last spring and has become a firm favourite with our partners. Before releasing it, we asked a selection of children to try it and asked for their feedback. It was a great way to get children involved in the process and give them ownership of the recipe.



## NEW PREMISES



For the last 3 years, we have been lucky to share warehouse space with other charities. We are so grateful for this opportunity to work alongside other charities, but have now taken the plunge to have our own office, warehouse/ and packing area in the same space. As we grow it's vital for us as a team to work more closely together. This does come with a cost and we are working hard to make sure we are able to fund it.

## TEEN CARDS



We have been acutely aware that our recipe cards were spot on for primary school-aged children, but not necessarily age-appropriate for children in secondary and beyond. We worked with designers to create a new look and video tutorials for students to follow on how to cook meals for older children who take a box home.



# GIVING IT AWAY.

OUR NETWORK OF MEALS HUBS



**St Mark's Meals** makes such a difference here in MK, we wanted to resource charities and churches in other areas to do the same. Our hubs are operating at small scale without much input from us since they began. Using our initial training and systems they're creating connections with local schools and continuing to provide them with Meals boxes for local children who need them.

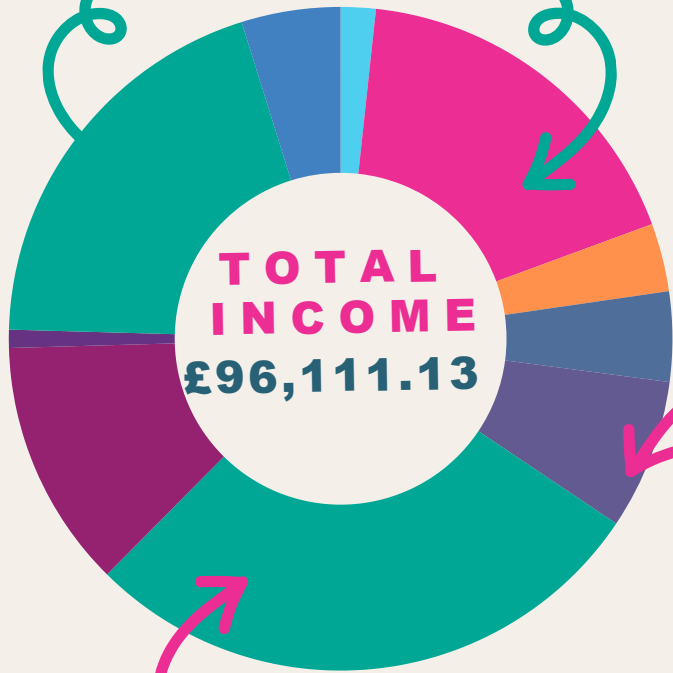


# FINANCES.

## ST MARK'S MEALS - INCOME.

Monthly Givers

Corporate Givers



Grants

**We rely** heavily on the generosity of individuals and corporations to help generate the income to keep up with demand. Grants are also a large source of our revenue, and over the coming year, we'll be looking to increase this avenue of income.



A student was hungry and becoming irritable in lessons, once we found out they were hungry, we provided food and it seems to have helped loads alongside breakfast support.

*Secondary School - 2025*



Gift aid makes a difference so do tick the gift aid box when donating!



# FINANCES.

## ST MARK'S MEALS - EXPENDITURE.

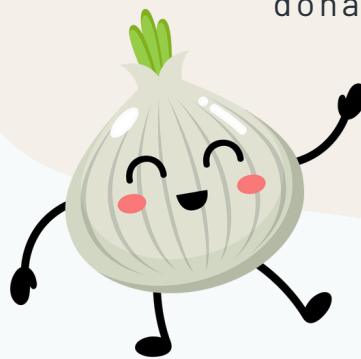


Warehouse/office

Food

Salaries

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE**  
**£102,425.14**



**This year's deficit** is £6,214.01. We have spent close to 40K on food, which is largely the reason for the overspend. Food is the essential element of our support, and it is no surprise that as demand increases, so do our food costs. We have contacted supermarkets and wholesalers for financial assistance or donations of specific foods, but unfortunately, we haven't received any responses.

**We also need** to increase our income to pay for the new premises. We are incredibly grateful for the support we have received, and we have successfully applied for grants to help cover some of the cost of the premises. This year's goal is to stabilise our income by increasing all avenues of income, especially our corporate giving and grant applications.

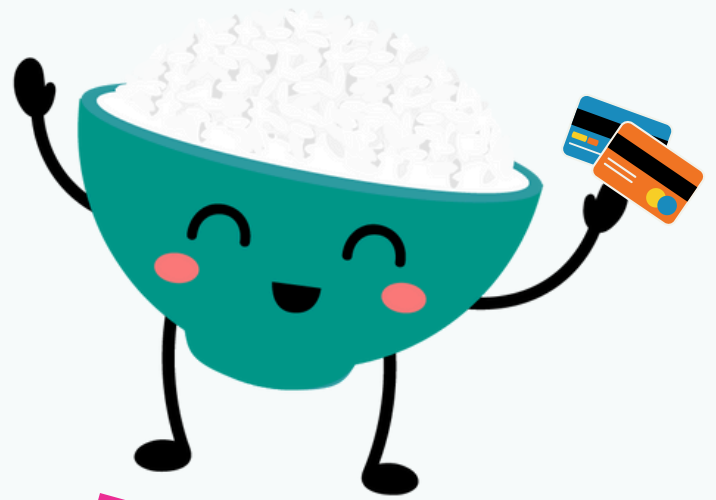
# THANKYOUS.

ITS A TEAM EFFORT.



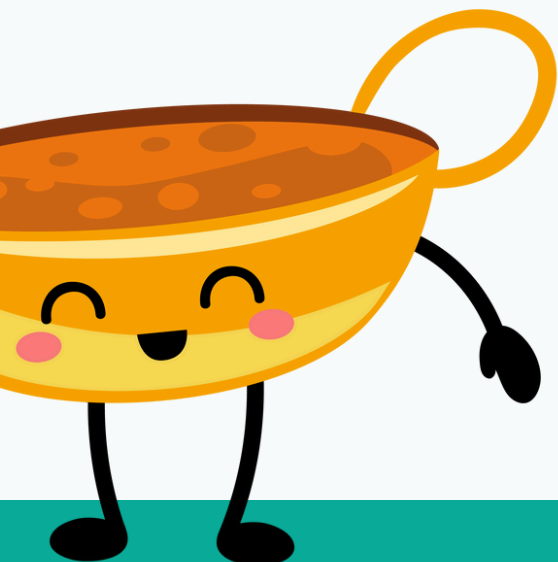
VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

To those who financially support us, whether regularly or on a one-off basis, a huge heartfelt thank you. Your generosity is providing relief to families across the city of MK.



# THANK YOU

**Volunteers** are the key to being able to keep up with the increase of orders. Our fantastic team of volunteers pack and deliver meal boxes across the city and we can't thank them enough!!



If you have packed meal boxes, run a marathon, fundraised in any way, or cheered us on, THANK YOU. Your support is very much appreciated, and thank you for being onboard with our mission.

**THANK YOU** *from us!*



Becky

Rachel

Esther

Jo

Paul

**SO NO  
CHILD GOES  
TO BED  
HUNGRY.**