

Information Partner Handbook

February 2025



Summary

This handbook provides the critical information and resources for those in Edinburgh who are looking to support those in need but aren't making referrals directly to the foodbank. We know it isn't right that anyone should be left hungry or living in extreme poverty, and whilst we work for long-term change, in the meantime our foodbank provides emergency food and compassionate, dignified support to people locked in crisis.

We operate on a referral basis – whereby referral agencies who are experts in understanding and supporting their clients can use their professional judgement to assess and determine need and can raise a voucher in the system for the client. We're looking to ensure that those being referred to the foodbank are getting the best support in addition to their food to help them escape crisis.

If you are working or engaging with those in need of food support but don't have the capacity to support them yourself, then this handbook is for you. It goes over what resources we would recommend, some details about the foodbanks and our strategy.

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WHAT ARE INFORMATION PARTNERS

At Edinburgh Food Project, a key focus of our work has been trying to ensure that everyone coming to our foodbank is being offered the most relevant support to address the problems they are facing. Food support alone is an insufficient solution to someone facing poverty, they provide immediate relief but do not address the causes of someone's crisis. If we want to meaningfully help people, then food parcels must come alongside proper support to ensure they are receiving all they're entitled to. As such, we now have two tiers of our referral system. One with those organisations specialising in delivering this support, Referral Partners, and the other who can help direct those in need towards this help, Information Partners.

Who should be issuing referrals?

We want those who can provide ongoing and meaningful support to people to be the pathway through which people access foodbanks. In the majority of cases, those coming to the food bank for the first time will be entitled to additional benefits or cash-first resources. As such, an ideal position to do so would be welfare rights and benefits support workers. Support workers and social workers, make up the majority of our referral agents and are well placed to make referrals as they're in regular contact with people in need to build an understanding of their situation. All referrers also attend training to make sure they're aware of what the foodbank is providing, how referrals should be made, and how food vouchers can best fit into the work they do.

Typical Referral Partner Roles	Typical Information Partner Roles
Welfare Rights Advisor Income Maximisation Advisor Debt Advisor Community Link Worker Housing Officer Justice Worker Support Worker	Receptionist Administrator GP Church Minister Volunteer

If your role is more suited for making referrals yourself, then please get in touch with us via info@edinburghfoodproject.org and ask about signing up for a referral webinar and we can get in touch with further details.

Role of Information Partners

There are many organisations who are regularly working with or encountering people who would benefit from help including food vouchers, but are not best placed to be offering this help themselves. In order to make the process as simple as possible for those in need, we have put together a list of useful resources that you can forward people on to all of whom offer really great support locally in Edinburgh:

SIGNPOSTING RESOURCES

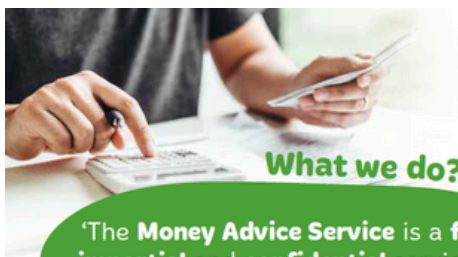
The following resources provide a great starting point for helping people out in Edinburgh:

Edinburgh Food Project - Money Advice Service:

Our internal trained debt and welfare rights advisers who provide comprehensive, tailored support for issues with benefits, budgeting and debt, including checking entitlement to benefits and that people are accessing everything they are entitled to. This service seeks to help people with their immediate and underlying problems to reduce/eliminate their need for food bank assistance and build their financial resilience for the future.

They are also referral partners able to issue food vouchers where this would benefit the client. Everyone who calls the EFP number looking for a food voucher will be directed to the Money Advice Service who will chat to them, issue an e-voucher which can be used immediately (if foodbank is open) and offered an information gathering appointment. These are where people are offered the full range of available money advice alongside ongoing food parcels if they are looking for continued food support. Through doing so, in the first four months of 2024 our team has saved people **over £200,000** through their services, considerably more than the value of food parcels alone.

You can contact the Money Advice Service via phone at **0131 444 0030** and pressing **option 2**, or via email at **moneyadvice@edinburghfoodproject.org**



What we do?

'The **Money Advice Service** is a **free**, **impartial** and **confidential** service, tailored to meet your needs.'

We are **fully trained debt** and **welfare rights** advisers who can work with you to help decide upon the best options for solving your benefit, budgeting and debt issues.

We provide comprehensive, tailored support and advice of the best solutions to help with your household debts and with finding ways to manage your household budget better.

We can also check your entitlement to benefits and ensure you're claiming everything you're entitled to.



The **Money Advice Service** is a holistic service, providing **specialist advice** and **support** with:

- Personal Debt
- Applying for benefits
- Budgeting
- Energy Advice
- Employability
- Accessing Mental Health and wellbeing Services
- Applying for Grants
- Food bank referrals
- Clothing bank referrals



'We can also **help with applying for grants** for living costs/furniture and furnishings.'

07956 300 121

moneyadvice@edinburghfoodproject.org



Worrying about Money - IFAN:

Your go to resource for financial advice and support available in Edinburgh. This is available here as both an interactive [website](#) and as a [leaflet](#). This is the most straightforward way of finding relevant Edinburgh-based support which focuses on maximising income and access to existing financial entitlements. All of the named services are reliable, are able to make food voucher referrals, and have agreed to be listed as a go-to resource. The Independent food aid network have co-produced these with councils and stakeholders like ourselves across the UK and it is translated across a range of languages. Free printed copies of the leaflets can be ordered for free [here](#).

Worrying About Money?

Follow these steps to find out where to get help in Edinburgh

View this leaflet online

www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/edinburgh

Step 1: What's the problem?	Step 2: What are some options?	Step 3: Where can I get help?
I suddenly have no money <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost job/reduced hours Lost money/unexpected expense Disaster (e.g. flood or fire) Relationship breakdown Money stopped (e.g. failed a medical) Sanctioned - see option 5 <p>See options 1 2 5 6</p>	1 Scottish Welfare Fund People on low incomes may be able to get a crisis grant from the Council. This is a payment to help you cope during an emergency or disaster, or due to unexpected expenses. Crisis grants do not have to be paid back (not a loan).	<p>Each of these services offer free and confidential advice</p> <p>The Advice Shop Advice on welfare rights, benefits, crisis grants and all types of debt 0131 220 2360 advice.shop@edinburgh.gov.uk www.edinburgh.gov.uk/advice-shop Help with options: 1 2 3 4 5 6</p> <p>Citizens Advice Edinburgh Advice on benefits, debt, money, housing and more 0131 510 5510 www.citizensadviceedinburgh.org.uk Help with options: 1 2 3 4 5 6</p> <p>Community Help & Advice Initiative Help with welfare rights, debt and housing advice 0131 442 2100 chai@chaiedinburgh.org.uk www.chaiedinburgh.org.uk Help with options: 1 2 3 4 5 6</p> <p>Granton Information Centre Advice on welfare rights, housing, rent arrears, debt and money 0131 551 2459 or 0131 552 0458 info@gic.org.uk Help with options: 1 2 3 4 5 6</p> <p>Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis grants to cover the cost of an emergency 0131 529 5299 welfarefundteam@edinburgh.gov.uk www.edinburgh.gov.uk/scottishwelfarefund</p>
I am waiting on a benefit payment/decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made a new claim for benefit Benefit payment is delayed Waiting for a benefit decision <p>See options 1 4</p>	4 Benefit Advance If you have made a new claim for benefit and are in financial hardship while you wait for your first payment, you may be able to get an advance to afford things like rent or food. It's important to get advice before taking out an advance. Benefit advances must be paid back, and the money will be taken from your future benefit payments (a loan).	
My money doesn't stretch far enough <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding between food/fuel/mobile credit Low income or zero hours contract Statutory Sick Pay too low to cover costs Not sure if eligible for support Change of circumstance (e.g. new baby/bereavement/illness/left partner) <p>See options 1 2</p>	5 Hardship Payment If you have been sanctioned, you may be able to request a hardship payment from the Jobcentre. Hardship payments are not always paid immediately, and they're not available to everyone. Hardship payments of Universal Credit need to be paid back (a loan), but hardship payments of Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment Support Allowance do not (not a loan).	
I have debt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent or Council Tax arrears Gas or electricity Credit or store cards Personal loans and overdrafts Owe friends and family Benefit repayments <p>See option 3</p>	6 Challenge a Decision You can challenge a benefit decision if your benefit has been stopped / sanctioned / reduced / refused or you have been overpaid. Most benefit decisions need to be challenged within one month.	
3 Debt Advice Debt can happen to anyone. Free advice and support can help you find ways to manage your debts and reduce how much you pay each month.	2 Maximise Your Income Anyone who is struggling financially can get a benefit check and speak to an advisor for free and confidential advice. A benefit check can ensure that you are receiving all the money you're entitled to, especially if your circumstances have changed recently. Speaking to an advisor could also help with managing gas and electricity bills and make sure you're not missing out on things like school clothing grants or free school meals.	

Other Support

Department for Work and Pensions Entitlement information www.gov.uk	Home Energy Scotland Energy advice 0808 808 2282 www.homeenergyscotland.org	Shelter Housing advice 0808 800 4444 scotland.shelter.org.uk	Breathing Space Mental health support 0800 83 85 87 www.breathingspace.scot	One Way In Housing support 0131 603 0400 referrals@edinburghvhs.co.uk	Social Security Scotland Crisis Grant 0800 182 2222 mygov.scot/benefits
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Updated on: 13/03/24

The Crisis Support Edinburgh Guide - October 2023:

Put together by the Health and Social Care Partnership, this is a community information database that contains a long list of available services in Edinburgh across a range of areas as part of their 'Connect Here Directory'. It includes short summaries of their work, contact details, and opening times. This list gives a big range of available options, but given it's scale we recommend double checking specific details. This can be accessed [here](#)

Introduction	
In this edition of the Crisis Guide for professionals we list services that support an individual in crisis.	
03	Alphabetical Index
06	Abuse
06	Carers
07	Clothing
07	Baby Clothing Bank
07	Clothing Bank
07	Interview Clothing
07	Disability Services
08	Employability
09	Food
09	Foodbanks
09	Basic Food Bank
09	Edinburgh Food Project
10	North East Edinburgh

Free and Low-cost Food list:

[Available here](#), this is designed by Edinburgh Food Project to provide a complete list of food-provision resources available in addition to our foodbanks. The Low-Cost list shows all Edinburgh pantries and their costs (from £2-6), an ideal resource for those who are not in immediate crisis but are limited by a low-income as this enables greater choice and dignity than a food parcel and is designed for regular access contrary to food vouchers.

Free Food resources don't require referrals and are where anyone is able to immediately access food in some form - this includes takeaway hot meals, sit in food and coffees, and sharing shelves.

FREE FOOD LIST



PANTRIES



CAFES



SIT IN FOOD



TAKEAWAY



COMMUNITY LUNCH

Cash First Toolkit - Edinburgh Community Food and IFAN:

ECF have put together a great resource around training for cash first aimed at staff to provide knowledge, skills, and confidence around supporting those facing hardships. This focuses on directly providing money, pathways to money, or vouchers. It gives great examples and advice in a step-by-step guidance around best practice for supporting people in a way that integrates cash-first principles and resources. The leaflet for this [can be found here](#)

The leaflet features a light orange background. In the top left is the 'INDEPENDENT FOOD AID NETWORK' logo. In the top right is the 'edinburgh community food' logo with a strawberry icon. A large green rounded rectangle in the center contains the title 'CASH FIRST TOOLKIT' and the section 'What is Cash First?' with a definition of cash first approaches. Below this, another section 'Why Cash First?' explains the benefits of cash. To the right of the text is an illustration of a family (a man, a woman, and a child) standing next to a shopping cart filled with groceries.

INDEPENDENT FOOD AID NETWORK

CASH FIRST TOOLKIT

What is Cash First?

Cash first approaches provide people directly with money, pathways to money, or vouchers, making them an effective and dignified form of support for people facing hardship. Where appropriate, they are an alternative to food banks referrals or in-kind support.

Why Cash First?

Cash offers flexibility for people to decide what their immediate needs are, whether they be purchasing the essentials, buying school shoes for their child, paying an energy bill, or paying down debt to get on a more secure financial footing. It can have an immediate impact on people's lives.

edinburgh community food

If there are any additional resources you think would be helpful to share then please get in touch at samjolley@edinburghfoodproject.org

FOOD BANK SERVICES AND PARCELS

Edinburgh Food Project does three primary areas of work:

- We operate seven foodbanks registered with the Trussell Trust across Edinburgh
- We have a Money Advice Service (MAS) who offer free confidential benefits, budgeting and debt advice
- We provide 'more than food' support with household supplies, signposting, and drop-in sessions at our foodbanks.

As a Trussell Trust registered foodbank, we use their Data Collection System to register referral agencies and agents which enables them to use e-vouchers. E-vouchers are a lot more efficient, allowing the agency worker to login, enter all the person's details onto the system and issue a voucher. They then print the voucher or give the person a code who brings that to the food bank. The volunteers can then find it on the system and mark as fulfilled without having to enter all the details again.

Food Parcel Contents

The vouchers you issue people are used to provide a food parcel, the size of which is determined by the number of adults and children in the household. They contain sufficient nutrition for at least three days worth of healthy, balanced meals for individuals and families and different parcels can be offered to meet dietary needs, for example, gluten-free, vegetarian, or vegan. We also offer toiletries (including nappies), baby food, household cleaning products, as well as wet and dry pet food. Food Parcels are pre-packed in our warehouse to fit these dietary needs and are from there distributed across all of our foodbanks. As such, we can't make changes around specific items in advance for individual referrals, but when attending the foodbank everyone is welcome to swap out or leave any items they don't wish to use and these will be redistributed back into the cycle.

In a typical food parcel, you will get:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Breakfast cereals | • Tinned vegetables |
| • UHT milk | • Tinned or dried pulses |
| • Long life fruit juice | (chickpeas, lentils, kidney |
| • Soup | beans) |
| • Pasta | • Tinned tomatoes |
| • Rice | • Tea or coffee |
| • Pasta sauce | • Sugar |
| • Tinned beans and spaghetti | • Biscuits |
| • Tinned meat and fish | • Snacks |



OPENING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Edinburgh Food Project is part of the Trussell Trust network of foodbanks and has seven locations across Edinburgh. Each of these locations has its own operating days to ensure that support is available across the entire week. These are:

Warehouse and Office (No food distribution):	0131 444 0030	12 New Lairdship Yards, EH11 3UY	Monday – Friday: 09:00–16:00 Excluding 12:30–13:00 Lunch
Craigmillar Hub	07805 203744	Thistle Centre of Wellbeing, 13 Queen’s Walk, EH16 4EA	Tuesday: 10:30–13:00 Thursday: 10:30–13:00 Friday: 10:30–13:00
Pilton	07794 850 009	St Margaret Mary, Boswall Parkway, EH5 2JQ	Monday: 13:00–15:00 Wednesday: 13:00–15:00 Friday: 11:00–13:30
South Queensferry	07837 532 169	The Priory Church, Hopetoun Road, EH30 9RA	Thursday: 11:00–13:30
Clermiston	07794 849 945	St Andrew’s Church (Buttercup Hall), 17–19 Clermiston View, EH4 7BS	Monday: 17:30–19:00 Tuesday: 13:00–15:00 Thursday: 13:00–15:00
Prestonfield	07933 707 819	Priestfield Parish Church, 2 Marchhall Place, EH16 5HW	Wednesday: 13:30–15:30
Grassmarket	07805 203 852	St Columba’s by the Castle, 14 Johnston Terrace, EH1 2PW	Tuesday: 14:00–16:00 Friday: 14:00–16:00
Broughton	07805 204 009	Broughton St Mary’s Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent, EH3 6NE	Monday: 13:00–15:00 Thursday: 13:00–15:00

In addition to Edinburgh Food Project, there are three other Trussell Trust affiliated foodbank organisations in Edinburgh who share the same referral criteria. These are:

Edinburgh North East Foodbank Foodbank

Website: edinburghne.foodbank.org.uk

Email: info@edinburghne.foodbank.org.uk

South Leith Parish Church	0131 553 5694	6 Henderson Street Leith, EH6 6BS	Monday: 13:00-14:30 Friday: 15:00-17:00
Leith St Andrew's Church	0131 553 5694	410-412 Easter Road, Leith, EH6 8HT	Tuesday: 13:00-14:30 Thursday: 10:00-11:30
Pirig St Pauls Parish Church	0131 553 5694	1a Pirig Street Leith, EH6 5AH	Wednesday: 16:30-18:00
St Margaret's Parish Church	0131 553 5694	48 Restalrig Road South EH7 6LE	Wednesday: 11:00-12:30

Edinburgh South East Foodbank

Website: edinburghse.foodbank.org.uk/

Email: edinburghfoodbank@blythswood.org

Blythwood Care - Edinburgh SE Foodbank	0131 664 9353	47 Southhouse Broadway, EH17 8AS	Monday: 10:00-13:30 Tuesday: 10:00-13:30 Thursday: 10:00-13:30
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Edinburgh South West Foodbank:

Email: Edinburgh.Gorgie@salvationarmy.org.uk

Salvation Army - Gorgie	0131 346 2875	431 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 2RB	Monday: 13:00-15:00 Wednesday: 11:00-13:00 Friday: 10:00-12:00
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REFERRAL CHANGES

The following is the definitions we put together to outline what our criteria and expectations are for both information and referral partners.

Information Partners are organisations who are interacting with and helping those who need support but are not themselves tackling the individual's underlying financial hardships.

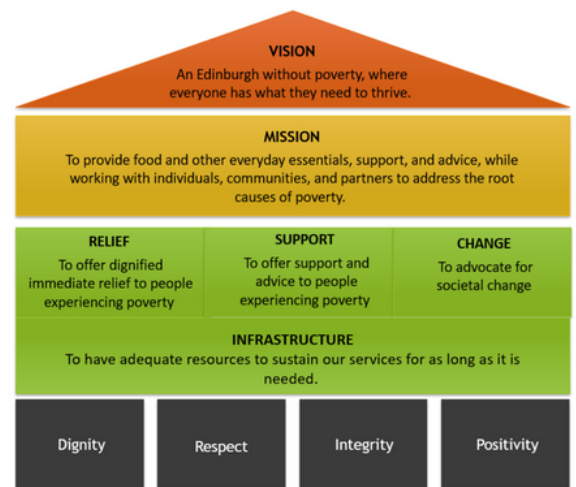
Criteria	Expectations
1. Interacting with people who may be experiencing food insecurity 2. Able to signpost to other local support organisations and make people aware of the available relevant support	EFP will provide you with up-to-date information on key referral partners, other Edinburgh-based food resources, and will remain a point of contact for this
	Your role should be to raise awareness of key support to prioritise access and efficiency

Referral partners are organisations who are providing support to lift the individual out of poverty and to tackle the underlying causes of poverty which have caused them to need food support.

Criteria	Expectations
1. Having conversations to understand the underlying causes of a person's financial insecurity 2. Providing the individual with support which addresses their financial insecurity 3. Aware of and utilising the available wider support to refer people to the most appropriate services 4. Not making referrals in isolation but as part of a wider package of support 5. Committed to ensuring that all members of the team operate to these principles	Those meeting these criteria will remain responsible for issuing vouchers. EFP will work to understand what they offer and where our partners should be referring to them to best meet individuals needs
	This seeks to produce a clear and concise group of referral agencies where all referrals are being made in addition to support that addresses the causes of food poverty and prioritises a cash-first approach

EDINBURGH FOOD PROJECT STRATEGY

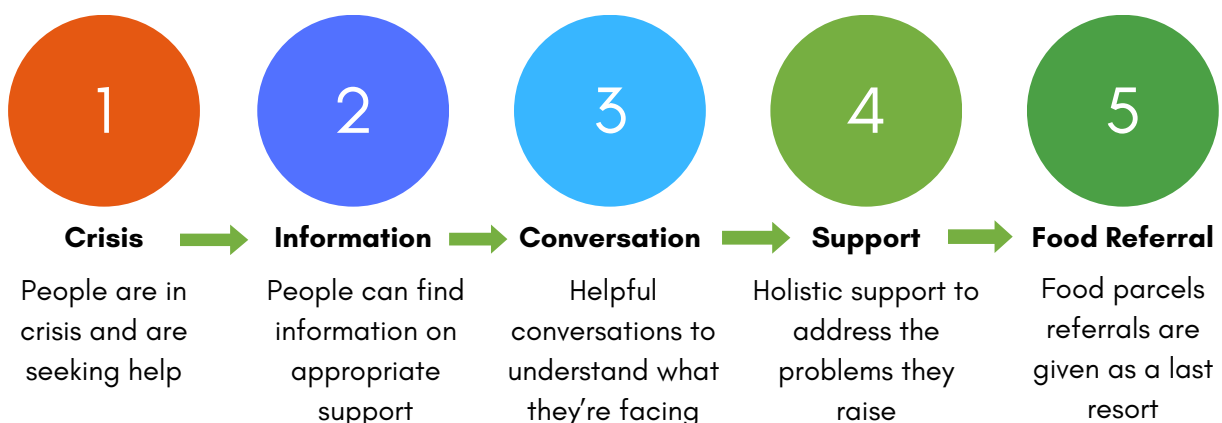
Edinburgh Food Project has grown substantially in recent years. We have moved from simply providing food to people in crisis, to providing a wider range of essential items and access to support and advice. Food provision alone is **only a sticking plaster** and does not resolve the causes of poverty. We believe poverty is an **income** issue, not a food issue. As such, our strategy in 2024 places emphasis on changing the way people are referred into and out of the foodbank to ensure referrals are not made in isolation but are paired with meaningful longer-term support.



Our vision is “An Edinburgh without poverty, where everyone has what they need to thrive”

People in crisis are too often being referred **without receiving adequate information, conversation, or support**. Many people accessing our foodbanks are unaware of the options available to them and are offered emergency food support instead of, rather than as well as, more effective cash-first support, help with welfare eligibility, or specialised advice to address the cause of their food poverty. Accordingly, we’re reviewing the Referral Pathways to ensure that additional support is embedded in the process. This involves changing who will issue vouchers, what we expect from our referral partners, and how we can help raise awareness of available local support. This seeks to streamline the pathway so that referrals will look more like this:

35%
of people referred to a foodbank in the Trussell Trust network said they received **no advice** from other services before their referral



LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Data Collection System:

- Link to the Data Collection System website
- Full training video on the Data Collection System -[link](#)
- Password reset link for the DCS

Foodbank resources:

- Edinburgh Food Project website - [link](#)

Foodbank Contacts:

- Email: samjolley@edinburghfoodproject.org – for all client referral needs and queries
- Email: info@edinburghfoodproject.org – for general enquiries • Tel: 0131 444 0030

THE LEGAL BIT

All data is held, processed and retained in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Client data from referral vouchers is stored securely in an online database. This data is only used to monitor client visits, and to generate aggregate data to analyse patterns and trends at local, regional or national level. The date and location of a client's visits may be visible to other foodbanks and some referral agencies, to monitor repeat visits. A data privacy statement for client data is available from the foodbank on request.

Your organisation's contact data will also be stored in the foodbank data system. It will only be used to contact you regarding foodbank activity and clients. It will not be shared with any third parties. A data privacy statement for referral agency data is available from the foodbank on request.

Vouchers are treated in confidence. The date and location of client visits to foodbanks may be visible to other local foodbanks and some agencies in order to prevent misuse. No other client data is divulged to anyone without their explicit consent. The foodbank is registered with the Data Protection Agency, and we comply with the regulations regarding the holding of client information on a database.

The foodbank has a Data Sharing Agreement in place with each of its partner Referral Agencies – this is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it is still valid and fit for purpose.

Charity number: SC043220