

Referral Partner Handbook

January 2025



Summary

This handbook provides critical information to enable our referral partners their clients to the Foodbank and some additional resources to help you with this process. Whether you are a new partner or have worked with us for some time, we are pleased to join you in providing essential support to clients in crisis and to strive in bringing about future changes and ending the need for foodbanks. We know it isn't right that anyone should be left hungry or living in poverty. But whilst we work for long-term change, our foodbank provides emergency food and compassionate, dignified support to people locked in crisis

We operate on a referral basis – whereby referral organisations use their professional judgement to assess and determine need and issue vouchers in the system for clients. 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. We hope these resources will help explain what we do, the role of referrals, and how we can best work together to help people.

Contents:

Opening Times and Locations	3
Edinburgh Food Project's Strategy	5
Foodbank Services and Parcels	6
The Referral Process	7
Who should be issuing referrals.....	9
Defining Referral Partners	10
Referral Training	11
Guide for Issuing Vouchers	12
Signposting Resources	17
Links and Contact Details	20
The Legal Bit	20

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: 10:30–13:30 Friday: 10:30–13:30
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

North and 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
---	---------------	-------------------------------------	---

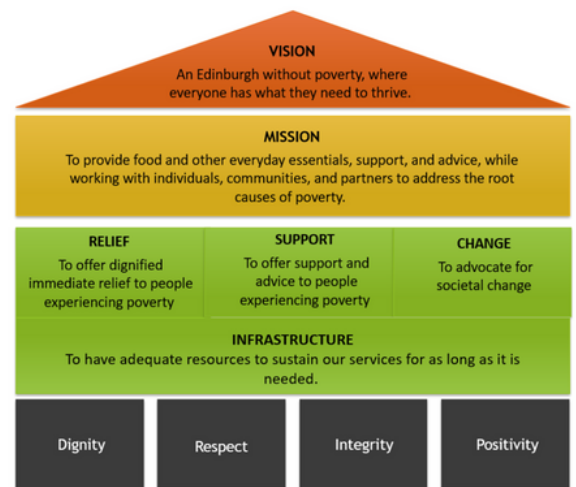
Edinburgh South West Foodbank:

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
-------------------------	---------------	---	---

EDINBURGH FOOD PROJECT STRATEGY

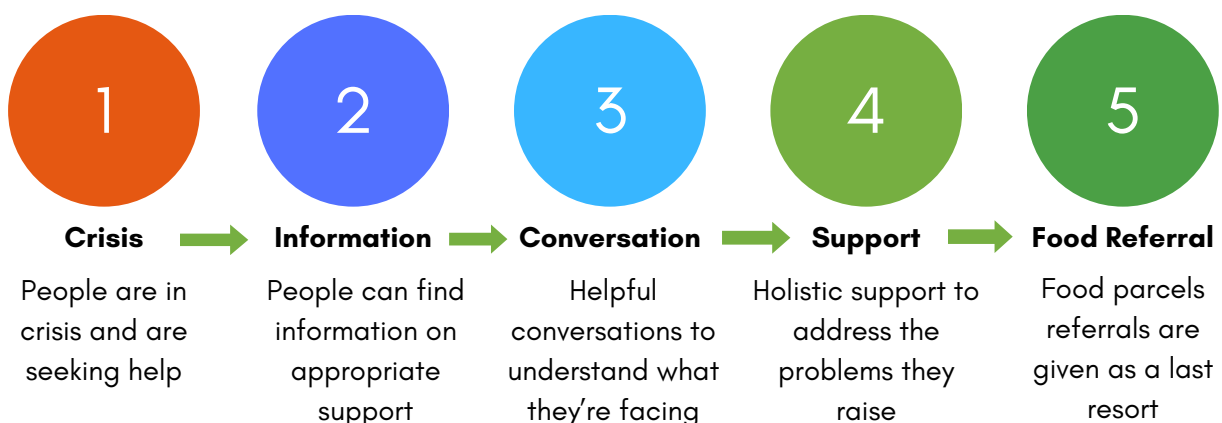
Edinburgh Food Project has grown substantially in recent years. We have moved from simply providing food to people in crisis, to providing a wider range of essential items and access to support and advice. Food provision alone is **only a sticking plaster** and does not resolve the causes of poverty. 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



FOODBANK SERVICES AND PARCELS

Edinburgh Food Project has three primary areas of work:

- We operate **seven foodbanks** registered with the Trussell Trust network across Edinburgh
- We have a **Money Advice Service** who offer free confidential benefits, budgeting and debt advice
- We provide household supplies, signposting, and **drop-in sessions from local support organisations** at our foodbanks

As a Trussell Trust registered foodbank, we use their Data Collection System to register referral organisations which enables people to use e-vouchers. This involves giving the person a code which they can bring to the foodbank where our volunteers can then find it on the system and mark as fulfilled. These codes can either be accessed digitally or printed off for the individual depending on their preference.

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 provide three meals for three days, for everyone that's living in the house. Different parcels can be offered to meet dietary needs, for example, gluten-free, vegetarian, or vegan. We also offer toiletries (including baby items) and household cleaning products, as well as pet food where stock allows.

In most cases, food parcels are pre-packed in our warehouse and distributed across our foodbanks. As such, we can't make changes around specific items for individual referrals, but everyone is welcome to leave or swap any items they don't wish to use and these will be redistributed back into the cycle. The exception to this is our foodbank in Craigmillar which looks like a shop where the person is able to choose which items they would like from each of the categories, giving them greater choice in the process. We also provide fresh fruit and vegetables at Craigmillar every week which people are free to take.

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 |



THE REFERRAL PROCESS

How do referrals work?

All food vouchers have to go through the e-vouchers system and therefore be issued by a 'referral partner'. There are two avenues through which this happens:

1

Self-Referrals

This is where people contact us directly without a referral from any other organisations. All of these go through our internal Money Advice Service who speak to the client and offer them support.

2

Referral Partner Referrals

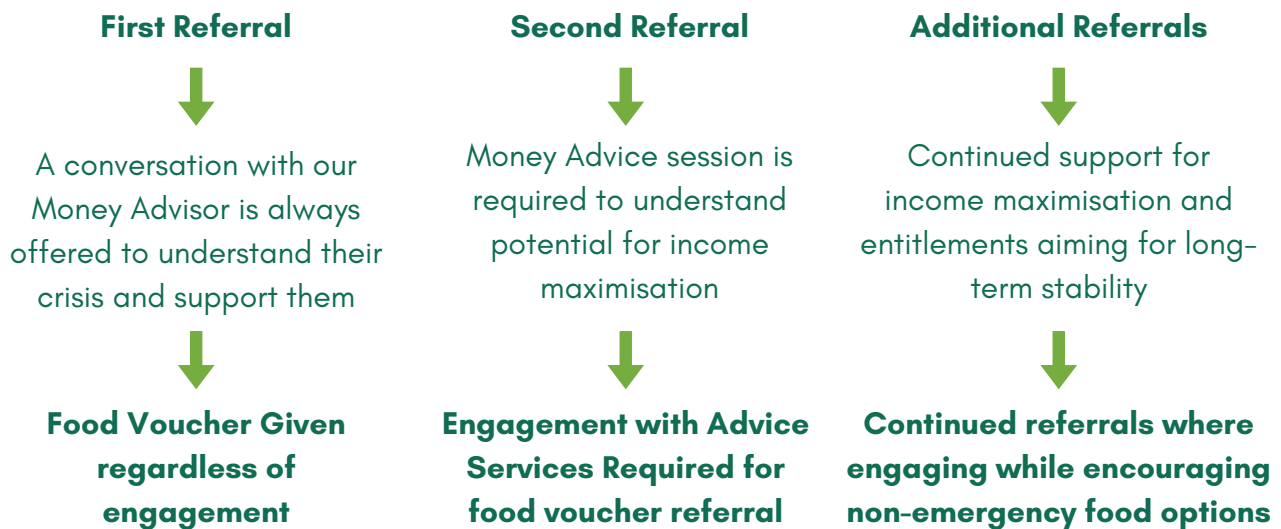
This is where support organisations send the people they are supporting to the foodbank in addition to the support they are providing. Partners must be registered on the Trussell Trust database to make these, and from there are responsible for frequency and quantity of referrals. Individuals will have the option to speak with the Money Advice Service but it is not required.

The Referral Pathways Review:

Throughout 2024, we have been looking to improve how the referral system works. This has involved some changes to the way our internal referrals work as well as how we're wanting our referral partners to be making their referrals. Food parcels have not been designed with the intention of being regularly used on a maintained basis. Despite this, we understand that crisis can happen to anyone and can often persist. As such, anyone is able to access food vouchers by engaging with any of our referral partners or by contacting us directly via our Money Advice Service. Through this, referral partners are able to engage with the individual and provide them with support in addition to their voucher.

In Edinburgh we trust our referral partners to understand that ongoing use of foodbanks shows that an individual requires additional support to mitigate this need. As such, if people are **continuing to engage** with support then vouchers can be issued when the referrer deems it necessary and beneficial, there is **no limit** on the overall number of parcels that an organisation can offer. If people are not engaging with the services then we will always offer a first-time emergency food voucher regardless of engagement.

Since early 2024, this is the model we have used in our Money Advice Service:



We have found that this has resulted in a significant increase in engagement with our financial support services where people have seen considerable financial gains on top of their food parcels. As of August 2024, the **average financial gain** per case since January this year is **£3,650** which they were entitled to but were not receiving. We want everyone using the foodbank to receive everything they should be in addition to their food support, and would encourage all referral agencies to consider whether the people they support are getting the necessary help to achieve this every time they are issued a food voucher.

Referral Frequency

Food parcels are designed to provide short-term, emergency food to individuals and families in crisis. As no one crisis looks the same, there is no definitive limit on how often the same person can be referred, however we would advise that **one voucher per week** would be a **maximum** for the vast majority of cases. Beyond this, we trust our referral partners as experts to understand where providing another food voucher is the best course of action based on your relationship with the individual you're supporting. Vouchers can't be issued on a rolling basis, instead as they are **part of a wider package of support** which should already involve regular client engagement.

Here are some factors to consider when issuing referrals which may help in your own process:

- Food parcels provide three days of food meaning one referrals every week is the **maximum** we would issue for special short-term cases
- For those facing an ongoing crisis we would reasonably expect to wait around **1.5-2 weeks** between each voucher
- In many cases, people look for vouchers monthly or bimonthly based around benefits payments
- If a client is continually accessing the foodbank past an emergency we would work with them to move on towards low-cost food provision designed for ongoing use like food pantries while reducing voucher frequency gradually to ensure they remain supported throughout this process

WHO SHOULD BE ISSUING REFERRALS?

An in-depth definition of what qualifies as a referral partner can be found on the following page, but in summary, organisations who are best placed to issue referrals are those who are able to offer meaningful conversations with people and be in a position to deliver support to address this. Given the range of support provided across Edinburgh is so vast, there are no strict rules of who does or doesn't qualify, but the following should give you some idea of what we are looking for:

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

An ideal example of this would be welfare rights and benefits support workers, similar to the work done by our internal Money Advice Service. In the majority of cases, those coming to the foodbank are entitled to additional benefits or cash-first resources which they are not yet receiving. Through discussing their circumstances and with a professional understanding of the benefits system, welfare advisers can inform and help people apply to all that they are eligible for. Another example would be support or social workers who are well placed to make referrals due to their understanding of each person's situation and the type of support they are receiving. Through having ongoing conversations with people and building effective relationships, this allows a detailed understanding of what support is most relevant and how food vouchers can fit into support plans for those in crisis.

What we want to see in addition to referrals:

There are a few essential elements to support we would want to see alongside a referral, these are:

1

Ensuring people are receiving all of the social security benefits that they are entitled to and aware of the locally available financial support

2

People are made aware of specialist advice and support on areas such as housing, immigration, or domestic abuse

3

Where relevant, people are made aware of available mental and physical health and well-being support

DEFINING REFERRAL PARTNERS

We are currently undergoing a reassessment of who we class as referral partners, eligible to issue vouchers, and the creation of a new group of information partners who will provide signposting for financial support and food provision. Going forward, instead of having as many organisations as possible issuing referrals, we will emphasise the referral quality while improving awareness and provision of non-food voucher options. It also includes new responsibilities for Edinburgh Food Project to engage and support our partners in offering the best support. The following summarises these and the expectations that come alongside them:

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	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
2. Providing the individual with support which either addresses their financial insecurity directly or involves regular ongoing specialist help to meet their specific needs	
3. Aware of and utilising the available wider support to refer people to the most appropriate services	This seeks to produce a clear and concise group of referral organisations where all referrals are being made in addition to support that addresses the causes of food poverty and prioritises a cash-first approach
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	

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

REFERRAL TRAINING

As we are placing greater expectations on referral partners, we are improving our offering too. We are now providing both resources and training around referrals to inform referral partners and help them provide better information to those they're supporting, and ensure that referrals are being made in a way that aligns with the provision we provide.

As such, all referral partners, old and new, will be asked to attend referral webinars which will outline the referral changes, expectations, and resources. They aim to support all partners in making better referrals and all new referral applicants will be asked to attend the training before they are added to the system

Dates for Training:

The webinars will take place regularly and are 30 minutes long. Specific dates and availability can be found [here](#)

This presentation goes over:

- Who the foodbanks in Edinburgh are
- How the referral process works
- What limitations and policies there are around issuing vouchers
- Edinburgh-specific guidance for navigating the e-voucher system
- What additional support resources are available

GUIDE FOR ISSUING VOUCHERS

Summary:

The following section seeks to give an in-depth account of **each step in issuing a voucher**, what you should be asking, what we're seeking to understand, and how this helps us in the process of supporting individuals. For a quick introduction to get you started, here is an introductory video which covers the basics: [How to issue a voucher](#)



Searching for the Client

If a client has been to a foodbank before then it's **essential** that you're checking you have spelt their full name correctly (particularly their surname), checking records on their previous address or name, and check whether they've been registered under no address.

Anyone that has been referred to the foodbank before from any organisation will have a record on our system, all you have to do is search for them. We see around 100 new duplicate clients every month and it stops us having a record of who, when, and how the individual is being supported.

Note: If the name is spelled incorrectly on the initial record, use that spelling, and then correct it in Step 2. If you do spot duplicate records, then **please contact us** and we will be able to merge them. If the client has not been to a foodbank before, then click **Create new client record**

Previous Vouchers:

For existing clients, this section will show you the clients voucher history including the date that their last voucher was **issued** and the last date a voucher was **fulfilled**. This has two purposes:

Firstly, it shows you if have any **existing unfulfilled vouchers** by looking at if their most recent activity was being issued rather than fulfilled. If this is the case, either the client can be given the existing code if its within the last month, or the unfulfilled voucher should be deleted and a new one reissued.

Secondly, it allows you to see **how recently** their last voucher was issued. In line with the guidance on page 8, you can assess how regularly or irregularly the individual uses the foodbank and adapt the support you offer accordingly to better meet their needs. If the person has already been issued a voucher within the last week, as noted in the guidance we would advise against issuing multiple per week in the vast majority of cases.

2

Checking and entering details

If the person being referred already has a record on the system, you can check and amend it here, by clicking **Update client details**. If the record is new, you can now enter their details. Please make sure you're spelling their full name correctly as this can easily cause problems further down the line for yourself and others.

Usual Household Structure - This tells us what the usual composition of the client's household that future referrals will default to. It's important to note that this step should **not include temporary guests** as the next step will always provide this option. For example, if someone is looking after children who don't typically live with them at the time of referral, this **should not be included** in their 'usual' structure. Instead, the 'number of people the voucher is for' section in the next step will ensure enough food is provided.

This also informs ourselves and potential future referrers of the individual's typical living situation to provide more relevant support and advice. Similarly, at this stage noting partner, parent, and carer status does not affect their food parcels but has potential to improve the relevancy of future support.

Fair Processing Notice - This is mandatory as part of UK GDPR law and this must be read out every time you are issuing a voucher, even if you have issued to this client before. This includes vouchers that are issued over the phone. It informs people how their information and data will be used and stored before it is collected and it's essential that the latest version of this is read out.

Only in a situation where someone is speaking on behalf of someone to receive a voucher and the individual is not there to hear it should the option of 'unable to ask' be used, and in these cases we can still process the data as we have legitimate interest under GDPR if the person is in need of emergency food.

You can view a copy of the full privacy notice [here](#).

3

Referral Information

Referral agency information – This will be pre-populated for the majority of referrers. Please make sure the contact details are correct and up to date and get in touch if you wish to update this

Ethnic group – This will only appear as an option for new clients, and it is important to make clear this is **entirely optional**, will exclusively be used for Trussell Trust reporting purposes, and will not be linked to the individual. People should **never be pressured** into providing this information, and it should be made clear they can choose for their ethnic group not to be recorded by selecting 'prefer not to say'. This will only be collected once, so if they need another voucher, the display will say 'In the past, the individual provided their ethnic group, therefore we are not asking for this information'. The referrer can also permanently remove any association with their ethnic group information from the system. A separate guide for collecting ethnic group information can be found [here](#).

Number of people the voucher is for – By default this will show as the number of people registered under the client's household, but this gives an opportunity to include any new temporary household guests who aren't on the record. This will inform the size of the food parcel and could help organisations and foodbanks provide more specific support, e.g. nappies for those with young children.

Client Contact Details – This is non-essential and will only be used to contact the client if delivery is an option which isn't typical practice. If you are collecting this information then please ensure that you have the person's consent to do so.

Dietary Requirements – As outlined in the 'Food Parcel Contents' section, we don't put in or take out specific food preferences given the scale of distribution. Therefore, it is better for the person to ask specifically at the foodbank rather than using this section of the referral for requests. It is worth letting the client know they should bring up specific requests with volunteers at the foodbank if they are looking for vegetarian, vegan, or gluten-free food parcels as all of these are available, and at all foodbanks people are free to leave or swap any items they do not want.

Additional Parcel Notes – Similarly, it is best to ask the person to highlight additional needs like baby products, sanitary products, and toiletries with volunteers rather than using this section of the referral. It is also important to highlight that non-food items are entirely dependent on stock levels which is often low, and we cannot guarantee they will always be available.

4

Reasons for Referral

The information collected in this step helps us to understand more about why people need to come to the food bank, but is often the least well detailed in the referrals we receive. By making a record of what issues people face, this allows us to build a better understanding of why it is people are facing poverty. With that said, we recognise that source of income and reasons for referral can be sensitive topics for people needing the support of a food bank so an empathetic approach is needed and if the person does not want to answer, you can select “Declined to answer” for any question.

A **detailed guide** for **all** reasons for referral is **available** [here](#) and is a great resource for further detail.

Source of income for the household - Only one option is selectable here and should address what the recipient of the food parcel has access to. We would suggest asking “What is the income for the household, are you earning, on benefits, or both?”

Reasons for referral - We would suggest that you don’t list out options to the person but instead ask what is the **reason for their crisis** or **what changes in circumstance** has led them to needing a food parcel. This is an opportunity to highlight the individual’s circumstances where possible rather than only ticking general reasons like ‘rising cost of essentials’. If they choose to mention it, it’s also a chance to note underlying debts or health conditions which can help them get tailored support later on.

For this section you should use your **conversation** with the client to pick up to **four reasons**, all of which are split into three categories: Financial, Personal, and Health.

Reasons for needing more than three vouchers - Trussell Trust foodbanks will generally work on a three-voucher guideline where someone referred more than three times in six months is flagged on the system to highlight who is in need of further help to resolve their underlying reasons for referral. While this doesn’t limit who is able to receive vouchers, we do ask that you help us out by being specific about why the person’s crisis is ongoing.

Over Three Vouchers - Where someone is being issued a fourth voucher within six months, this question will come up. We would suggest asking something along the lines of “In particular, what would you say is the long-term reason for needing the support of the food bank?”

5

Food Bank Centres

Are you able to collect - For the vast majority of cases, this section will default to **yes** as all of our foodbanks require collection with the exception of specific instances for Edinburgh SE Foodbank based in Southhouse Broadway (this will also require you to fill out contact details for the individual's delivery).

Selecting Foodbank:

This gives a list of the foodbanks you can refer to in the order of distance from the postcode of the client. Please note that these are **only open at certain times of the week** so please refer to the opening times on page 18 and speak with your client about what best fits **their needs**. They can be used at **any** of the foodbanks regardless of where's been assigned and are valid for up to six weeks, but the closest option may not be the best for their individual circumstance.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Automatic Removal - The Trussell Trust database has a measure where users who do not log in for 12 months will be **automatically removed** from the system due to GDPR law around storing inactive user's data. If your account has been removed then please get in touch with samjolley@edinburghfoodproject.org who can restore your account.

Password Reset - If you are unable to login to your account, then we would recommend performing a **password reset** using the following link: <https://data.foodbank.org.uk/users/password/new>

If you continue to have issues following this then please contact helpdesk@foodbank.org.uk who will be able to help further.

SIGNPOSTING RESOURCES

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 foodbank 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 Food Project's 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 half of 2024 our team has helped people access **over £300,000** 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**



'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 across the UK and it is translated across a range of languages. Free printed copies of the leaflets can be ordered for free [here](#).

View this leaflet online:

www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/edinburgh

Worrying About Money?

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

Step 1: What's the problem?

I suddenly have no money

- 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

See options 1 2 5 6

I am waiting on a benefit payment/decision

- Made a new claim for benefit
- Benefit payment is delayed
- Waiting for a benefit decision

See options 1 4

My money doesn't stretch far enough

- 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)

See options 1 2

I have debt

- Rent or Council Tax arrears
- Gas or electricity
- Credit or store cards
- Personal loans and overdrafts
- Owe friends and family
- Benefit repayments

See option 3

Step 2: What are some options?

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).

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.

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.

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).

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).

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.

Step 3: Where can I get help?

Each of these services offer free and confidential advice

The Advice Shop

Advice on welfare rights, benefits, crisis grants and all types of debt
0131 200 2360
advice.shop@edinburgh.gov.uk
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/advice-shop
Help with options: 1 2 3 4 5 6

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

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

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

Scottish Welfare Fund

Crisis grants to cover the cost of an emergency
0131 529 5299
welfarefundteam@edinburgh.gov.uk
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/scottishwelfarefund

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@edinburghrns.co.uk	Social Security Scotland Crisis Grant 0800 182 2222 mygov.scot/benefits
--	---	--	---	---	---

Updated on: 13/03/24

Money Counts Training:

A council-led course which aims to increase skills and confidence to identify those affected by poverty and low income and offer relevant support. It focuses on developing the skills and confidence to ask about money worries as well as increasing knowledge of the support services available.

We would recommend this to any service that is looking to support those facing poverty and you can register [here](#) and for more information contact: moneycountstraining@edinburgh.gov.uk

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 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](#)



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.



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

LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Data Collection System:

- Link to the Data Collection System website – https://data.foodbank.org.uk/users/sign_in
- Full training video on the Data Collection System – [link](#)
- Password reset link for the DCS – <https://data.foodbank.org.uk/users/password/new>

Foodbank resources:

- Edinburgh Food Project website – <https://edinburghfoodproject.org/>

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 organisations, 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 organisations 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 organisations – this is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it is still valid and fit for purpose.

Charity number: SC043220