

Referral Partner Handbook

February 2026



Summary

This handbook provides critical information to enable those supporting people in Edinburgh to make use of the foodbanks effectively. 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 people. We know it isn't right that anyone should be left hungry or living in poverty, so whilst we work for long-term change to reduce this need, our foodbank provides emergency food and compassionate, dignified support to people in crisis.

Our foodbanks operate on a referral basis whereby those in support organisations use their professional judgement to determine where people require food provision. This allows people to not only receive a food parcel to address their immediate need but meaningful support to address the causes of their poverty too. We're looking to ensure that those being referred to the foodbank are getting the best support and hope these resources will support this through explaining what we do, how referrals should be issued, and how we can best work together to help people.

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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. Please note that people should arrive **at least 15 minutes before closing** to have time to collect the food. The opening times 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: 14:00-15:30
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 foodbank organisations in Edinburgh who partners can refer to and for which this handbook applies to. 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
Pilrig 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 Leith 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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Why are Referrals so important?

People using foodbank services are typically eligible for, but are not receiving, significant amounts of support. Foodbanks are often the first place people go for help, with **36%** of those using the foodbank having **not accessed any formal advice or support at all** prior to their foodbank referral. It is vital that we maximise people's statutory support alongside charitable services, yet just **one in five people** referred to foodbanks in Scotland have accessed a Crisis or Community Care Grant in the last three months, with **35%** of people **unaware of this support entirely**.

80%
of people referred to Scottish foodbanks had not accessed a crisis or community care grant in the last three months

Every referral to the foodbank is an opportunity to check if someone is getting the help that they should be getting and to support them in doing so or signpost to those who can. A voucher for the foodbank is not enough to address someone's poverty, but does give them a few days of relief. What this cannot do is address the reason why that person cannot afford food in the first place. To properly support someone in poverty, we need to be addressing that person's lack of income.

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

£4,195

Is the average amount of money a foodbank user gets when working with a money adviser

Foodbanks have gone from rare to commonplace in the UK, with an increase from 26,000 to 1.33 million parcels distributed between 2008 and 2018. This has come about as a direct result of cuts to social security which froze Universal Credit rates, set caps for families, and limits on child payments. This has left a welfare system that does not pay enough to cover the costs of people's essentials, leaving them with too little to afford a minimum standard of living.

The result of this has been a growing dependence on foodbanks and charitable services to offset these insufficient benefits payments. Foodbanks can't provide people with a reliable and consistent income or offer them cash while the government can. That is why as part of a referral to the foodbank it is **essential** to make sure that people are supported to get Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants, and see their Universal Credit payments maximised.

Checklist for issuing vouchers

When issuing a voucher to the foodbank, we would recommend following the below steps to make sure the person you're supporting is getting the most effective support:

1

Crisis

Someone presents in crisis and is seeking help by accessing your service. They are unable to afford food for the next few days, meaning they would benefit from using the foodbank to provide immediate relief to this crisis.

2

Essentials checklist

Are they receiving the essentials? The Scottish Government fund [Crisis and Community Care Grants](#) to offer immediate cash support which **everyone** using a foodbank should be accessing. It is essential that anyone referring somebody to the foodbank has at least checked this and supported that person to apply for these if they have yet to.

3

Conversation

You speak with them and try to build an understanding of their situation, what their immediate needs are, and what the causes of their crisis. In particular, what are the main costs they're facing and what is their source of income?

4

Support

Beyond grants, how else can you address the person's crisis and improve their income? This will look different subject to each organisation's speciality but we would always encourage you to address income first and foremost. The majority of people accessing our services are eligible for higher rates of UC and debt support so always check this or signpost to those who can. How else can you address the issues raised in your conversation, and how can you maintain this on an ongoing basis?

5

Food Referral

With the above established, referrals to the foodbanks should be made alongside this support in order to make sure people can have immediate relief. For much of the above support, accessing it takes time and the foodbank may be needed to help people out as they go through this process.

How do the foodbanks work?

What do Food Parcels include?

Food vouchers can be claimed at the foodbanks to collect a food parcel, the size of which is determined by the number of people in the household. Each parcel provide three meals for three days for everyone that's living in the house. Gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan or Halal parcels are offered to everyone to meet dietary needs. We also offer toiletries (including baby items) and household cleaning products, as well as pet food where we have these in stock.

In a typical food parcel, you will get:

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



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 where the permanent space allows us to have it set up like a shop where the person is able to choose which items they would like from each of the categories.

How can people access foodbanks?

Our foodbanks use the Trussell's E-Voucher system to distribute food vouchers which means that organisations must register with us so they can issue vouchers to those in need. Once on the system, you can generate a code for the person you're supporting which they can bring to the foodbank where our volunteers will find it on the system and mark it as fulfilled. These codes begin with E followed by a series of numbers (e.g. E-12345-1234567) and are all someone needs for claiming a parcel. They will be texted to clients via the contact details you enter but we would recommend writing out or printing another copy to make sure people are aware of the voucher. Please also note that people should arrive at the foodbanks with enough time prior to closing, as you would any shop or supermarket. We would recommend giving at least 15 minutes before the foodbanks closing time to allow our volunteers to pack up and leave on time.

What is a Referral Partner?

We have two categories of partners: Referral Partners who issue vouchers directly, and Information Partners who don't have capacity to refer but are still in a position to signpost those in need to relevant support services. These are defined as follows:

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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having conversations to understand the underlying causes of a person's financial insecurity 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 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 	<p>Those meeting these criteria will be responsible for directing people to the foodbanks. EFP will work to keep you updated on the foodbanks and how we can best combine our support to help those in need across Edinburgh</p> <hr/> <p>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</p>

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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>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</p> <hr/> <p>Your role should be to raise awareness of key support to prioritise access and efficiency</p>

What roles should be issuing vouchers?

The people best placed to issue referrals are those who are able to not only identify that someone is in crisis but offer support to address the causes of this crisis. Given the range of support provided across Edinburgh, whether a specific role fits this varies between organisations, but the following demonstrates some roles are suitable for issuing referrals:

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. 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 should I do if I can't offer this support?

If you can't provide any of the above support, but know someone that is in need of accessing the foodbanks, then it's worth noting that anyone is welcome to call us up directly for immediate support. We have a Money Advice Service who can be accessed by calling 0131 444 0030. Alternatively, there are a huge range of services registered to make referrals to the foodbanks. Further down in this handbook is a list of some of these and details on how to access them (page 17).

Limits to issuing vouchers

Number of vouchers issued:

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.

Alternatives to issuing vouchers:

Vouchers should be issued to those engaging with your services, not just as drop-in support. If people aren't working with your services but are in need of accessing the foodbanks then we would strongly recommend you direct them to our Money Advice Service who can not only issue one-off vouchers to those in need but also offer welfare rights support.

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 referral per week is the **maximum** we would issue for special cases on a short-term basis
- In cases where people need vouchers on an ongoing basis, we often see this on a monthly or bimonthly basis
- 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

Getting registered as a Referral Partner

To keep all our partners up-to-date and aware of everything outlined in this handbook, we have put together training around referrals which everyone must take part in these in order to start making referrals. This helps ensure that those issuing vouchers know how the system works and what the best practice is for issuing vouchers. This introduction covers:

- 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

If you or someone you work with is looking to get signed up to make referrals then you can complete this training via the following form: <https://forms.office.com/e/31ZeRG8z1J>

Guide for Issuing Vouchers

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.



Searching for the Client

If a client has been to a foodbank before then it's **essential** that you use their existing record. This saves everyone time by saving you from re-entering details, them from re-explaining details, and means we have an accurate record of our users. 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. If someone does not appear at first then please check you have spelt their full name correctly and try checking under no fixed address.

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

Foodbank 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:

In addition to running the foodbanks, Edinburgh Food Project have our own welfare rights advisers who provide support for issues with benefits and budgeting. This includes checking entitlement to benefits and that ensuring people have access to everything they should. This service aims to make sure our foodbanks not only address people's immediate needs but address their underlying problems to reduce 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 the 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, over 2025 our team has helped people access an average of **over £4000 per person** 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:

This is the go-to resource for financial advice and support available in Edinburgh. It is available 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](#).

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?

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
www.gic.org.uk | 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 508 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@edinburghvihs.co.uk

Social Security Scotland
General support
0800 182 2222
mygov.scot/benefits

VoiceAbility
Support for disabled people
0300 303 1660
voiceability.org

Lightning Reach:

The Lightning Reach portal allows people to find and apply for support such as grants, benefits, help with bills and local schemes. It can be accessed via a free online portal that helps you find and apply for different types of financial support in one place. This has been rolled out by Edinburgh Council as it was found that households could be owed up to £80 million in unclaimed benefits in Edinburgh. This tool is designed to make it easier for people to check what they're owed. It includes:

- Funding from Edinburgh council
- Grants from charities
- Help with electricity, gas, and phone bills



Lightning Reach

Their website can be found [here](#) and more information from the council [here](#)

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 (typically £2-5 for £20+ food). These are 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

The Turn2us Benefits Calculator and Grants Search:

Turn2us have brilliant resources which makes it as simple as possible to access available support. The first is their [Benefits Calculator](#) which lets you see the benefits that someone is entitled to and an estimate of the amount they may receive. This is confidential and designed to be as accessible as possible to get people the money they should be getting. They also have a [Grants Search tool](#) that shows grants from registered charitable that someone could be eligible for based on their circumstances. These are both free and confidential services.



14,000

calculations made via the
Turn2us Benefits Calculator
embedded on [Trussell.org.uk](https://www.trussell.org.uk)

“Throughout this partnership, we have seen the impact on people visiting our websites looking to increase their income and get support.”

Neal Southwick, Head of Financial Inclusion Programmes, Trussell

Links and Contact Details

Data Collection System:

- Link to the Data Collection System website - https://data.foodbank.org.uk/users/sign_in
- 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: 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