Role Purpose

The Community Guider Volunteer plays a vital role in creating a warm, welcoming environment for clients attending food bank sessions. This role focuses on providing a compassionate, listening ear and supporting clients to access additional help by signposting them to relevant services and resources. While this is not a formal advice role, volunteers will be trained to recognise key needs and offer appropriate information.

Key Responsibilities

- Welcome clients warmly and help create a friendly, non-judgemental atmosphere.
- Offer tea, coffee, and light refreshments to clients attending sessions.
- Engage in supportive, confidential conversations with clients who wish to talk.
- Listen with empathy and without judgment to clients' stories and needs.
- Identify when a client may benefit from additional support (e.g., debt advice, mental health services, housing support).
- Provide signposting information using up-to-date resources supplied by Edinburgh Food Project (e.g., leaflets, referral information, contact details).
- Record relevant information as required and in line with confidentiality policies.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries and safeguard both client and volunteer wellbeing.
- Attend training sessions and supervision meetings as needed.

Skills and Qualities

- A warm, approachable, and empathetic nature.
- Excellent listening and interpersonal skills.
- Non-judgemental attitude and ability to respect confidentiality.
- Willingness to learn about local services and signposting options.
- Ability to work sensitively with people from a wide range of backgrounds, including those experiencing crisis.
- Reliability and a willingness to work as part of a team.
- Confidence to engage in conversation with clients, including initiating interaction.

Support and Training Provided

- Induction and safeguarding training
- Signposting resources and ongoing updates
- Regular check-ins and support from the Community Guider Coordinator
- Opportunities to attend further training sessions on related topics (e.g. trauma awareness, mental health first aid)

Time Commitment

We ask for a minimum commitment of 2-3 hours one session per week or fortnightly though this can be discussed and agreed based on availability.

Benefits to Volunteers

- Make a meaningful difference in the lives of people facing hardship
- Gain experience in community support and signposting
- Join a friendly, supportive volunteer team
- Opportunity to develop skills in listening, communication, and empathy