

Donations Handling Policy

POLICY CONTROL

Version	Description	Date
1	New policy 19 th May 2026 for Handling of Unusable or Restricted Donations	19 th May 2026
Board Approved		20 th July 2026
For Review:		July 2028

Related policies

Cash Handling Policy
Thank you policy
Governing Document

Purpose

Chesterfield Foodbank is extremely grateful for all donations received. This policy ensures that all donations are handled safely, ethically, and in line with our charitable objectives (See governing document). For donations of cash, see Cash Handling Policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all non-cash donations received at Chesterfield Foodbank, including those delivered to our warehouse, distribution centres, or via partner organisations.

Standard Handling of Accepted Donations

The majority of donations received by Chesterfield Foodbank consist of items that are suitable for inclusion in emergency food parcels and form part of our normal operational processes.

Donations are:

- Weighed upon receipt
- Recorded by weight and donor where known
- Recorded as anonymous where donor details are not available

Where possible, donors are thanked in line with the charity's Thank You Policy.

Donations are then sorted by volunteers according to:

- Item type
- Expiry date
- Suitability for distribution

Suitable items are stored and used to prepare emergency food parcels of varying sizes to meet the needs of individuals, couples, and families.

Food parcels are distributed through:

- Chesterfield Foodbank centres
- Our rural delivery service

This process helps ensure donated items are handled safely, fairly, and efficiently in support of people experiencing financial hardship.

Items We Are Unable to Distribute

- For safety and fairness, the following items cannot be included in standard food parcels or given directly to people accessing our service:

- Alcohol (will not be distributed to people accessing our services or to partner organisations supporting vulnerable individuals)
 - Medicines or medical products
 - Baby formula milk
 - Hazardous or chemical products (e.g. bleach)
 - Perishable items that cannot be safely stored or distributed except where agreed with the Operations Manager in advance
 - Non-food items outside our usual provision (e.g. toys, gifts, luxury hampers, clothing and shoes, gift cards), except during agreed seasonal projects (see below)
 - Cash
- This list is not exhaustive.

Seasonal and Project-Based Exceptions

At certain times of the year, Chesterfield Foodbank may accept and distribute additional items as part of planned seasonal support, including:

- Christmas – toys, gifts, and festive items
- Easter – Easter eggs and seasonal treats
- At any other time – Raffle/Tombola/Fundraising items

These items are:

- Accepted only during defined periods
- Distributed through planned processes
- Managed in line with available resources and capacity

Outside of these periods, such items will be treated as non-standard donations and handled in accordance with this policy.

Bulk or Non-Standard Quantities

Occasionally, Chesterfield Foodbank may receive donations in bulk quantities or large-volume formats that are not immediately suitable for direct distribution within standard food parcels.

Where capacity allows, and where it is safe, practical, and appropriate to do so, the charity may:

- Split or decant items into smaller quantities suitable for distribution
- Repackage items safely and hygienically
- Label repackaged items appropriately, including contents and relevant dates where applicable

Any such handling will be carried out with due regard to:

- Food safety and hygiene
- Storage requirements
- Available volunteer capacity and resources
- The suitability of the item for redistribution

Where it is not feasible or practical to split or decant items, the charity may use its discretion to:

- Allocate the item directly to a client or household where there is an identified need for the quantity provided, or
- Offer the item in exchange for a suggested donation to support the work of the charity

All decisions will be made in a proportionate and reasonable manner, taking into account fairness, practicality, and the best interests of the charity and the people it supports.

Guiding Principles

When handling non-standard donations, we will:

Chesterfield Foodbank, Unit 6 Carrwood Road Ind. Est. Carrwood Road, Chesterfield, S41 9QB
 Mobile No: 07529 224996 Email: info@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk
 Registered Charity No: | 1174426 Reg in Eng. & Wales

- Act in line with our charitable purpose
- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the people we support
- Respect donor intent wherever possible
- Ensure transparency and accountability
- Apply a consistent, proportionate, and common-sense approach

Hierarchy for Use of Unusable Donations

1. Redistribution to Appropriate Organisations

Where suitable, items may be passed to other charities or community organisations better placed to use them, for example baby items could be transferred to a specialist baby charity.

All redistribution will be subject to safeguarding and suitability checks. Items such as alcohol will not be redistributed to organisations supporting vulnerable individuals where this may be inappropriate.

2. Fundraising Use (Where Practical)

Items may be used to support fundraising activities where appropriate, such as stall holder raffles, tombolas or other fundraising activities including the sale of items or release of the items with a suggested donation to the charity. This will only be undertaken where it is practical, lawful, proportionate, and within the charity's capacity.

3. Internal Use (Occasional and Proportionate)

Low-value items that cannot be redistributed may be used on an occasional basis to support the work of the charity, for example:

- Volunteer recognition or leaving events
- Light refreshments for staff or volunteers

This use will be:

- Infrequent and proportionate
- Clearly linked to supporting the charity's work
- Not for personal or private gain

4. Responsible Disposal

Where items cannot be safely or appropriately used, they will be disposed of responsibly.

Decision Making

Decisions regarding the handling of non-standard donations will be made by the Operations Manager, guided by this policy. Any uncertainty, or items of higher value, should be referred to the Trustees.

Record Keeping

A record will be kept in the Stock In/Out sheet of all stock, standard or non-standard. This record details how stock is redistributed, used for fundraising, or disposed of through the normal Weighing Out process.

Communication with Donors

On our website, we provide guidance to donors on the types of items we are able to accept, including seasonal items. Where unsuitable items are received outside of these periods, they will be managed in line with this policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains practical, appropriate, and aligned with best practice.