



Volunteer Handbook



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Welcome to the team

Thank you for giving your time, skills and experience to support Chesterfield Foodbank and our local community. We are delighted to welcome you and hope you enjoy being part of the team.

This handbook explains how the Foodbank works, what you can expect as a volunteer and the practical standards that help keep everyone safe. It summarises the essentials; full policies, procedures and training are available online, through Assemble or from your Main Contact.

Your Main Contact

Your usual first point of contact is your Centre Manager or another named Main Contact for your role. If you are unsure who to contact, use the main Foodbank number or email below.

Contact details

Main Foodbank contact	07529 224996 info@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk
Address	Unit 6, Carrwood Road Industrial Estate, Carrwood Road, Chesterfield, S41 9QB
Website	chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk
Volunteer information	chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk/current-volunteers/

Please visit our Volunteers Welcome Page and bookmark it for future reference.



Scan this QR code to go to the Volunteers page on our website to access the Welcome page and all the useful and relevant links contained within this Handbook.

<https://chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk/current-volunteers/welcome/>

Project Coordinators

Patrick Evans – Operations Manager

Patrick oversees day-to-day operations, including foodbank centres, the warehouse, food and essential supplies, deliveries, health and safety, and support for Centre Managers and volunteers. Contact: 07529 224996 or info@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk.

Jacqueline DeVeaux – Communications, Engagement and Funding Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Jacqueline oversees volunteer recruitment and training, communications, community engagement, partnerships and fundraising. She is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Contact: 07529 224995 or jacqueline@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk.

About Chesterfield Foodbank

Chesterfield Foodbank provides emergency food, essential items and support to local people experiencing financial crisis. Clients are referred by approved local organisations and are issued with an electronic voucher code to bring to one of our foodbank centres. Alongside food, we help people connect with specialist advice and support that can address the underlying causes of crisis.

Our centres serve Brimington, Hasland, Chesterfield town centre, Whittington Moor and Loundsley Green. We also serve the Hope Valley area. The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees and relies on community donations, grants, fundraising and the contribution of volunteers.

Our vision, mission and values

Vision	Chesterfield without the need for foodbanks.
Mission	To distribute emergency food and other essentials while working with partner organisations so people receive the help and professional advice they need to address the underlying cause of crisis.
Values	Compassion, dignity, community and justice.

Trussell

Chesterfield Foodbank is part of Trussell's UK-wide network of foodbanks. Trussell provides guidance, training, resources, technology and support, and campaigns for long-term solutions to financial hardship and a future without the need for foodbanks. Find out more at trussell.org.uk.

Volunteering with us

Volunteers are involved throughout the Foodbank. Roles include receiving and sorting donations, packing food parcels, driving, welcoming clients, offering refreshments and signposting, supporting administration and governance, fundraising, events, and other practical tasks.

Joining the team

For safeguarding and insurance reasons, everyone must complete our approved recruitment and induction process before volunteering. This includes providing contact and emergency-contact details, references, a safeguarding self-declaration and, where a role is eligible, undergoing an appropriate DBS check. Informal, casual or unregistered volunteering is not permitted. Current opportunities are advertised on our website here chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/volunteer/.

Our shared commitment

We will welcome you and treat you with respect, provide clear guidance and appropriate training, keep you informed about your role, consider reasonable adjustments, protect your privacy and give you a named contact for support.

In return, we ask you to:

- uphold the Foodbank's vision, mission and values and remember that you represent the charity

- treat clients, volunteers, staff, partner organisations and members of the public with dignity and respect
- follow your training and all relevant policies, procedures and role instructions
- meet agreed commitments and give as much notice as possible if you cannot attend
- keep your contact and emergency-contact details up to date
- communicate openly, honestly and respectfully and raise concerns promptly
- tell your Main Contact if you need support, wish to change roles or want to stop volunteering.

Full details are set out in the **Volunteering Policy & Agreement**, which all volunteers are asked to read and sign.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We want everyone to feel welcome, respected and able to contribute. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying. Please tell your Main Contact if you need a reasonable adjustment or additional support, or if you experience or witness behaviour that concerns you. See the **Equal Opportunity Policy** and **Volunteering Policy & Agreement** for further information.

Assemble

Assemble is Trussell's secure volunteer portal. It holds your volunteer profile and contact details, which you can review and update at any time. You can also access training, view your training record, read Foodbank news and find resources and volunteering opportunities. Access Assemble at volunteer.trussell.org.uk/auth/login. The foodbank's **Privacy notice** is available online.

Induction, training and development

Every volunteer receives an induction covering safeguarding, clear and safe boundaries, health and safety, data protection and confidentiality, a warehouse introduction and practical role-specific guidance. During your first sessions you will normally shadow or work alongside an experienced volunteer.

Complete all training identified as mandatory for your role. The Induction Refresher and Safeguarding training must be renewed at least every three years. Your Main Contact will tell you when training is due or if additional training is needed.

Training, guidance and development opportunities are available through the Volunteers page: chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk/current-volunteers/.

Events and additional opportunities

You may occasionally be invited to help at food drives, concerts, fayres, community stalls, fundraising activities or awareness-raising events. Helping at these activities is optional.

We also arrange optional social and volunteer-appreciation activities, such as quizzes, bowling and other get-togethers. These are a chance to relax, have fun and meet volunteers from other Foodbank teams.

Public Event details are listed on the What's On calendar, available through the Volunteers page. The calendar also includes free or subsidised wider community, charity and church events that may interest volunteers and clients. Private events are on WhatsApp and Assemble.

Staying up to date

We share important information through session volunteer briefings, WhatsApp groups, the Volunteers page, the What's On calendar, by email and our quarterly newsletter. Please read any operational updates and attend briefings where possible so you do not miss information affecting your role.

Using WhatsApp

Our main volunteer WhatsApp group is used for general updates and announcements; some centres also have a team group for rotas, absences and cover. Joining is optional and based on your consent. Other members will be able to see your phone number.

- Keep messages relevant to Foodbank volunteering
- Do not use Foodbank groups for personal issues or political or religious debate.
- Respect other volunteers' privacy and obtain permission before contacting someone privately.
- Tell us if you want to join or leave a group; notifications can be muted in WhatsApp settings.

At the foodbank centre

The Support Hub

Our Support Hub is based on a simple 'cup of tea principle': every client should receive a warm welcome and be offered a drink, a snack and an opportunity to talk. Emergency food meets an immediate need; a kind conversation can also help someone connect with support that may reduce future reliance on the Foodbank.

Welcoming and listening

Welcome clients warmly and make sure they know where to wait and what will happen. Offer a drink and snack and, where appropriate, sit and talk with them in an open, shared area. Listen without judgement and ask about practical needs relevant to their food parcel, such as allergies, dietary requirements, cooking facilities and the needs of children or pets.

Clients must always be treated with dignity, compassion and respect. They must never feel pressured to discuss their circumstances or engage with another service. No client should be left ignored, unattended or unsure where to go.

Signposting and warm handovers

While the client's food parcel is being made up, your continuing chat is an opportunity to signpost the client to onward support. Volunteers must not provide legal, housing, debt, benefits or other specialist advice, interpret documents or tell clients what action they should take. Volunteers may listen, provide approved publicly available information and, where authorised and with the client's consent, make a referral or offer a warm handover to an appropriate adviser or organisation. Always use approved signposting materials from the Signposting Toolkit or display leaflets and ask the session supervisor if you are unsure. See the **Signposting Policy** for full guidance.

On-site specialist support

Different organisations attend through the Guest Agency Rota and may offer support with benefits, debt, housing, employment, health and wellbeing, domestic abuse and other difficulties. Citizens Advice also provides financial-inclusion support at daytime centres. Check the current rota online or ask your Centre Manager what is available.

Foodbank vouchers

Clients should normally obtain a Foodbank voucher before attending. On-site advisers should not routinely be asked to issue a voucher simply because someone has arrived without one. Explain how to obtain a voucher through the normal referral routes, including the Help Through Hardship helpline on 0808 208 2138 or local Citizens Advice. Where necessary, the Centre Manager may authorise a 24-hour emergency pack in accordance with Foodbank procedures.

Remember

Be warm, respectful and helpful, but keep all support within your volunteer role and approved Foodbank processes. Volunteers must not provide specialist advice or make personal arrangements with clients.

Safeguarding: recognise, respond and report

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. A concern may arise from something you see or hear, a disclosure, a change in behaviour or anything that makes you feel uneasy about a child or adult at risk.

- Stay calm, listen and take the person seriously. Thank them for telling you.
- Do not investigate, question repeatedly, confront anyone or try to decide whether the concern is true.
- Do not promise secrecy. Explain that you must share the concern with the Safeguarding Lead so the right help can be considered.
- Record the facts promptly, including dates, times, places and the person's own words where possible. Do not add assumptions or opinions.
- Report the concern as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy or session supervisor.

Immediate danger or serious injury

Call 999 (or 112) first. Then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

Safeguarding contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jacqueline DeVeaux 07529 224995 jacqueline@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Christine Hardy christine@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk
Operations Manager	Patrick Evans 07529 224996 info@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk
31:8 safeguarding advice	0303 003 1111, option 2
Concern about a colleague	Report to the Safeguarding Lead or use the Whistleblowing Policy. If the concern involves your normal contact, approach another named lead or trustee.

Full reporting procedures are set out in the **Safeguarding Policy and Procedure**. If in doubt: report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Clear, safe boundaries

Safe boundaries protect clients, volunteers and the Foodbank. They reduce the risk of harm, allegations, misunderstandings, unfairness and conflicts of interest. They also protect volunteers from the stress and pressure that can develop if a client becomes attached to or dependent on one individual.

Non-negotiable boundaries

- Never be alone with a client. Stay in an open or shared space where other volunteers are present. A quieter table is fine; a private room is not.
- Never enter a client's home or arrange a home visit. Authorised doorstep deliveries (Hope Valley only) must follow the current delivery instructions and do not permit entry into the home.
- Never offer a client a lift in your own vehicle or travel alone with them.
- Never arrange to meet a client privately or outside an authorised Foodbank session or activity.
- Never share your mobile number, home address, personal email or social-media account. Do not contact clients through a personal account or make your own arrangements with them.
- Never invite a client to your home or tell them where you live.
- Never give or lend cash to a client or use your own money to buy food, goods, travel or other help.
- Never promise personal or continuing help. Listen, and use approved Foodbank routes.
- Do not accept gifts, money or favours from clients. Tell the session supervisor if anything is offered.

Fairness: no favourites

- Treat clients consistently and with equal dignity. Do not provide extra food, priority, special access, money or personal help outside agreed procedures.
- Do not create an exclusive relationship. If a client asks specifically for you, contacts you personally, waits for you or begins relying on you, tell the supervisor promptly so support can be shared safely.
- If you know or recognise a client from outside the Foodbank, ask another team member to support them or take over where possible. This helps the service remain impartial, protects confidentiality and reduces potential awkwardness or conflicts of interest.
- Do not promise secrecy, guarantee an outcome or say you will personally sort out someone's situation.

Professional boundaries are not unkind

They make support safer, fairer and sustainable and ensure help comes from the organisation rather than depending on one volunteer.

Personal safety and difficult behaviour

- Get support early. Alert the session supervisor and keep colleagues nearby; do not manage aggression alone.
- When it is safe, use a calm voice and open posture, listen, acknowledge the concern and offer two simple choices.
- Keep a safe distance and clear route to the exit. Calmly state that abusive or threatening behaviour is unacceptable.
- Step away if the situation is not calming. Do not touch, restrain, pursue or argue with the person.
- If someone appears intoxicated, notify the supervisor, and keep the interaction brief.
- Call 999 if there is immediate danger, serious injury, a medical emergency or risk of harm.
- Report and record incidents and near misses, then debrief with the team. Speak up if you feel shaken or need support. More detail is provided through **Handling Difficult Situations** training and the **Safeguarding, Health and Safety, and Lone Working and Personal Safety policies**.

Practical standards

Health, safety and safe working

Take reasonable care of your own safety and that of others. Follow your induction, local risk assessment, fire and evacuation procedures, manual-handling guidance and instructions for equipment or personal protective equipment (PPE). Report hazards, accidents, incidents and near misses promptly to the session supervisor. Full requirements are in the **Health and Safety Policy**.

Lone working

Avoid working alone. If lone working is exceptionally necessary, it must be authorised in advance and the current **Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy** must be followed, including arrival and departure contact and an escalation plan. Never use ladders or steps, undertake unsafe lifting or meet a client while working alone.

Confidentiality and data protection

Protect all personal and confidential information you encounter through your role. Only access or share information when necessary for your duties, with authorised people and through approved Foodbank systems. Never discuss clients outside the Foodbank or post information about them online.

- Keep paperwork, passwords, screens and devices secure.
- Do not use personal email, cloud storage, messaging or devices for storing sensitive, confidential or client information.
- Report any loss, accidental disclosure, wrongly sent message or other suspected data breach immediately to the Data Protection Lead on 07529 224996 or info@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk.
- Remember that confidentiality continues after your volunteering role ends.

All volunteers must follow the **Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement, Volunteering Policy & Agreement** and Understanding Your Responsibilities for Data Protection guidance.

Media, photography and social media

Refer all media enquiries to your Main Contact. Do not make statements on behalf of the Foodbank unless a Project Coordinator has authorised you to do so. Do not post confidential information, identifiable client details or photographs taken during your role.

We will ask for consent before using identifiable photographs or recordings of you for publicity. You may decline or withdraw consent at any time without affecting your volunteering. Tell your Main Contact if you do not wish to be included on a particular occasion. See the **Social Media Policy** for further guidance.

IT and communications

Use Foodbank equipment, accounts, email and internet access only for authorised purposes. Keep passwords confidential, lock or sign out of devices and do not install software or connect unapproved services. Be professional in all communications and report suspicious messages, lost equipment or possible security problems immediately. Role-specific users must follow the **Volunteer IT and Communications Policy** and any current instructions issued with equipment.

Expenses and cash

Reasonable agreed expenses can be reimbursed so that volunteers are not financially disadvantaged. Agree expenses with the Operations Manager in advance and submit the appropriate form and evidence. Do not personally reimburse clients or use your own money to meet their needs. Follow the **Expenses Policy** and **Financial Controls and Cash Handling Policy** whenever handling Foodbank money or donations.

Driving and deliveries

Only drive or make deliveries for the Foodbank when authorised and trained for that role. Ensure your licence, vehicle, insurance and roadworthiness meet the current requirements. Follow the delivery instructions, protect client information, keep personal contact details private and complete the required check-in and check-out procedure. Current Driving Guidelines will be provided by the Operations Manager.

Everyday expectations

Clothing and identification

Wear clean, practical clothing suitable for your role. Warehouse volunteers must wear closed-toe footwear and warm clothing when needed. Wear any provided PPE, branded clothing and your name or ID badge during your session. Do not smoke or vape while wearing Foodbank branded clothing/tabards

Smoking and vaping

Smoking and vaping are not permitted inside Foodbank premises or close to doors or windows. Follow the local venue rules and use designated areas where provided. Please remember that you are an ambassador for the foodbank, so please do not smoke or vape whilst any foodbank branded clothing is visible.

Personal belongings

Avoid bringing valuables and place personal belongings in the designated area. Personal belongings remain your responsibility. Hand lost property to your Main Contact.

Children and young volunteers

Children and young people may only volunteer in approved, age-appropriate activities and must be supervised in accordance with the Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies, with authorisation from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Operations Manager. The child or young person's parent or guardian must be a registered, trained and inducted volunteer. Informal or unregistered volunteering is not permitted.

Dogs and assistance animals

Assistance dogs are welcomed in accordance with our policy. Other dogs and support animals require prior agreement and may need an alternative arrangement. Do not handle or approach a client's dog without permission from the owner, and refer any safety or access concerns to the Operations Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead. See the **Dogs, Assistance Dogs and Support Animals Policy**.

Food and other donations

Follow current instructions when receiving, recording, sorting, storing or declining donations. Cash must be handled under the **Financial Controls and Cash Handling Policy**. Do not take donated items for personal use unless this has been specifically authorised under the **Donations Handling Policy**.

Looking after resources

Handle equipment and stock carefully, use the designated recycling and waste points, switch off unnecessary lighting or heating where authorised and report faults or shortages. Ask your Main Contact for another task if you finish your allocated tasks.

Attendance and transport

Tell your Main Contact as early as possible if you cannot attend or need to swap a shift. Volunteers may privately and voluntarily arrange lifts with other volunteers, including through a team WhatsApp group. No one is obliged to provide transport. Volunteers must never offer lifts to clients.

If something goes wrong

Concerns, complaints and problem solving

Raise day-to-day concerns with your Main Contact as early as possible so they can be resolved informally. If the matter concerns your Main Contact, approach a Project Coordinator; if it concerns a Project Coordinator, contact the Chair of Trustees. The Problem Solving Procedure explains how volunteer concerns and concerns about volunteer conduct are handled. Complaints about staff or trustees are covered by the Complaints Procedure.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is for serious concerns about wrongdoing, illegality, danger or concealment that affect the public interest. Follow the **Whistleblowing Policy** and report to another appropriate lead or trustee if the concern involves the person you would normally approach. If your concern involves a Project Coordinator or the person you would normally report to, email secretary@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk and mark your message “Private and confidential – for the Chair of Trustees.” The Secretary will ensure it is passed securely to the Chair.

Serious misconduct

Serious misconduct may result in a volunteer being asked to stop volunteering immediately. Examples include violence or threatening behaviour, theft, serious discrimination or harassment, attending under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and serious breaches of safeguarding, confidentiality or health and safety. Full details are in the **Volunteering Policy & Agreement** and **Problem Solving Procedure**.

Wellbeing and support

Volunteering can sometimes be emotionally demanding. Do not bottle up worries or concerns. Speak privately with your Main Contact or a Project Coordinator if you feel overwhelmed, affected by an incident or worried about your role. Current sources of mental-health and practical support are listed at chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk/mental-health-support/.

Where to find guidance

This handbook summarises the essentials. Always follow the most recent policy, training and role instructions. Public policies are available at chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk/about/policies/. Volunteer documents and training are available through Assemble or from your Main Contact.

Key policies and guidance

Your volunteer relationship	Volunteering Policy & Agreement; Equal Opportunity Policy; Expenses Policy; Problem Solving Procedure
Safety and safeguarding	Safeguarding Policy and Procedure; Clear, Safe Boundaries summary; Health and Safety Policy; Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy; Handling Difficult Situations guidance; Driving Guidelines
Information and communications	Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement; Signposting Policy, Data Protection Policy; Understanding Your Responsibilities for Data Protection; Volunteer IT and Communications Policy; Social Media Policy; Privacy Notice
Money, goods and premises	Financial Controls and Cash Handling Policy; Donations Handling Policy; Dogs, Assistance Dogs and Support Animals Policy
Speaking up	Complaints Procedure; Problem Solving Procedure; Whistleblowing Policy

Some governance documents, including the Privacy Notice and Record of Processing Activities, are maintained by the charity. Ask your Main Contact if you need help finding or understanding any document.

Quick contact guide

I cannot attend or need to swap	Contact your Centre Manager or Main Contact through the agreed channel.
I have a safeguarding concern	Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. Call 999 first in an emergency.
There has been an accident or near miss	Tell the session supervisor immediately and complete the required record.
I may have lost or shared information	Tell the Data Protection Lead immediately: 07529 224996 or info@chesterfield.foodbank.org.uk .
I have a complaint or concern	Speak to your Main Contact or follow the Problem Solving, Complaints or Whistleblowing procedure as appropriate.
I need support with my role	Speak to your Main Contact or a Project Coordinator.

Your volunteer induction checklist

Use this checklist following your induction and ensure you have received the information, training and support you need.

Before or during or shortly after your induction

- ☐ Attend the warehouse visit and induction presentation
- ☐ Complete Safeguarding Awareness Training
- ☐ Receive the Volunteer Handbook
- ☐ Receive your name or ID badge
- ☐ Receive the Safeguarding Pocket Guide
- ☐ Read and sign the Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement
- ☐ Read and sign the Volunteering Policy & Agreement
- ☐ Complete the Health and Safety induction form
- ☐ Receive the Clear, Safe Boundaries summary
- ☐ Provide current contact and emergency-contact details
- ☐ Be invited to the main Foodbank WhatsApp group, if you have consented

When you join your team

- ☐ Be introduced to your Main Contact or Centre Manager
- ☐ Be invited to your team WhatsApp group, if applicable and you have consented
- ☐ Be added to the rota
- ☐ Receive practical, role-specific guidance
- ☐ Be assigned a buddy or experienced volunteer to shadow
- ☐ Know how to report an absence, concern, accident or safeguarding matter
- ☐ Know where to find policies, training and volunteer updates
- ☐ Complete the Data Security Statement or Manager Agreement, if required for your role

If anything is missing

Please tell your Main Contact. The checklist is here to help you and the Foodbank make sure you feel informed, prepared and supported.



Scan this QR code to go to the Volunteers page on our website to access the Welcome page, Assemble and all the useful and relevant links