

Trustee Information Pack

About Edinburgh School Uniform Bank

When a child or young person goes to school in the “wrong” clothes, they are vulnerable to social exclusion, bullying, low self-esteem and poor mental health. Lack of suitable clothing or footwear can lead to low attendance; the effects can be devastating.

Edinburgh School Uniform Bank (ESUB) was formed in 2015 by local people who wanted to provide practical help for families facing hardship by giving them school uniform. We became a registered charity in 2017 and our work has grown substantially since then.

We work closely with local partners to support thousands of families each year. The Board of Trustees oversees the charity as a whole and drives its strategic direction, while two part-time staff and a team of volunteers run our operations.

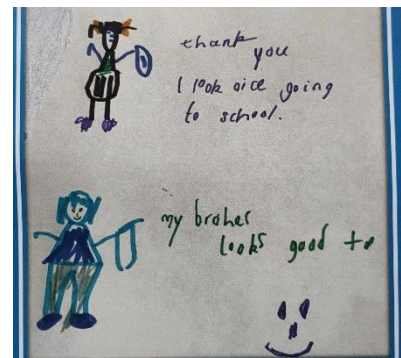


“The families I referred would not have managed to send their children to school without this service”.

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision is that every child and young person in Edinburgh has a school uniform and thrives at school.

We work with donors, volunteers and partners to make sure that every child and young person in Edinburgh has a suitable school uniform. Families tell us that having a uniform helps their children’s self-esteem and school attendance.



Our Approach

We are not a campaigning organisation – we do not seek to address the causes of hardship, but rather our focus is on providing practical help. We maintain a close dialogue with other organisations including campaigning groups and those who provide other forms of support, so that we can all work together to facilitate the best outcomes for local families.

Hardship comes in many forms. Many families are working hard but still living in poverty, while others face difficulties with mental health or issues around addiction, domestic abuse or parental imprisonment.

While basic items of uniform are relatively inexpensive at supermarkets, many children do not have an adult in their life who has the money and capacity to make sure that they are suitably clothed for school.

“Many families may not be able to afford more than one item of uniform, meaning that when it's washed it may not be dry in time for the next day, so children are absent”.

One mum cried and said
“Now my kids won't feel ashamed going to school”.

We give new and pre-loved uniform and other school essentials to children and young people in two ways:

1. We empower local communities to support their own children and young people in ways that are accessible and dignified for all. We partner with schools and community groups to set up and run local initiatives such as mini uniform banks, sharing rails, pop-up events, free “shoe shops” and other projects that meet the needs of their families.
2. We provide bespoke packs of new school uniform and accessories to children and young people who are referred to us by professionals, when they cannot access resources locally and a “cash first” approach is not workable.



Our ethos is to give families as much choice as possible, to support their dignity and wellbeing. If a young person requests a particular style of clothing in order to fit in with their peers, we will provide it. We encourage schools and community groups to offer uniform to families on a “take what you need” basis so that parents and carers can browse the clothing and choose what is best for their child, without the stigma of receiving a hand-out.

With thousands of items of clothing coming through our door each year, much of our work revolves around logistics and funding but we always keep local children, young people, parents and carers at the centre of what we do.

"Thank you so much for the school clothes. You have absolutely no idea how much this helps me. My husband passed away this year and I am a kinship carer for my 3 grandchildren. This has taken so much of the worry I am overwhelmed and emotional for the kindness of others helping others".

Our Operations

We work all year round, with the exception of the Christmas period. All our work is undertaken by a team of around 20 volunteers under the direction of two part-time staff.

Many of the new items that we give to families are donated to us by members of the public and local businesses via a network of drop-off points around the city. We buy anything else that is needed from funds that are donated to us or that we secure through grant funding.

Local people also give us their out-grown uniforms, and we check every item for quality before offering pre-loved clothing to schools, community centres, youth groups, and so on. Feedback shows that families love to choose items for themselves and really appreciate uniform being made available for free.



In 2022/23 we reached an estimated 4,500 children and young people.

Our Board of Trustees

Our Board is made up of elected Trustees who oversee the governance of the charity. There are currently four Trustees. We have won multiple awards including a UK-wide Charity Governance Award as well as the Lord Provost's Inspiring Volunteer of the Year and a special commendation as Trustee of the Year in the Scottish Charity Awards.

Our Trustees play a crucial role in setting the strategic direction of the charity while also having oversight of its operational, regulatory, and financial governance.

The role of Trustee includes:

- ensuring that our work remains focussed on our aims and strategic objectives;
- ensuring the prudent and responsible management of the charity and its resources;
- playing an active part in sustaining and growing the charity so that we can better achieve our vision.

Trustees work on a voluntary basis but can claim reasonable expenses incurred as part of their role.



“The children are more confident as they have something in common with their classmates and peers. I'm so happy to see them walk confidently to and from school. I see that they feel they belong”.

Expanding the Board

We are currently looking for up to two new Trustees to serve on our Board.

We are seeking people who bring a diverse range of skills and experience, both personal and professional, to their role, as well as a passion for supporting local families. ESUB has gone through a period of substantial growth and the Board needs to be expanded accordingly.

Previous Board experience is desirable but not essential. We will support new Trustees with training as appropriate.

We are particularly interested in hearing from candidates with experience of:

- lived experience of the issues that our clients face
- financial skills
- evaluating impacts and outcomes
- corporate partnerships

This is not an exhaustive list, and we welcome applications from any and all backgrounds and skill sets.

Board meetings are currently held every 2 months and additional discussion meetings for Trustees are sometimes held at other times (typically a few times a year). Meetings are usually held remotely but we meet in person from time to time.

Trustees work together to progress matters in between meetings, as well as liaising with staff and volunteers. The time commitment required of each Trustee is variable but is not limited to attendance at meetings. Trustees should anticipate a weekly time commitment of no less than three hours.

To fulfil this role you need to have:

- time and energy to devote to the role;
- enthusiasm to support the mission of ESub;
- ability to take a strategic view of ESub while understanding operational services;
- ability to respect the confidentiality of the Board and management discussions;
- willingness to attend ongoing training;
- genuine commitment to active participation in Board matters in a collaborative way.

You have to be 18 years old or over and must not be disqualified from acting as a Trustee. Further information about the duties and responsibilities of Trustees can be found at

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees>

How to Apply

Please email us at chair@edinburghuniform.org with an explanation of why you are interested in joining the Board and what skills and experience you can bring. Feel free to have an informal chat with our Chair before submitting your application (please email to arrange a phone call).

“It was nice seeing mummy smile and have happy tears, she said I looked really smart for school, and I felt good going to school”.

