

Food Bank Helpline Assistant Information Pack

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Job Details

Job title:	Food Bank Helpline Assistant
Reporting to:	Operations Lead
Direct Line Reports:	none
Contract Type:	Permanent contract
Hours:	20 hours per week
Work Pattern:	10.00am – 2.00pm
Salary:	£13.45 per hour
Location:	New Lairdship Yards, Broomhouse Road, Edinburgh, EH11 3UY (Hybrid Working)

The Application Process

Application deadline: Sunday 13 September 2026

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Interviews may take place before the closing date therefore early applications are encouraged.

Interview Date: Friday 18 September 2026

Interview location: In person, Edinburgh

Interview format: 45-minute interview. Competency-based questions will be sent out to candidates in advance of the interview together with timings and information about the selection panel. There may also be one or two small tasks to complete in advance that will be relevant to the job.

To Apply: Please send your CV of **no more than two sides of A4** to recruitment@edinburghfoodproject.org together with a statement of **no more than two side of A4** telling us how you meet the Person Specification and why you are interested in working with us here at Edinburgh Food Project.

Please also complete our [Equality and Diversity monitoring form](#)

Entitlement to work in the UK

A job offer will be subject to confirmation that you are permitted to work in the UK in accordance with the provisions of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. You will be asked to provide evidence of your entitlement to work in the UK if you are successful and an offer of employment is made. Please note that Edinburgh Food Project does not hold a sponsor licence and, therefore, cannot issue certificates of sponsorship under the points-based system.

Criminal Records Disclosure

A criminal records check is not a requirement of this role.

About Edinburgh Food Project

Edinburgh Food Project has been providing emergency food parcels to those in the community most in need since 2012. We don't believe that poverty is inevitable and have a vision of an Edinburgh without the need for Food Banks where everyone has what they need to thrive. We are working towards a world where there is no need for Food Banks in Edinburgh. Our Money Advice Service plays an important role in our strategy to achieve this by ensuring that people accessing our Food Banks get support with income maximisation, budgeting and debt.

Vision

An Edinburgh without poverty, where everyone has what they need to thrive.

Mission

To provide food and other everyday essentials, support, and advice, while working with individuals, communities, and partners to address the root causes of poverty.

Values

DIGNITY

- We recognise the importance of the power to choose what, where, when, how, and with whom you eat and how and when you interact with services.
- We involve people with lived experience in our decision-making and provide opportunities to contribute.

RESPECT

- We treat individuals as a whole person.
- We listen and are understanding of people's situations and will respect the choices they make.
- We recognise difference and respond in a way that respects people and their protected characteristic or social situation.

INTEGRITY

- We conduct ourselves with integrity and ensure our work is of the highest quality.
- We are transparent, accountable for our actions and are committed to learning from experience.

POSITIVITY

- We act with unconditional positive regard and always assume the best of people and situations.
- We do not accept the status quo.
- We hold to a belief in a better future and that there is a way to achieve it.

Strategic Objectives and Activities

RELIEF

To offer dignified immediate relief to people experiencing poverty

We provide food parcels containing enough for three meals a day for three days together with other everyday essentials e.g. toiletries, household, and pet items to people referred to our seven Food Banks across the city.

We also provide Emergency grants through the Money Advice Service such as fuel, crisis, and clothing grants.

SUPPORT

To offer support and advice to people experiencing poverty

We aim to support people beyond the initial provision of food and other items. Our Money Advice Service provides a dedicated phone line, outreach support at our Food Bank centres, and engages in casework to help people with individual issues including benefit advice and appeals.

We also invite other organisations to provide drop-in support at our Food Bank centres, make referrals and signpost to other sources or help, and work with partners on delivering additional community activities.

CHANGE

To advocate for societal change

We work in partnership with others including the Poverty Alliance and Trussell to drive systems change, which will reduce the need for Food Banks in Edinburgh.

We include people with lived experience in everything we do, and safeguard those we work with.

“The Food Bank was there when we really needed it, it was an absolute lifeline.”

“I have a passport now and birth certificate. I won my appeal... A massive thanks to you and EFP.”

“I have never felt as appreciated in ANY employment as I do at EFP”

Job Purpose

To act as the first point of contact for people seeking emergency food support from the charity. The postholder will answer telephone enquiries, explain how the Food Bank service operates, help callers access Food Bank vouchers in line with charity guidelines, and signpost people to statutory support and other services appropriate to their needs.

The role requires a compassionate, non-judgemental approach, strong communication skills, and the ability to maintain accurate records while handling a high volume of calls.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Telephone Support

- Answer incoming calls from people seeking food support. Listen carefully to callers and respond with empathy, dignity and respect.
- Respond appropriately to callers who may be distressed, frustrated or experiencing crisis, seeking support from a supervisor where necessary.
- Explain how the Food Bank referral system works, including the role of referral partners.
- Provide clear information about eligibility and the process for receiving Food Bank support. Explain self-referral arrangements and any applicable limits on support.
- Issue Food Bank vouchers in line with organisational guidelines and procedures.
- Make outgoing calls and complete agreed callbacks where required.
- Respond professionally and calmly during periods of high call volume.
- Ensure all callers receive a welcoming, supportive and non-judgemental service.
- Provide support in a way that is inclusive, non-discriminatory and respectful of people's backgrounds, identities and circumstances.

Information and Signposting

- Ask basic questions to understand a caller's circumstances and support needs.
- Signpost callers to appropriate organisations for further support, including money advice, benefits advice, housing support, health services and other community resources.
- Encourage callers to engage with referral agencies where ongoing support may be beneficial. Where established pathways exist, complete referrals to external support services and Edinburgh Food Project's own Money Advice Service.

- Keep up to date with information about local support services, food provision and community resources relevant to clients.
- Provide information rather than specialist advice, referring more complex matters to appropriate services.

Administration and Record Keeping

- Accurately record client information on the charity's database and case recording systems.
- Obtain and record consent for storing and processing personal information.
- Maintain accurate records of calls, vouchers issued and actions taken.
- Follow organisational guidance regarding confidentiality, information security and data protection legislation.
- Share feedback with colleagues and managers about common client issues, barriers to accessing support, and gaps in provision.

Safeguarding

- Complete mandatory safeguarding training and keep this knowledge up to date.
- Remain alert to potential safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people and adults at risk.
- Recognise when a caller may have urgent welfare needs. Follow organisational safeguarding procedures and promptly raise concerns with the designated Safeguarding Officer.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

1. Excellent listening and communication skills, with the ability to communicate clearly and sensitively by telephone.
2. Ability to demonstrate empathy, patience and a non-judgemental approach when supporting people in difficult circumstances.
3. Ability to work within established procedures and apply rules and eligibility criteria consistently.
4. Experience of using databases or computer systems to record and maintain accurate information.

5. Good attention to detail and ability to maintain accurate records.
6. Ability to manage a busy workload, including high call volumes and call-backs.
7. Basic IT skills, including email, databases and Microsoft Office applications.
8. Understanding of the importance of confidentiality, data protection and handling personal information appropriately.
9. Ability to maintain professional boundaries and work in a trauma-informed manner.
10. Understanding of the importance of safeguarding and ability to raise concerns in line with organisational procedures.
11. Commitment to treating all clients with dignity, respect and fairness, and to supporting people experiencing poverty and financial hardship.

Desirable Criteria

1. Experience of working in a charity, community, advice, customer service or support setting.
2. Awareness of the challenges faced by people experiencing poverty and financial hardship.
3. Knowledge of local support services, community resources or food support provision.
4. Understanding of GDPR and data protection requirements.
5. Previous safeguarding training or safeguarding awareness.

Employee Benefits

Compensation

- We are an accredited Living Wage Employer
- Competitive salary

Holiday

- 34 days annual leave, which includes 9 bank holidays

Pension

- We'll automatically enrol you into our pension scheme
- We offer a 4% minimum employer contribution and will match your contribution up to a maximum of 8%
- You'll need to pay at least 4% too, but you can opt to add more for the tax benefits!
- You can opt out if you'd prefer not to have a pension at all

Business Travel

- 55p per mile paid for business travel

Learning

- Learning budget for training courses and conferences
- Access to over 200 free courses

Health and Wellbeing

- Generous paid sick leave for both physical and mental health
- 1 week full pay in your probationary period
- 4 weeks full pay followed by 9 weeks half pay and up to 2 years income protection at half pay
- Access to Edinburgh Bicycle Co-op's Bike to Work Scheme
- Unlimited mental health consultations (for mild to moderate conditions), lifestyle coaching and wellbeing assessments
- Monthly wellbeing hour

Family

- Maternity pay – 1st 16 weeks full pay, 2nd 16 weeks half pay
- Paternity pay – 5 weeks full pay
- Paid adoption and shared paternal leave also available

Death in Service

- 3x your annual salary
- Access for you and eligible family members to financial support, legal support, wellbeing content, and discounts and savings

