



North Cotswold Foodbank VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

"It's a great feeling to go home after a day at the food bank knowing that someone won't go hungry that night."



Registered Charity No. 1181310 | Registered in England & Wales
Volunteer Handbook v2.1 February 23



Welcome to the North Cotswold Foodbank team

Thank you for giving up your time, skills and knowledge to support us and help our local community. We're delighted that you've decided to join our team. We hope you will enjoy your time with us.

This booklet is designed to give you a clear picture of how foodbanks are run and why we do it, as well as to set out some general guidelines about volunteering with us.

Contact details

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To find out more about The Trussell Trust please visit: www.trusselltrust.org

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1. North Cotswold Foodbank

Every day people in the North Cotswold area go hungry for reasons ranging from redundancy to receiving an unexpected bill on a low income. North Cotswold Foodbank provides a minimum of three days' emergency food and support to local people experiencing crisis.

North Cotswold Foodbank relies on the support of the local community through volunteering, food donations and fundraising. Almost all food is donated by the community through churches, schools, businesses, and supermarket collection days. Our clients are referred to us by frontline care professionals such as social workers, debt advisors, medical professionals and teachers, who identify people in need, and give them a voucher they can exchange for a food parcel containing three days' worth of nutritionally-balanced food at our foodbank outlets. Sometimes we can also provide toiletries and items such as cleaning products and nappies. Volunteer drivers also deliver parcels, if required.

Volunteers are involved with every bit of the foodbank. Volunteer roles include (but are not limited to) collecting and delivering donations, weighing and sorting donations, welcoming people, packing food parcels, preparing refreshments, liaising with local organisations and companies, providing administrative support, promoting the foodbank online, training, tidying and organising.

Our goal is to make the foodbank a relaxed and friendly place, where volunteers and visitors feel welcome and safe.

The foodbank is governed by its Trustees and there are currently seven Trustees. More information about North Cotswold Foodbank can be found at northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk.

2. Our Values

Our work focuses on helping people from all walks of life, restoring dignity and reviving hope – whether it is with our foodbank clients, supporters or indeed our volunteers. We welcome people from all backgrounds.

We are a Christian-based organisation motivated by Jesus' teaching on poverty and injustice. We operate according to Christian principles of compassion, honesty, integrity, openness, kindness and care of all people, regardless of backgrounds or beliefs. We believe in turning faith into practical action, living out God's love for everyone.

Whilst we are a Christian-based organisation, we serve and work with people of all faith groups and beliefs, or none. Volunteers that share our principles are welcome, whatever their personal faith position.

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We are passionate about inclusion and being non-judgemental is central to what we do. We believe that everyone has the right to have food on their plate, dignity, a chance to work and hope for the future. Everyone has unique skills and gifts to bring to society.

3. The Trussell Trust

North Cotswold Foodbank is part of a national network of foodbanks across the UK run by the Trussell Trust. The Trussell Trust is an anti-poverty charity founded on Christian principles. In this, the charity is guided by our values to be passionate, compassionate, accountable, innovative and empowering.

The story of the Trussell Trust began in 1997. In 1999 Salisbury foodbank was set up with the aim of supporting people in crisis. In 2004 the UK foodbank network was launched, resourcing and facilitating churches and communities nationwide to start their own foodbank.

Today the Trussell Trust operates an extensive network of foodbanks throughout the UK. The charity also carries out research and campaigning work, in partnership with other organisations in the sector.

North Cotswold Foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust's network providing us with access to:

- Trussell Trust Area Manager, providing direct support
- Operating Manual offering extensive guidance and editable resources
- Training
- Personalised website
- Data collection system, used to produce vouchers, record food donations and collect statistics about foodbank usage.
- Branding pack with logo and designs for leaflets, posters and banners.
- National and regional conferences and meetings.
- Corporate relationships brokered by the Trussell Trust such as Tesco food collections and cash top-up or access to surplus product donations from large companies.
- Funding grants administered by the Trussell Trust.
- Media opportunities and support from the Trussell Trust's media team
- Support and guidance from the Network Support team.

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4. Joining our foodbank

What you can expect from North Cotswold Foodbank:

- to be integrated into the structure of the charity and actively contribute to a charity dedicated to end hunger and poverty
- to be recognised as equal partners in achieving the aims of the charity
- to be recruited fairly in line with our volunteer recruitment process
- to be welcomed and treated with courtesy and respect
- clear instructions, information and advice to assist you in your role as well as access to relevant training
- to be consulted and informed regarding any possible changes to your role
- regular reviews to ensure you are confident and comfortable in your role
- a named contact for support: your main contact is the Project Manager and Assistant Manager.
- to have your right to privacy respected
- recognition and thanks

North Cotswold Foodbank expects volunteers to:

- uphold and champion the vision, mission and values of the North Cotswold Foodbank
- remember that you are a representative of the charity
- collaborate positively with staff, volunteers, members of the public, clients and staff from partner organisations throughout your time as a volunteer
- be open and honest in your dealings with us
- treat everyone with dignity and respect
- communicate in an open and respectful way whether in person, by phone or using digital communications
- comply with relevant laws, guidance, policies and procedures
- remember that you have been put in a position of trust and that such should not be abused
- meet mutually agreed expectations around your role and to communicate with your Main Contact if these cannot be met
- let us know if we can improve the service and support that you receive
- let us know if you wish to change the nature of your volunteering role or if you are unable to continue as a volunteer
- avoid acting fraudulently or dishonestly or doing anything that will bring the charity into disrepute or have a negative impact on reputation

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In support of this please ensure you:

- follow the guidance and practices in this Handbook and supporting documents which can be found in the [About our Foodbank](#) section of our website
- notify the foodbank as soon as possible if there are any changes to your contact details or emergency contact details.
- Let your main contact know if you are unable to attend **any** of the sessions you are signed up to, giving as much notice as is possible.

Our volunteers (definition)

A volunteer is someone who performs a task at the request of, or on behalf of, the charity. A volunteer does not receive financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of “out of pocket” expenses.

Volunteering for North Cotswold Foodbank is not a precursor to employment at the charity, nor are volunteers recruited to do the work of paid staff. No legally binding contract of employment or otherwise can be imposed on volunteers.

Recognition

Volunteers bring a huge amount of value through their time and commitment so at North Cotswold Foodbank we will take the time to thank and recognise our volunteers. This will take the form of day-to-day activities such as regular communication and asking for your feedback, to special thank you events which also provide a great opportunity to socialise with other volunteers.

Learning and development

Every volunteer will have an induction when they start their role. This should cover health and safety requirements, task training, and meeting the team, as well as generally ensuring the person is comfortable, confident, and have all they need to do the task in hand safely. Regular catch ups with your main contact at the foodbank will then provide the opportunity to identify any other training that will be of benefit.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

North Cotswold Foodbank is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. During your time volunteering you will be treated fairly regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins or socio-economic background. As a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting this position.

We firmly believe that no one should be left out. Whatever the needs of our volunteers, we do our best to meet them by being flexible, inclusive and accommodating. We hope that all volunteers will

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actively seek to create supportive and happy teams, and, when needed, will 'buddy' with someone who needs a little more help to accomplish the task in hand.

Expenses

North Cotswold Foodbank will pay for reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred whilst undertaking your volunteering role. Expenses should be discussed and agreed with your Main Contact in advance. For more information, please see our Volunteer Expenses policy.

Insurance, risk assessment and health and safety

The foodbank has a duty of care to ensure all volunteers are operating in a safe environment. All volunteers are covered by the North Cotswold Foodbank's public liability insurance. A Health and Safety Policy and risks linked to the role will be talked through as part of your induction. Any training on use of personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary to carry out your role safely will be provided and training needs will be reviewed regularly.

Problem solving

Problems may arise in a number of different ways. A volunteer may make a complaint about another volunteer, a member of staff or the North Cotswold Foodbank itself.

In cases of difficulty, the North Cotswold Foodbank:

- endeavours to get it right from the beginning, by following guidance on good practice, having up to date policies and listening to the concerns of volunteers
- offers means to achieve reconciliation when things go awry by ensuring everyone knows what to do when something goes wrong, appointing somebody to monitor volunteers' complaints and to explore independent means of conflict resolution when necessary
- accepts responsibility for ensuring volunteers' complaints have a fair hearing

Any complaint (oral or written) will be examined quickly and effectively. If there is no satisfactory resolution the volunteer will be referred to a senior manager, up to and including the Board of Trustees who will provide a written response within 10 working days.

For further information please see our [Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure](#) later in this document.

Gross misconduct

Volunteers are expected to behave responsibly throughout their time with the charity. Normally we would bring any difficulties to your attention informally. However, the behaviour listed below would result in us refusing any further voluntary assistance from you:

- Grossly indecent or immoral behaviour, deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or serious acts of harassment

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- Dangerous behaviour, fighting, or physical assault
- Incapacity whilst volunteering, or poor performance caused by intoxicants, alcohol, or drugs;
- Possession, supply, or use of illegal drugs
- Taking part in activities which result in adverse publicity for ourselves;
- Theft or unauthorised possession of money or property, whether belonging to us, another employee or volunteer, or a third party
- Destruction or sabotage of our property, or any other property on the premises;
- Serious breaches of Health and Safety procedures
- Maltreatment of volunteers, staff, people visiting the foodbank, other visitors or donors;
- Failure to report an incident of abuse, or suspected abuse, of a service user by an employee, other volunteer, or member of the public; and
- Convictions for any offence which may affect your suitability for the volunteering duties you are involved in.

Please note that a criminal record will not necessarily preclude you from volunteering, but we may need to make an assessment of any risks both to you and to others.

Safeguarding

We take safeguarding very seriously and are committed to fulfilling the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Disclosure and Barring Scheme and other relevant legislation aimed at the protection of vulnerable people. The charity ensures it promotes a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults.

All volunteers for the charity have a responsibility to follow best practice and to pass on any welfare concerns in line with our [Safeguarding Policy](#). Remember, safeguarding is the responsibility of all of us; if you spot something, make sure you immediately follow the training and guidance you receive.

Allegations which involve potentially criminal activities will be reported immediately to the police.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The charity fully complies with the requirements under GDPR and PECR and volunteers must do so too. Whilst volunteering you may have access to or learn of information of a confidential nature. We expect all volunteers to comply with our [Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement](#) and [Data Protection Policy](#).

Volunteers will not, either during their time at the charity or thereafter, use to the detriment or prejudice of the charity any confidential information about the charity or other information designated as confidential.

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Statements to the media

Any media enquiries must be directed to your Main Contact. You may be approached by your Main Contact to support a campaign or take part in an interview. Please note that volunteers must not make any statements to the media without the express permission of the Foodbank Project Manager.

From time-to-time photographs or filming may take place at the foodbank. Please ensure you have signed our permission form so that we can use your images. If you do not wish to be photographed or filmed, you are responsible for letting the photographer/camera operator at the time.

5. General standards

Driving

If it is a requirement of your volunteering role to possess a current driving licence and to drive for the charity then you are required to read and comply with the foodbank's **Driving policy**

Standard car insurance policies cover social use and commuting. Business cover covers a wider range of use such as travelling between different work locations, visiting customers or transporting business products and people.

Standard car insurance policies cover social use and commuting. As such, commuting to and from the foodbank in your car shouldn't require business cover. However, cover does vary depending on the provider. For more information visit:

<https://www.abi.org.uk/globalassets/files/publications/public/motor/2019/abi-guide-to-volunteer-driving---the-motor-insurance-commitment.pdf>

Minimum waste

We maintain a commitment to "minimum waste" which is essential to the cost effective and efficient running of the charity.

You can support this by:

- Handling machines, equipment and stock with care
- Turning off any unnecessary lighting and heating
- Being punctual
- Seeking additional tasks, if appropriate, if you complete your activity.

Personal property

No liability is accepted for any loss of, or damage to, personal belongings or property brought onto our premises. You are advised not to bring any personal items of value with you to work or, in

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particular, leave any items here overnight. Take care not to leave any personal items where they could be confused with donations or items available for clients to take.

Please be considerate of clients and other volunteers if you are using a mobile device while volunteering. It will likely be appropriate to switch it to silent or vibrate, and it is highly recommended that you do so if you have lots of notifications set. Never take a photograph of a client and always ask permission from other volunteers if you want to take a photograph to record an occasion.

Articles of lost property should be handed to your Main Contact.

Use of Computer Equipment

You may be required to use the internet or email system to carry out your duties. Any unauthorised use of either (e.g. for engaging in the dissemination of offensive or confidential content, bullying, piracy or other illegal activity, pornography, gambling, copyright infringement, or personal use unrelated to your task) may be regarded as gross misconduct.

You may be allowed to use the internet for personal tasks during break times.

No new software may be added (whether by CD-ROM, USB flash drive, download or any other means), copied or removed from our computers without the permission of the Project Manager.

For further information please see our [IT and Communications policy](#)

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted inside any of our buildings or close to any door or window. If we have provided you with over-garments e.g. tabards, please remove them before smoking. If we have provided you with branded clothing e.g. a polo shirt, please change into your own clothes before smoking (including e-cigarettes).

Suitable Clothing

You are likely to come into contact with a range of people during your volunteering. As such, we ask that you maintain a neat and tidy appearance at all times. You should wear clean clothes appropriate to your role and activities. If you are volunteering in the warehouse you should wear footwear with closed toes and warm clothes, particularly during the winter months when it can get cold.

If provided with branded t-shirts, fleeces and name badges please ensure that they are worn for the duration of your volunteering session.

Protection of Minors and Young People:

We have a responsibility to see that minors while helping out at the foodbank are afforded the protection consistent with our Safeguarding Policy.

This is expected to be complied with by all volunteers and staff. A copy of the Safeguarding policy will be given to you to read at your induction and is also on display at the foodbank centre{s} and warehouse.

We would appreciate it if you would please be team minded and help any volunteers needing support (if you are safely able to), especially younger people who may not be able to lift or move things or work at height.

Lone volunteering

For safety reasons we aim to ensure nobody volunteers alone. Volunteers visiting a foodbank centre or the warehouse when no-one else is present must notify the Project Manager/Assistant Manager by text or phone of their arrival, and alert when they leave or are joined by another. Ladders and steps must never be used unaccompanied and doors should be locked, with the key kept in the lock should you need to make a quick exit. Food deliveries to clients' home addresses must not be undertaken unless accompanied by another adult volunteer or employee.

Closed circuit television

Closed circuit television cameras are used on some of our premises for security purposes. We reserve the right to use any evidence obtained in this manner to handle complaints or problem solving issues.

Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure

The involvement of a volunteer is mostly a positive and rewarding experience for everyone involved. However, it is important to recognise that sometimes things can go wrong. When such cases can't be resolved through an informal discussion, it's important to have a Problem Solving Procedure to support your volunteer management. A Problem Solving Procedure acts in a similar way to an Employees Grievance Procedure, providing clarity as to the procedure when handling:

- A volunteer making a complaint against another volunteer, member of staff or the charity
- A complaint about a volunteers conduct or attitude
- A decline in the volunteers' performance.

In cases of conflict the charity:

- Endeavours to get it right from the start, by following guidance on good practice, having up to date policies and listening to the concerns of the individuals involved.
- Offers means to reach reconciliation by ensuring everyone knows what to do when something goes wrong, appointing somebody to monitor volunteer complaints and to explore independent means of conflict resolution when necessary.
- Accepts responsibility for ensuring volunteers' complaints have a fair hearing.

What to do if you need to make a complaint

Stage 1: Oral complaint

Initial complaints, whether concerning a volunteer, member of staff or the charity should first be discussed informally. Many issues can be resolved this way through sensible and open discussion. Complaints should initially be raised with the *{Person 1*}*, or if the complaint refers to *{Person 1*}* it should be made to *{Person2*}*.

Stage 2: Written complaint

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the oral complaint, you should make a formal complaint in writing to *{Person 1*}* or if the complaint refers to *{Person 1*}* it should be made to the *{Person 2*}*.

The charity will reply to the formal written complaint within 10 working days and we ask the complainant to respond within the following 15 working days.

Stage 3: Opportunity to appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of stage 2 then you can appeal to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees' decision is final.

What should happen if someone complains about you

Stage 1: Oral discussion

The first step will be an informal discussion about the complaint. This is an opportunity for you to hear about the complaint and offer your side of the story. It will also seek to identify some solutions, if required and appropriate.

Stage 2: Written warning

If the issue hasn't been resolved by the oral discussion, you may be issued with a written warning outlining the reason for the complaint. You will be given the opportunity to state your case formally to a responsible person within 15 working days of receiving the written warning.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set or help offered, based upon a timeline agreed by you and {Person 1/Person 2* - choose as appropriate}. If Stage 2 concludes with you being asked to leave you will be given the opportunity to appeal.

Stage 3: Opportunity to appeal

If you have been asked to leave you will be able to appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees. If appropriate a sub-committee will be formed to specifically hear the appeal.

If at Stage 2 you had been asked to leave, you will be suspended from your volunteering duties until the appeal has concluded.

To note:

- Complaints should not be made anonymously. Everyone should have the right to know what they have been accused of any by whom so that they are able to offer their side of the story.
- If attending any meetings as part of the problem solving procedure you will also be given the option to be accompanied by a nominated person of your choice.
- All complaints must be treated confidentially and should only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the situation.
- The charity will keep records of what happens and who is involved.
- Meetings will take place in a confidential, neutral place.
- You will be kept informed at every step of the procedure.

**Person 1:* this is the volunteer's direct supervisor. Depending on the volunteer's role and the set-up of the food bank Person 1 should be their main lead/contact. This may be their Volunteer Lead, Volunteer Supervisor, the food bank's Volunteer Coordinator or the food bank's Project Manager - choose as appropriate.

**Person 2:* this is Person 1's supervisor / boss. This may be the food bank's Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager. If Person 1 is the Project Manager, then Person 2 would be a nominated person from the Board of Trustees or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

As a volunteer at the charity, you may have access to (or may learn of) information of a confidential nature including personal volunteer, donor, supporter, general public and/or those of people visiting a food bank.

Confidential information includes (but is not limited to) food bank vouchers, data collection system entries, data logged on Assemble Volunteer Management System, Peakon, spoken words and presentations, printed documents, loose notes, diaries, memoranda, drawings, photographs, electronic, magnetic and optical storage, and computer printouts.

When someone gives us any confidential information, they need to be sure that we will not pass this on to anyone else without their prior permission and that such will be handled in line with the latest data protection legislation. This includes ensuring confidential information is never disclosed to people outside of the project.

The only exception to this is if you have been party to any information which raises a concern to you, such as a safeguarding matter. In this case, you will be expected to share this with your Main Contact who will follow up in line with the charity's safeguarding procedures and policy.

Confidentiality Statement

I understand that while volunteering with the Trussell Trust / food bank I may come across information that is confidential. I agree that I will never disclose such confidential information to anyone outside of the project, subject to the exception outlined above.

I also agree to respect the intellectual property of the Trussell Trust and food bank. I will not to pass on any forms or documentation I may use in the course of volunteering anyone outside of the project.

I understand breaches of this agreement could result in termination of my role as a volunteer and may lead to a case being raised with the ICO (Information Commissioners Officer)

Signed Date

Name.....

Volunteer IT and Communications policy

About this policy

This policy outlines the standards volunteers must observe when using the food banks IT and communications systems.

Breach of this policy will be dealt with under our Problem Solving Procedure.

Equipment security and passwords

- You are responsible for the security of the IT equipment whilst you are using it and you must not allow it to be used by anyone other than in accordance with this policy.
- You should use passwords on all food bank IT equipment. Passwords must be kept confidential.
- You must only log on to the IT systems using the log in details given to you by *your Main Contact*. You must not use another person's log in details or share your username and password with other volunteers *without permission from your Main Contact*.
- You must log out and shut down the computer at the end of each day / your session.

Systems and data security

- You should not destroy, delete or modify existing systems, programmes, information or data (except as authorised *by your Main Contact* in the proper performance of your duties).
- You must not download or install software from external sources without authorisation from *your Main Contact*.
- You must not attach any device or equipment including mobile phones, tablet computers or USB storage devices to our systems without authorisation from *your Main Contact*.
- You should exercise particular caution when opening unsolicited emails from unknown sources. If an email looks suspicious do not reply to it, open any attachments or click any links in it.
- Inform *your Main Contact* if you suspect the IT equipment may have a virus.

Email

- Adopt a professional manner and observe appropriate etiquette when communicating with others by email.
- Always use our standard email signature
- Remember that email can be used in legal proceedings and that even deleted emails may remain on the system and be capable of being retrieved.
- You must not send abusive, obscene, discriminatory, racist, harassing, derogatory, defamatory, pornographic or otherwise inappropriate emails.

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- You should not:
- Send or forward private emails on the food bank computer which you would not want a third party to read
- Send or forward chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip
- Contribute to system congestion by sending trivial messages or unnecessarily copying or forwarding emails to those who do not have a real need to receive them or
- Send messages from another person's email address (unless authorised *by your Main Contact*) or under an assumed name
- Use your own personal email account to send or receive emails relating to the running and operations of the food bank. Only use the email account we have provided for you.

Using the internet

- Internet access is provided primarily for the running and operating of the food bank.
- You should not access any web page or download any image or other file from the internet which could be regarded as illegal, offensive, in bad taste or immoral. Even web content that is legal in the UK may be in sufficient bad taste to fall within this prohibition. As a general rule if any person might be offended by the contents of a page, or if the fact that our software has accessed the page or file might be a source of embarrassment if made public, then viewing it will be a breach of this policy.
- We may block or restrict access to some websites at our discretion.

Monitoring

Our systems enable us to monitor telephone, email, voicemail, internet and other communications. As part of the running of the food bank, our telephone and computer systems may be continually monitored by automated software or otherwise.

We reserve the right to retrieve the contents of email messages or check internet use (including pages visited and searched made) as reasonably necessary in the interests of the running of the food bank, including for the following purposes (this list is not exhaustive):

To monitor whether the use of the email system or the internet is legitimate and in accordance with this policy

- To find lost messages or to retrieve messages lost due to computer failure
- To assist in the investigations of alleged wrongdoing
- To comply with any legal obligation.

Prohibited use of our systems

Misuse or excessive personal use of our telephone or email system or inappropriate internet use will be dealt with under our Problem Solving procedure. Misuse of the internet can in some cases be a criminal offence.

Creating, viewing, accessing, transmitting or downloading any of the following material will amount to gross misconduct:

- Pornographic material
- Offensive, obscene or criminal material or material which is liable to cause embarrassment to us or to our partners or to people coming to food banks
- A false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation
- Confidential information about us, staff or volunteers or the people who use the food banks (except as authorised in the performance of your role)
- Unauthorised software
- Any other statement which is likely to create any criminal or civil liability (for you or us)
- Music or video files or other materials in breach of copyright.