



Information for Potential Trustees

Kensington & Chelsea Foodbank is looking for up to four new board members, including one who will become the new Chair. An effective board of trustees is essential if the charity is to be effective in achieving its objects. The board must seek to be representative of the people with whom the charity works and must have available to it all of the knowledge and skills required to run the charity. Individual trustees must have sufficient knowledge, both of trusteeship in general and of the Charity's activities, to enable them to carry out their role and to represent the Charity at meetings and other events.

In addition to wanting a diverse board of skills and experiences, applications are invited for members who bring knowledge of finance, fundraising, communications/media, HR, or company secretary duties. Applicants with lived experience of the issues facing foodbank clients would be very welcome. The Trussell Trust has a Christian ethos but we seek a diverse board of members, and there is no faith requirement. We have, and have had, members of other faith communities on our board.

The Kensington & Chelsea Foodbank was established in late 2018 as a project of the Notting Hill Methodist Church, and became an independent charity (CIO) in early 2021. Our constitution allows up to 9 trustees who serve fixed terms of varying lengths in order to ensure smooth continuity and succession as new members replace retiring ones. Expected time commitment is for 6-12 trustee meetings per annum (some online), time as needed to support areas of expertise, occasional volunteer appreciation events and emergency support with foodbank operations. There are also opportunities to attend Trussell Trust training sessions.

The foodbank is open on Tuesdays and Fridays between 11am – 2pm. Citizens Advice provide advice staff during these times, and this has proved to be very popular. We are based at the Notting Hill Methodist Church where a purpose-built food store is located. However, this store is barely adequate for present requirements and limits the kind of food we can provide.

The foodbank employs a Project Manager (35 hours/week), a Strategic Resources Manager (21 hours/week), a Volunteer Co-ordinator (21 hours/week), a fundraiser (14 hours a week) and a Warehouse Manager (19 hours/week) – the last four on fixed term contracts as their funding is grant-dependent.

The Trussell Trust is committed to ending food poverty through the provision of emergency foodbanks, but ultimately to the transformation of the circumstances which cause this need. Sometimes this provision is to cover a short-term need, such as while waiting for benefits to be processed, but sometimes the causes are different and benefit from advice or assistance. Clients receiving vouchers from a referral agency (social worker, church, school, GP, CAB, etc); clients then use this to receive a 3-day food pack from the foodbank appropriate for the size of their household (and dietary requirements). Vouchers should not be given more than 6 times in any 6-month period. When we offer food, we want to do so in a way that minimises stigma and affords dignity.

Our foodbank faces some immediate challenges and opportunities.

Challenges:

- Fundraising. Like so many charities, we have been hit by the economic downturn and inflation. Costs have gone up while incomes have been flat, meaning people, have less money to give. Trust and foundation income is also harder to come by as demands on their resources is growing.
- Shortage of volunteers. Those we have are dedicated and very able but we need significantly more.
- Shortage of food. As individual food donations have been hit during the cost-of-living crisis, we have been able to obtain donations from an increasing number of local supermarkets. Nevertheless, in common with other Trussell foodbanks, we are having to purchase lots of food each week.
- External Communication. We are a small foodbank in the borough and referrals come from a small number of sources. There is work to be done in developing relationships with referral agencies.
- Improving the proper referral system, with more clients coming from agencies rather than vouchers being given out by the church/CAB to people who arrive on foodbank days.

Opportunities:

- Our financial position is secure thanks to generous donations (some monthly), grant income and significant support from the Methodist Church.
- We have made significant steps to consolidate the foodbank structure
- Much potential for partnership with other agencies and providers

New trustees will be asked for references, and required to provide a Safeguarding Disclosure Certificate.

This is an unpaid role; however, expenses can be reimbursed within reason.

If you are interested in becoming a trustee, or would like further information or the chance to talk through this opportunity, please contact Matthew Barrett, interim chair, at chair@kensingtonchelsea.foodbank.org.uk