



# CLIENT ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Version 1.0 October 2025

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Shepshed Foodbank is committed to providing emergency food and, where availability permits, other basic provisions to eligible individuals and families in genuine need while managing its limited resources responsibly.

**This Policy Adopted:**

*By Resolution of the Trustee Board*

*23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025*

**Next Revision due by:** October 2028

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### 1. Responsibilities

This Policy applies to:

- All volunteers<sup>1</sup> (including Trustees) whilst undertaking activities on behalf of Shepshed Foodbank.

**The Trustees** are ultimately responsible for the conduct of the charity.

**The Chair of the Management Committee** is responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline clear and fair eligibility criteria for clients accessing Shepshed Foodbank's services.

### 3. Guiding Principles: Behaviour

**Dignity:** We treat all individuals with compassion and respect.

**Confidentiality:** All client information will be kept confidential and used solely for service delivery, reporting, and evaluation purposes.

**Equity:** We aim to serve those in genuine need without discrimination.

**Integrity:** Our criteria are designed to prevent misuse and ensure support reaches those most in need.

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<sup>1</sup> The Policy thereby applies to Clients who become Volunteers, and to Volunteers who become Clients.

## 4. Guiding Principles: Use of Foodbank

To be eligible for food support, individuals must meet the following conditions:

### 4.1 Residency

- Clients must live within the designated catchment area of Shepshed Foodbank, i.e. Shepshed and the surrounding area i.e. Diseworth, Hathern, Kegworth, Belton, Long Whatton and Osgathorpe.
- Proof of current address WILL be required (e.g., utility bill, tenancy agreement, official letter dated within the last six months).

### 4.2 Referral

- Clients must be referred by a recognised referral partner such as:
  - Local authority services (e.g. social worker, housing officer)
  - GP or NHS services
  - School or children's centre
  - Charitable organisations
  - Jobcentre Plus or other DWP representative
  - Probation Service

### 4.3 Evidence of Need

Eligibility is based on short-term crisis or ongoing hardship, which may include:

- Sudden loss of income or employment
- Delays or changes in benefit payments
- Debt or financial hardship
- Homelessness or housing insecurity
- Domestic abuse or family breakdown
- Illness, disability, or caring responsibilities
- Refugee or asylum seeker status with limited access to public funds

Clients are required to provide documentary evidence of the circumstances contributing to their hardship (e.g. proof of income and expenditure)

## 5. Frequency and Limits of Support

- Once eligibility is confirmed, clients can access the Foodbank on a weekly basis, although ongoing eligibility will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Additional support may be considered in exceptional circumstances, subject to review by the Foodbank Management Committee.
- Clients' individual circumstances will be reviewed on a three-month basis before continued access to Foodbank services can be permitted.
- We may be able to help clients by suggesting other services that they can access for longer-term support which we would expect clients to engage with in order to help address and improve their financial circumstances.

## 6. Use of the Foodbank by Volunteers

- Foodbank Volunteers (including Trustees) are eligible to use the Foodbank provided they meet the Eligibility Criteria laid out in Sections 4 and 5 of this Policy.
- For reasons of confidentiality and to avoid any conflicts of interest, any Volunteer or Trustee who is or who becomes a client must, whilst they remain a client:
  - Cease any client-facing volunteering (ie working in the foodbank or as a driver);
  - Not be a member of the Management Committee;
  - Not be a Trustee
- Any Volunteer or other person who is a Client may engage in admin, fund-raising or publicity activities for the Foodbank.
- Any ex-client of the Foodbank may take on any voluntary role within the Foodbank, including being a Trustee or member of the Management Committee, except:
  - No ex-client may undertake a role which requires face-to-face interaction with existing clients.

## 7. Review and Appeals

- If a client is deemed ineligible, they will be informed of the reason in writing by the Management Committee. They may appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees within 2 weeks of receiving the letter.
- A review will be conducted by two Trustees, and a written final response will be provided within 2 weeks of receiving the letter of appeal

## 8. Exclusions

The Foodbank reserves the right to refuse access to Foodbank services in cases of:

- Abusive or threatening behaviour towards volunteers or other clients.
- Fraudulent referrals or misuse of Foodbank provisions.
- Repeated failure to follow the agreed access procedures.

**VERSION CONTROL**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Formally Adopted</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1.0	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2025	