



Guide to Organising and Operating a Food Bank



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Acknowledgments..... 3
- Purpose of this guide..... 3
- What Is a Food Bank?..... 4
- Community Support..... 4
- Developing a Plan..... 5
- Charitable Status..... 5
- Sources of Food in Your Community..... 6
- Food Drives..... 6
- Budgeting..... 8
- Finance and Admin 8
- Fundraising 9
- Getting Going..... 10
- Volunteers..... 10
- Clients..... 12
- Distribution Options..... 12
- Record Keeping..... 13
- Accessing the Service..... 14
- Food Storage Guidelines..... 15
- Some general considerations..... 16

- Appendices 17- 24*
- A. Burgess Hill Community Food Bank Role Descriptions.....,.,,..... 17 & 18*
- B. Sample leaflet for distribution to shoppers..... 19 & 20*
- C. Sample Gift Aid declaration –for a single donation..... 21*
- D. A sample food bank voucher..... 22*

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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is written for those who believe that their community might benefit from a food bank but are unsure how to start. This is a free guide aimed at those who like us, would like to operate a locally based, independent food bank with minimal startup costs. You can set up quite quickly, in fact from the moment one person decided to start a food bank to the moment it was launched it took only six months – with a good team you can be up and running very quickly. The teams that fitted our needs most effectively are: Depot, Finance & Admin, Sourcing, Distribution and Development (see appendix A).

WHAT IS A FOOD BANK?

A food bank is a community-based project that collects and stores food and household products for free distribution to low-income and needy people who are facing a crisis.

Look closely at your community. Are there people lacking the resources to provide enough food for their family? Organising a food bank may be a good way to help provide them with more food. Our starting point in Burgess Hill was to meet with the Town Council Community Officer and review services already available in the area and any 'gaps' in provision, we also reviewed public census data about the social economic profile of our town and made an estimate of the percentage of the population who might be deemed 'at need'. Note that even in the relatively prosperous South East there are pockets of deprivation.

If after evaluating the need and existing services in your community, you have determined a food bank is probably necessary, it's time to get started. This handbook can be used as a basic guide to help generate ideas and develop your vision.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The first thing you need is community support. It is impossible to build a food bank alone. Also, you can benefit from the experience of others and the diversity of their ideas, so talk with people you think will be interested. Tell them about your plans. Three good sources of interested people are:

- **People in Need of Food** – no one can give you a better idea about what services are needed in the community
- **Social Service Agencies** – individuals working in social services have an awareness of the need, a concern, and experience. In our experience the town council have also been a great help.
- **Community Organizations** – members of groups, churches, and fraternal organizations can act as volunteers, make referrals and share their experiences

From this group of people, call together a meeting to form an organising committee. You need a core group (4-15 people) to plan your direction and accept responsibility for the primary positions of Chairperson, Deputy Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. When you meet, make sure everyone agrees on the definition of a food bank.

Discuss its basic function of immediate aid and consider related services, such as counselling and referrals. This should be incorporated into your mission statement.

NB// Networking with agencies and people in the community right from the start builds a vested interest in the food bank's success, laying the ground-work for volunteer recruitment and information exchange.

Every community will have their own approach and there is no one model that suits all, so all we can say is we chose to broaden participation as widely as possible and we wanted to be an independent food bank, rather than applying a standard model.

Whilst the original impetus for the Burgess Hill Community Food Bank came from a single church they did not want to limit the project to just one congregation or even to one group of churches, as no one group can be expected to have all the contacts and expertise necessary. In addition, organisations such as Lions, Rotary etc have certain limitations placed upon them by their own statutes and cannot operate under other organisations that are exclusively religious or political, however they are most willing to be a partner in community projects and this is the way we opted to go. They and other community groups such as schools, social groups and voluntary organisations have been especially helpful and supportive – it has also been a great pleasure to work with such a wide range of people rather than solely those from one's own circle.

DEVELOPING A PLAN

Once you have formed an organising committee and agree on your purpose, it's time to determine the size of the operation and other details. Some basic questions to be answered are:

What area will be served?

Who will be served?

Where will the food bank be located?

Will you have a separate depot and sorting premises?

How often will assistance be provided?

Who will do the work?

How will patrons access your service?

What range of food will you handle?

Note that you might feel it necessary to expand your coverage area in time as you find that prospective clients from outlying villages or neighbourhoods use the services of your voucher agencies. When you are making these decisions, keep in mind the location of neighbouring food banks, the needs of your prospective clients and how your agency could best meet those needs. Every possible effort must be made to treat food recipients with dignity and respect.

CHARITABLE STATUS

The benefits of being a non-profit agency include:

- **Increased donor incentive with tax deduction opportunities**
- **Some VAT exemption when purchasing equipment and supplies**
- **Eligibility for various grants and other support**

Working under sponsorship of an existing non-profit organization, such as a church, is a useful method of ensuring non-profit status. (It can also reduce expenses, supply volunteers, and provide a ready made information network). We would recommend that you review the options available by visiting the Charity Commission website which gives extensive advice <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/start-up-a-charity/> – we certainly found it to be very useful. For our purposes we opted to form a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) as it is less bureaucratic than establishing a charity with limited company status (whilst offering the same protections for trustees), and offers several benefits over unincorporated structures, such as:

- The members and trustees are usually personally safeguarded from the financial liabilities the charity incurs, which is not normally the case for unincorporated charities
- The charity has a legal personality of its own, enabling it to conduct business in its own name, rather than the name of the trustees
- The template constitution given on the Charity Commission web-site is very comprehensive and perhaps more detailed than you might need; however adopting it wholesale meant that we were accepted as a CIO in less than a week; negotiating with the Charity Commission from an alternative starting document may result in longer delays.

Registering for Gift Aid.

You will also need to register for Gift-Aid if you wish to set up on-line giving. This is done via the HMRC web-site with a form that must be downloaded, completed and posted back to them – it requires signatures. The information you have for the CIO application covers most of the requirements; the remainder is mostly details of trustees and declarations of financial probity by the treasurer and finance team.

SOURCES OF FOOD IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Where are you going to get an adequate and varied supply of food for your clients? You will want to pursue donated products in your community. Meet with storeowners and supermarket managers, let them know who you are, and ask for their help. We were very fortunate in that our local Waitrose were keen to be involved and became our partner supermarket – they allow us to run a food drive every six weeks at our local store.

Who you ask and what you ask for is something that you need to give some serious thought to and will have implications for storage and staffing levels. As a relatively small food bank we took the decision to limit ourselves to food stuffs that have a reasonable shelf life i.e. tins, packets, cartons etc and not to accept fresh or perishable food (we have no refrigeration) – however we don't like to see generosity go to waste and usually refer such donations to local homeless projects.

Ask for donations from:

- Restaurants
- Bakeries
- Convenience stores
- Independent grocery stores
- Catering companies
- Supermarkets

Many of these establishments throw away hundreds of pounds worth of damaged or day old products each week that could be used by food bank clients. You may also be able to arrange discounts on large purchases of some items and some commercial companies may be willing to accompany you to the Cash and Carry or contact their trade suppliers for you. We also find that many organisations and individuals prefer to give us cash with the intention that we buy what food we need – this proves useful when the food bank has a glut of one food stuff or other (often baked beans followed by soup and tinned tomatoes).

FOOD DRIVES

As previously mentioned, a food drive is another good way to secure a variety of items for your food bank while simultaneously cultivating community awareness.

Food drives give everyone a chance to participate and feel good about helping to feed the hungry. It is also an opportunity for you to request certain items such as protein foods (esp meat & fish products) and personal hygiene products if you choose to supply them.

In order for your food drive to be successful, people need to know about it. The easiest way for a small agency to spread the word about an upcoming food drive is to distribute flyers. Your flyer should request specific items and include information about your agency so that people know where and when to donate. You might also want to recruit some local children to help design the flyer and copy it onto brightly colored paper.

Distribution ideas for food drive flyers include:

- Use as tray liners in cafeterias and fast food restaurants
- Hand out in shopping malls, street corners, and meetings
- Use as inserts in local publications/church bulletins
- Stuff in grocery bags
- Stack in the local library
- Distribute at local community events

OTHER CREATIVE IDEAS:

Choose an honorary chairperson for your food drive

Approach a local celebrity or local Mayor etc and have him/her publicly support your efforts by mentioning your agency at special events for example.

Get the cinemas and theatres Involved

Ask local cinema and/or theatres to charge a certain amount of tinned goods as admission on certain nights in the year. Many well known musical groups also donate a part of their profits to charities in the towns that they perform in. Call local concert halls for more information.

Approach a radio station

Persuade a local radio station to “donate” events or sponsor special concerts with admission as a tin or two of food. Contact stations that appeal to younger listeners.

Create a name for your food drive

A name increases community awareness of hunger issues and boosts food donations.

Publicise and educate

Create T-shirts and stickers, set up information tables at community events and fairs, contact the media with statistics about food poverty in your community. The better known your agency becomes, the more it will receive in contributions of food and funds.

Local press

We have been fortunate in the support that our local newspaper has given to us with a number of articles providing much needed visibility. We also give food drive dates on our website and Facebook page.

The food drive as publicity

If you are lucky enough to have a partner retailer, as we do, then the food drive itself creates a good deal of awareness. We have a team of volunteers who man a stall at the entrance to the store, handing out leaflets with details of food required (see appendix B) and receiving donations of food at the exit. The supermarket lend us a number of crates for filling, making it easier to deliver to our depot later. We stack up the crates at the entrance and at the exit so that supermarket patrons can see the progress we are making and feel inspired to add to the pile.

NB// It is a good practice to keep your supporters up-to-date on your progress.

BUDGETING

Along with the need for a facility and food comes the obvious need for money. But before you start looking for that money, you should develop a budget to know how much you need.

First, consider your basic operating expenses. There will be expenses even with volunteers. Are you paying rent or insurance for the space you are occupying? We were fortunate in that the Royal British Legion offered us some free space as a depot (a couple of streets away from the café distribution point) and we have free space at St John's Church where we operate a community café. You need to consider a mobile telephone or two for key volunteers (in our case the depot managers who receive deliveries), utilities, transportation, or contracted services like printing? Your budget should take into account these costs along with supplemental food purchases and equipment like shelving, a refrigerator/freezer if you later decide to handle perishable goods, shelves and office equipment for tracking patrons and keeping accounts etc.

Sometimes personal credit cards may be needed to pay for expensive items and claimed back when funds can be released. Even if you have a bank account for the food bank you are unlikely to have payment cards straight away. This is true in every area, but the largest bills and the least access to funds is likely to be at the start, as the Depot is being set up (in the early days you are setting up bank accounts, and the charity status and the depot all at once, but it calms down later).

FINANCE AND ADMIN

In our experience finance and admin functions work best together as there is so much cross-over, for example as multiple names are needed on cheques etc. Given that you are starting an important charitable enterprise there will be a good deal of admin to deal with and money to be handled. One core team ensures efficient communication.

Here are some of the things we have learned along the way:

- Achieving Charitable Incorporated Organisation status is not difficult (if that is the route you choose to go); but you will need to use a customised version of the sample Constitution provided on the Charity Commission website.

- Some accounts do not allow for on-line giving. We have decided to open a second account (with CAF) that provides us with this capability; we also use the BT service MyDonate but there are other online donation services you might also like to consider. In the longer term we should look at holding any larger sums in a higher-interest account but at present rates are so low that we have deferred the decision.
- Many people are happy to give money rather than food. £1 is often more useful than another 1kg pack of pasta. Big collection buckets are best.
- Our website and Facebook group are useful methods of making a presence known. Both require regular maintenance however, and a volunteer is needed to keep them up to date
- Thank you acknowledgements should be issued to significant donors.
- A record of all donations i.e. money, goods, services needs to be kept.
- Insurance needs to be taken out and be in place before food drives etc take place. These need to cover public, employee and product liability and stock cover. Also consider including Indemnity cover for Management Team members. This will require statements from Management Team Members regarding aspects of their probity. To avoid possible embarrassment this should be publicised before people agree to be members of the Management Team.
- Ideally use an insurance company that specializes in the charity/voluntary sector, many do not understand the different needs that we have. They should understand that volunteers ideally need to have the same liability cover that employees are required to have by law.
- Ensure that you are aware of what grants are available from local and national organisations and companies – keep checking as priorities do change for grant making bodies
- Establish contacts with other local Food Banks. Mutual assistance at times of stock gluts or shortages could be very important.
- Volunteers who might be challenged while doing something (e.g. collectors from Dump Bins) so probably need some form of food bank ID.
- A supply of business cards would be useful to give to people asking for information.

FUNDRAISING

Even the smallest food bank can raise money to cover operating expenses and purchase additional food for distribution.

Some ideas include:

- **Sponsoring fund raising events**
 - The possibilities for fund raising events are limited only by your imagination and energy. Some examples include organising community dinners, garage and eBay sales, cake sales, raffles, car washes, auctions, etc.
- **Applying for grants (national, regional, and private foundations)**
 - Most libraries have foundation directories as well as grant-writing advice manuals
 - Instruction books to help you get started.
 - We were extremely fortunate to receive a seed-funding grant from West Sussex County Council from their social fund that gave us an enormous boost and enabled us to start the food bank more quickly than otherwise might have been possible.

Such grants are more forthcoming if one demonstrates the intention to be self-financing within a reasonable period.

▪ **One-time contributions and monthly contributions**

Whilst some people might like to donate food they have purchased, others might be attracted to the fact that the food bank may be able to buy certain products at trade bulk prices and that their money will stretch further if they give cash – we have certainly found this as donations are increasing including from people who used to give food but now wish to help us maintain a more varied store of products

NB// It is extremely important to remember that all donations or contributions, no matter how small, must always be acknowledged.

Getting Going

Some lessons we have learned:

- The first food drives need to deliver after the depot is set up, and before initial distributions are scheduled.
- Liaison with shopping centre managers and supermarket staff takes time and effort but pays off as they can be very supportive
- Information displays need to be clear and of manageable size – we use displays that roll up into the stand. They are not that expensive and look professional and reassuring
- Collectors need protection from the weather if outside or in doorways
- Make sure that collectors have a good briefing leaflet to facilitate their answers to questions from donors.
- A high quality flyer is invaluable both as a means of advertising ourselves, and for a shopping list.
- Consider placing dump bins in participating outlets around the town where people can leave donations outside food drive times – these will need careful checking however as people may donate out of date food or be tempted to tamper – you can't be too careful with food – in Burgess Hill the local library, Town Hall and one or two retailers have kindly allowed us to place a dump bin on their premises – we empty monthly or when full.
- Have money collection buckets (with logos and lids) in place for the first and subsequent food drives. These should be a very useful source of income. At least two members of the management team should open the buckets, count and agree the proceeds.
- Our depot is responsible for replenishing stock at the distribution point. Other Food Banks may manage this interface differently.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a essential resource for many organizations large and small. According to government statistics about 54% of all UK citizens volunteer at least once per year, 29% monthly. These volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds: retirees, middle-aged/young adults, college students, and even those who are actively employed esp if evening weekend work if possible ie book-keeping etc. As the planning of your food bank progresses, the amount of work to be done can seem overwhelming for a small team. You will need volunteers for many of the following activities:

1. Clerical – Client intake & financial record keeping.
2. Organizational – Plan events, donations, recruit and schedule volunteers.
3. Physical – Load and unload food, clean and stock storage areas, help clients to carry boxes/bags.
4. Creative – Make flyers and posters to advertise food bank events and help with fund raising efforts.
5. Interacting with the public esp at food drives

These tasks easily break down into a dozen different jobs.

The time commitment required of your volunteers would vary depending on how many people are available to share the work and how often your food bank decides to distribute food. A core team should be set up to coordinate the work of the food bank and have clear roles descriptions. In our case each team leader sits on the management committee so that all teams are represented. If you have a starting number of volunteers, your goal should be to recruit a full team as soon as possible. Some ideas on how to recruit and manage include:

- Make public appeals in the community
- Seek volunteers with specific skills
- Write job descriptions
- Provide flexible hours and offer short-term possibilities
- Get staff members, current volunteers, and others to enlist friends, family members, and colleagues
- Contact local colleges, many of which have community service requirements for graduation.

You can also contact your local volunteer referral centre (CVS) and ask to be placed in their database free of charge. They will be able to inform potential volunteers about your agency.

Recruiting your first volunteers to fill the above mentioned positions will not be the end of your work. It is important to fit people's skills with those activities. For example, you should match volunteers with good communication skills or who have done office-work in the past with activity clerical duties or dealing with patrons, while people who prefer working alone or are capable of physical work could perform loading and lifting tasks. In general, it is good practice to ask new volunteers what type of work they have done before or what activities they would enjoy doing before assigning them a task. Because of the variety of tasks most people will find something they can do – even the housebound.

It is also very important to have regular volunteer meetings in order to share success stories, voice concerns, and celebrate group efforts. Your primary goal is to ensure that everyone is working together happily and effectively. Also, a volunteer appreciation day, service or event helps boost morale and remind volunteers that their hard work and dedication is valuable to your organisation.

At Burgess Hill, we have over 50 volunteers who are available to help. Of course, there is a core team (the management committee) who are responsible for separate parts of the food bank and organize their team of volunteers many of whom will be asked to staff the food drive rota every six weeks by email and others who work on a rota basis at the café distribution point. The depot team being more specialised is smaller and more regular. Bear in mind that you need to remain flexible and adjust the structure of the organisation based on the experience and the talents of the volunteers as time goes by. You will also need to keep looking for volunteers esp for food drives as some do fall away after a while.

CLIENTS

Once all the preparations have been made and the preliminary work has been done, your next focus should be on your clients and how to ensure that they are properly served with respect and dignity.

It is necessary to inform people in the community about your agency, where it is located, what types of assistance it provides, and when it is open. One way to do this is by creating a mission statement. A mission statement is a written policy that outlines all of the above information and usually includes an equal opportunity statement like: "It is our policy to provide equal assistance to all qualified persons without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability." Your mission statement should be posted at the food bank where everyone can read it. A copy could also be given to your volunteers or any social service agencies that refer people to you.

NB// Generally speaking, word of mouth is the best form of advertisement in all cases. If your food bank treats people with respect, provides them with a variety of food and non-food items, as well as information about other services available, others will soon find out. You will also need to give thought to how people may access the service and how they may be assessed as suitable for assistance – see page 14.

DISTRIBUTION OPTIONS

There are two primary methods of distributing food to clients. While there are many different ways of handling the actual event, it basically comes down to either pre-packing bags/boxes or having clients "shop" for themselves. Each method has its pros and cons. It may be that one starts with pre-packing and then move to 'shopping' later. Note the "shopping" method, or client choice, has certain advantages as it allows for the following:

- Greater empowerment of clients
- Ability to meet clients' special needs
- Easier ordering and planning
- Avoiding the distribution of unwanted items
- Less work required by volunteers
- Less food waste since clients take only what they need

Many agencies however are reluctant to adopt a client choice method of distribution. They worry about issues such as available space and supervision. There are many degrees of choice that can be explored, which take into consideration your agency's available resources of time, space, and volunteers.

One simple way of giving limited choice is to make up standard bags:

1. For meat and fish eaters
2. For vegetarians

If you are a small food bank like us, you may find the shopping route to be too complicated. We have opted for a meat and vegetarian standard 'bag' but also have an 'options box' of assorted items that allow patrons to swap one or two items that are not appropriate for them. We have also decided not to supply petfood or baby food on the basis that if we supply most of their basic needs then people can top-up with specialist items either from their own purse or from other agency donations. The combinations of baby food and/or pet food are too complicated for us to handle. We don't believe that food banks should worry about meeting all patron's needs – we cannot do that, but we can be a help with part of the problem. We also do what we can if people have specific dietary needs on a case by case basis.

In our case the place of distribution is in a church café with the depot at a separate building a couple of streets away. It is not ideal but we much prefer to greet patrons in the community café as they could be there for any number of reasons, not just receiving food, and therefore it is less stigmatizing than a signposted food bank.

We use standard plastic boxes from the local discount store to make up a nominal family box and then adjust for numbers at the café. We can presently hold enough food there for one days operation, but are planning to expand our storage there to two days supply. As we are open on two days per week (Tuesday and Thursday) that would mean we only need to restock once per week from the depot. That does mean that the distribution team needs to use their initiative when 'edit' boxes patrons, but it generally works out. At Burgess Hill the contents of packs for patrons and the way that they are handled has evolved over the first few months of operating. Complexity has been reduced and only standard packs are routinely kept with a low degree of customization mainly depending on the clients wanting tea or coffee. We always give people food in shopping bags so that they leave as a shopper – preserving people's dignity is important.

RECORD KEEPING

Food banks need to maintain client records. You will be surprised at how useful it is to simply record the number of visits a person makes and how many people are in his or her family. Three months later you may review your note cards to find that 500 food bags were provided and 45% of the recipients were children. This type of easily accumulated information can be used in a report or newsletter to draw more support from the community. You may also find that major donors and sponsors require such information as part of their funding package and increasingly local and central government are collecting food bank data.

A suggestion to facilitate the record keeping process is to create a client in-take or interview form (see sample). In-take forms should be confidential and kept on file at your agency. They should at least include the following information:

- Names & ages of all household members
- Ethnicity esp if you live in a culturally diverse area
- Postal address & telephone number
- Client's signature

Another good tool to have is a distribution log to keep track of every person who visits your food bank on any given day. A distribution log should include the date, the client's name, the number of children (0-17), adults (18-64), and the elderly (65+) in the family, the number of bags/boxes given

to each household, and whether or not they were new to your agency. At the end of every month, simply add the numbers down each column and use the total for your monthly statistics. This system will make it easy to count the number of individuals in each household that you serve each month for your agency's records and for the Food Bank's yearly statistical surveys.

You may also consider utilizing an index card system as a way of identifying frequent users in order to find out what other assistance they may be in need of and make referrals. Each registered client has his or her first and last name written on an index card, which is kept in a readily accessible box. Every client's visit is recorded on their individual card and returned to the file box. This can later be transferred to computer or a simple input device may be used at point of distribution. You will also need to do this if you place a limit on the number of times you can serve a patron in a twelve month period. Letting them know how many visits they have left also helps them to plan ahead. At present we keep redeemed vouchers and an index cards but are investigating a move to an IT solution in due course (with appropriate security of course).

ACCESSING THE SERVICE

Once you have established a method of intake and record keeping, you will want to set up an client assessment process so that it can be determined what each new client needs and how you can help them. Since your food bank may be the first place they have turned to for help, you want to be thoughtful as well as thorough. Also, the more comfortable people feel with your agency the less likely it is that they will have to travel from place to place in order to get the help they need.

A key decision is whether you wish to assess clients yourselves or entrust partner agencies to interview potential clients and then issue vouchers for them to redeem at the food bank. We decided to follow the latter route for a number of reasons:

- We have no training in client needs assessment
- There are a number of existing agencies that are skilled in this area and have an existing client base
- It would be invidious to assess clients ourselves at the point of delivery only to turn them down
- The voucher agency system exists elsewhere and has been shown to work

To start you might like to identify local agencies who have experience in the following areas:

- Medical services
- Family support
- Housing associations / homeless charities
- Job Centre Plus
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Education/literacy support
- Addiction support
- Debt and financial advice

Having taken the decision not to interview patrons we rely on our partner agencies to assess their needs and refer them to us as required. Therefore we do not hold any vouchers centrally, and instead refer enquirers to the list of voucher agencies we have (see appendix B). Of course in absolute emergency we can provide food direct and have a mobile phone hotline for this purpose, but we try to keep this to a minimum.

FOOD STORAGE GUIDELINES

The following are basic guidelines for storing food and grocery items as recommend by the food bank.

- Choose a storage space with locking doors and no outside entrance direct to the storage area – security is an important issue – an alarm may be necessary
- Store all grocery products away from walls and off the floor.
- Use free-standing shelves or leave space between items and the wall, (one of our first major purchases was industrial shelving that was hygienic and strong – it was a wise investment)
- Protect products from moisture by selecting a dry, well-ventilated area.
- Store non-food items, such as cleaning supplies, on separate shelving units from food.
- Mark the date received on all cases of food and start a “first-in first-out” (FIFO) rotation system.
- Inspect all items. Do not use any that are bulging, contaminated, or leaking.
- Food parcels for clients are assembled in our Depot based on agreed guidelines. A nutritional balance should be struck as far as possible given the limitations of what food is handled i.e. long shelf life items only. Packs can be “enhanced” for example at Christmas and other festivals when seasonal items are likely to be donated.
- Use non-toxic insect and rodent traps and monitor them regularly.
- If you decide to store fresh food use thermometers to regularly monitor the temperature of refrigerators (32° to 41°F) and freezers (-10° to 0°F) –
- Make sure that you have hand-washing facilities and a toilet if possible
- Health & Safety and Food & Hygiene regulations need to be noted, and we organised a training session on lifting weighty items for our depot volunteers
- Make sure that you have more than one set of keys for the storage area – you may need access when someone cannot be contacted immediately
- Ensure that operational procedures are put in place, displayed and monitored and there is a noticeboard where volunteers can see changes and new info – do not assume that they have read the email
- A regular opening time needs to be agreed and staffing arrangements made.
- At Burgess Hill we only supply in date foodstuffs to patrons (even though it is often safe to consume past the manufacturers dates) as we feel that patrons have enough to deal with and may feel stigmatised by out of date food. However, as such food is often perfectly safe to consume we pass what we can to shelters who will then prepare the food and serve on their premises.

SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Following on from the initial start up we have found:

- Communication between teams is important and can be problematical – a lot of volunteers are helping in discretionary time and may not be looking out for messages.
- Even with mobile phones provided, messages don't always get through.
- Email isn't foolproof but is efficient when it is used properly. Ideally make it clear at the kick off meeting that this will be the primary means of written communication but agree alternative approaches if a potential volunteer does not have access.
- Keeping track of volunteers, even using an on-line contacts database such as that in gmail, is subject to error – people often forget to inform everyone about their email address change.
- Suitable access times for deliveries to and from the Depot need to be agreed communicated and adhered to. We have established our own mechanism for access to the depot outside agreed times
- Deliveries of proceeds from Food Drive deliveries (particularly) need a significant staff available to process them but only occasionally. This will need some forward planning.
- Accounting for inputs and outputs is not easy and we haven't cracked a foolproof way of dealing with it yet. A neighbouring food bank does it by weight. We are experimenting with estimates by volume (Waitrose standard crates worth) and by weight. Just how accurately you need to do this may partially depend on the requirements of any funders that you have.
- Stock control, particularly of relatively short-life UHT milk, is a problem. We also needed to devise an ethical means of dealing of out-of-date foods. If the food is still within safe limits we have donated some to day shelters who will cook and prepare the food appropriately.
- Some charities may offer to provide more stock than you can always handle. This needs to be negotiated *ad hoc* but in one case we have asked for donations for every other of their food drives.
- People can sometimes be tempted to see food banks a means of disposing of out-of-date food in cupboards, and also to give items not on our shopping lists (some of which they may have bought out of a sense of generosity). This needs sensitive handling and sometimes referral to other agencies who may have a use for the items.
- Some food items, particularly pasta, baked beans and soup cans, are easy for donors to remember, and so rapidly go into surplus. You may wish to have an alternate shopping list that omits these items when required. If you have surplus items that may not be used in a reasonable period they you might consider donation to homeless charities or exchanging with other food banks etc.

Burgess Hill Community Food Bank Role Descriptions**Depot Team**

The depot, which is in a separate building from the café distribution point, will hold stocks of food that are sorted into plastic boxes and passed to the distribution outlet – the Spire Café. A team of volunteers, managed by the depot manager, will run the depot.

The Depot team will be responsible for:

- Preparation, security, and access to, the Depot food store when needed
- Organisation of, and Health & Safety of volunteers
- Hygiene of the stored food while on the premises, including safe disposal of unusable items.
- Organisation of the food store & provision of necessary safe storage.
- Reception of, and recording of, food donations from various sources
- Liaison with Distribution over production and delivery of “shopping bags” and recording
- Liaison with Supply concerning shortages and surpluses
- Liaison with Admin over thanks to suppliers

Sourcing Team

Supplies need to be obtained from potential sources, including shops, collections in (for example) schools or shops, purchases with donated funds etc. A team of volunteers, managed by one of them, will arrange this and deliver the supplies to the depot.

The sourcing team will be responsible for:

- Collection of food from sources, and delivery to depot
- Organising food drives, dates, times, location volunteer rota etc
- Organisation of, and Health & Safety of volunteers
- Recording of deliveries made & liaising with Admin to arranging formal thanks.
- Liaison with development about finding new sources of food/following up leads passed on by other sections
- Liaison with the depot about stocks in surplus and shortage

Administration Team

The Food Bank will need documentation and tracking of activities. A team of volunteers, managed by one of them, will deal with this. The Admin Team will be responsible for:

- Production of brochures and leaflets to publicise the activities of the Food Bank
- Production of food vouchers and personal documentation for customers to access the Food Bank
- Recording details of volunteers and their roles
- Overall control of the food recording IT system, and liaison with IT expertise when needed
- Reporting to grant bodies and other relevant agencies

Distribution Team

Shopping bags supplied from the Depot will be distributed from the Spire Café. A team of volunteers, managed by one of them, will deal with this. The team will be responsible for:

- Security of, and access to, the Spire food store
- Organisation of, and Health & Safety of volunteers
- Hygiene of the stored food while on the premises, including safe disposal of unusable items.
- Friendly reception of patrons and recording supply
- On the spot discretionary decisions about food bags supplied and combination required
- Liaison with the Depot for production and delivery of “shopping bags” and recording
- Liaison with Admin concerning particular customer needs

Finance Officer

The Food Bank will be handling significant sums of donated money and will need to track expenditures. The Finance Officer will be responsible for:

- Maintaining/monitoring day to day accounts
- Making quarterly returns to the Management Committee in conjunction with admin
- Providing reports for external bodies
 - Managing the accounts that we hold
 - Paying excess petty cash and donations (especially cheques) into the bank
- Producing financial reports for major donors, management and Charity Commission
- Arranging for cheques to be paid to volunteers to reimburse pre-agreed expenses (we allow volunteers to incur expenses up to £20, above which they require approval from a management team member)

Development (& External Relations) Team

The Food Bank will necessarily need to adapt over time and develop external relationships.

The Development Team will be responsible for:

- Liaison with external bodies that will be responsible for Voucher distribution, e.g. Social Services, Benefits office, Social Action groups.
- Liaison with external bodies that will provide funding.
- Liaison with and supporting the Supply Team in their search for further supplies
- Liaison with other Food Banks over surpluses or shortages to improve efficiency and reduce waste.
- Communication with the press
- Facilitation of periodic meetings of volunteers, whether in teams or across the Food Bank project.

Sample leaflet for distribution to shoppers (printed as double sided A5)



Burgess Hill Community Food Bank

Registered Charity Number 1154105

The Spire Café, St John's Church, Lower Church Road, Burgess Hill RH15 9AA

www.burgesshillfoodbank.org.uk

Burgess Hill Community Food Bank collects non-perishable food, kindly donated by local people, and distributes it to people who are in financial crisis and are hungry, perhaps because of family breakdown, sudden unemployment or benefits problems, or other eventualities.

At our Food Drives (normally monthly outside Waitrose in Burgess Hill), we collect food and monetary donations.

Items on our Shopping List a selection of which will be in our Food Bags

Milk (long life or powdered)	Tinned vegetables
Tea, coffee, hot chocolate, sugar	Baked beans, tinned spaghetti
Fruit juice, bottles of squash	Breakfast cereals
Soup (tins or packets), pasta sauces	Biscuits, crackers
Tinned meat/meat pies/fish	Tinned fruit, sponge puddings
Instant mashed potatoes, rice, pasta	Rice pudding, semolina, custard
Tin of filled pasta e.g. ravioli	Jam, marmalade, chocolate spread
Tomatoes – tins and cartons	

We also have three Dump Bins where food donations can be dropped off at other times: The Town Council Help Point, The Library & Miss Mabel's Magnificent Emporium (next to Wickes). If you would like more information, would like to help or donate money please contact us via our website.

Food Vouchers can be obtained from one of our Voucher Distributors (a list of them is overleaf) when a client shows need. They would be given a Voucher for sufficient food for 3 days. A client can normally only receive 4 vouchers per year – our help is to give someone breathing space in a crisis.



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The person then takes the Voucher to the Distribution Point, which is open between 11 am and 1 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at the Spire Cafe at St John's Church, and it is exchanged for food in shopping bags packed in our Depot. (Though we don't encourage it, our Voucher Distributors do have access to an Emergency Distribution System to cover crises at weekends)

Our current Voucher Distributors

Burgess Hill CAB	0844 4771171
Sidney West Children and Family Centre	01444 255493
The Gattons Children and Family Centre	01444 255480
Sussex Downs Children and Family Centre	01444 255477
Sussex Police	01273 470101
Housing Needs Department (Mid Sussex District Council)	01444 477574
Job Centre Plus	08456 043719
Sussex Oakleaf	01444 447367
Youth Homelessness Prevention Team	01444 243922
Affinity Sutton (clients only)	03001 000303
King's Church debt advice centre	01444 244215
MyKey Horsham, Mid-Sussex and Crawley	01903 867320
Our House Think Families Team	01243 642142
Family Mosaic	
Linwood CMHT Dementia Crisis Team	01444 416606

Please look on our website to get more details or to check the latest version of the agencies.



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Gift Aid declaration –for a single donation

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Burgess Hill Community Food Bank

Please treat the enclosed gift of £ ----- as a Gift Aid donation.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Donor's details

Title ----- First name or initial(s) -----

Surname -----

Full Home address -----

Postcode -----

Date -----

Signature -----

Please notify the charity or CASC if you:

Want to cancel this declaration

Change your name or home address

No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

A sample food bank voucher

Burgess Hill Food Bank Office St John's Church Lower <i>Church</i> Road <i>Burgess Hill</i> RH15 9AA Tel: 01444 232582		Voucher No 02-345 Distributed by: Xxxx, Xxxxx, Burgess Hill, XXXX XXX				
<i>Please complete Counterfoil in Block Capitals before detaching Voucher</i>						
Patron's Name & postcode						
Nature of Crisis, e.g.	Benefit Delay, Domestic violence Low Income					
Ethnicity	White	Mixed	S.Asian	E.Asian	Black	Other
Age	16-24		25-64		65+	
Authorised Signature:						

Cut here

Burgess Hill Food Bank Distribution Centre Spire Café: St Johns Church Open: Tuesday 10am-2pm Open: Thursday 10am-2pm		Voucher No 02-345 Date:				
Patron's Name						
Patrons Address, inc Postcode						
Number of Adults						
Number of Children						
Dietary needs						
This voucher is not transferable, and only valid when completed and signed by a competent authority. It is exchangeable for emergency food supplied by Burgess Hill Food Bank within 1 week of its issue.						