

Corporate volunteering and collections information

We centre ourselves on being the community serving the community; whether you live or work in Tower Hamlets, thank you for wanting to be part of this and to give time to help others. This sheet provides practical information on different ways to support us with volunteering or collecting donations in kind.

Collection boxes

Request our essentials items poster to go with any collection box you set up.

What are essential items?

Did you know we purchase most of the food we give out – often up to 875 bags of food and another 640 bags of children's items? We have wholesale routes that secure better value, and ensure we never have to turn anyone away. Essential items are the items we buy, providing a consistent offering with a good shelf life. This is an important part of ensuring an equitable and dignified offering. This year (2023), our shopping bill has been as high as £13-15k a week. Food items must be:

- In date
- Non-perishable (unless being delivered directly before a foodbank open time)
- Unopened
- With the nutritional labels where applicable

Anything outside of our list will still be given out, as an optional extra. Items on our list save us money. Be mindful that we can get wholesale supermarket prices so often would get more items than the same amount would get in a supermarket.

Help source one item in bulk

Some teams opt to identify one item and source this in bulk for us. Sometimes this is because the items represent something particularly close to your mission statement or the hearts of your teams.

- An example is nappies and period products, or shampoo and other hygiene items – sometimes people come to the foodbanks because they need these hygiene items for their children more than they need access to food, and they feel more stigma about asking friends and family for help with these items than they do with food.

- Many people like to donate pet food – we don't spend on this, but we know that people will share items in their food bag with their pets.
- Are you passionate about sustainability? We spend money on plastic bags (we wish we didn't!) – could you collect these ongoing for us?
- We try our best to cater to different dietary requirements and preferences, but it is not something we can often build into our purchasing model, could you source dairy free milk in bulk for us or gluten free items?
- Do you have relatives or friends that mean you understand how important incontinence items can be to dignity for older people, and how much these can make the difference between leaving the house or feeling isolated?
- Does someone you know have diabetes? Are you passionate about ensuring that our items promote tackling diabetes?

Delivering to us

Our website lists the times we can receive donations – it is very hard for us to collect; we ask corporate supporters if they can please arrange delivery. If you'd like to talk about delivering and then volunteering to help sort the donation, please read the volunteering options section below, you can arrange a collection drive before attending for one of our activities and bring the collection with you on the day. Many teams enjoy this as it stretches the activity out over time and gets more people at your workplace involved than just those that can volunteer on the day.

Raising awareness

You can also download our supporter posters and information posters from the website, as well as a crib sheet on our current situation, headline figures and what we are trying to fundraise.

Corporate volunteering

Book into a corporate team slot to help serve our guests at the foodbank – this can be one off or we can provide login details to reserve slots on ongoing basis – whether once a month or once a quarter, this for us is one of the most valuable volunteering options! The list of activities is below.

Suggested donations to support these activities

We know many organisations charge for volunteer days – we only suggest a £200 donation for the day or £25 per person for a shift, alternatively committing to setting up a donation fund for colleagues and friends to sponsor and donate to the charity.

Donation resources / platforms – download the full pack [here](#).

- Does your workplace have its own charity initiative?

- Setting up a fund page – you can do this on Local Giving here and we can provide image, branding and text resources at request

Why?

It involves a lot of administration time of our very small staff team, as well as our volunteers' time to lead you on roles when you arrive for a one off. We know how much teams get out of these activities, so ask if it would be possible for your group to make these suggested donations. Just get in touch if you want to discuss this – and obviously if you are looking for a regular slot, we are not suggesting repeated donations, and if you are a small local business please be assured we do not wish to discourage you from volunteering with us for the sake of a donation. Tower Hamlets has the highest level of child poverty in the country while also hosting many of the UKs banks and high turnover corporations. **See Activities and Schedule Below.**

Please be aware that as of 1 September 2023, we had to move all our volunteering shifts from Bow to our Bethnal Green site. We will be moving into our own site in Bow (Roman Road) in later 2023.

Activities

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| Mondays at our Bethnal Green site | One off or regular bookable slots | 7:30 – 10:30 am | Minimum 2, maximum 4 people (same people can book for 10am slot) | Foodbank shift – serving guests at our foodbank Outside and inside work – you should expect to be active with some physical work, wear comfortable clothing and bring wear suitable to all weather conditions. You will be interacting with guests and or working with stock. |
| | | 10 am – 1pm | Minimum 2, maximum 4 people | Foodbank shift – serving guests at our foodbank Outside and inside work – you should expect to be active with some physical work, wear comfortable clothing and bring wear suitable to all weather conditions. You will be interacting with guests and or working with stock. |
| | Day Team Activity | 7:30 am – 3 pm | Minimum 4, maximum 7 people | Whole day helping sort stock, prepare for foodbank, then serve guests. Morning |

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| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serving guests at the foodbank (see info in the foodbank shift section) <p>Hour lunch break - your team to go wherever they choose – there is a social enterprise café on site</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donation processing Stock areas clean Packing children’s bags for the next foodbank Preparing other stock |
| Wednesdays at our Bethnal Green site | One off or regular bookable slots | 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm | Minimum 2 people, max 4 people (same people can book for 3pm slot) | <p>Foodbank shift – serving guests at our foodbank</p> <p>Outside and inside work – you should expect to be active with some physical work, wear comfortable clothing and bring wear suitable to all weather conditions.</p> <p>You will be interacting with guests and or working with stock.</p> |
| | | 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm | Minimum 2 people, max 4 people | <p>Foodbank shift – serving guests at our foodbank</p> <p>Outside and inside work – you should expect to be active with some physical work, wear comfortable clothing and bring wear suitable to all weather conditions.</p> <p>You will be interacting with guests and or working with stock.</p> |
| | Foodbank Day Team Activity | 10am – 5:30 pm | Minimum 4, maximum 7 people | <p>Whole day helping sort stock, prepare for foodbank, then serve guests.</p> <p>Morning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> donation processing Stock areas clean |

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| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up for foodbank <p>Hour lunch break - your team to go wherever they choose</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving guests at the foodbank (see info in the foodbank shift section) |
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How to book in

Email suggested dates and activity requests to leticia@bowfoodbank.org.

We will create an account for you on our booking system and send your group contact a login – the group contact will then be able to reserve an activity slot.

If you reserve an activity slot, you are committed to attending. We do understand that you will have short notice cancellations and it is not necessary you provide the maximum group size. If you want to cancel this with less than 2 weeks' notice, please could you get in touch directly – as we will need to fill this gap.

Ongoing support

Many teams become even more inspired to support their community after doing an activity for us. We can provide lots of information about raising awareness and helping us with specific campaigns or food drives, please just ask.