

COMMUNITY GUIDER – Your chance to make a lasting difference in your community

JOB DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Windermere and District Foodbank is a local independent charity working as part of the Trussell network, the UK's largest national network consisting of over 1400 locations. We provide emergency food and practical support to people facing hardship in our communities of Grasmere, Ambleside, Windermere, Bowness and Staveley.

Led by our Operations Manager, we are an enthusiastic team of volunteers with a very supportive and engaged group of trustees. In addition to providing emergency food support we have funded a very successful Citizens Advice presence, the first in our area for many years. This has led us to realise that our rather rural area needs easier access to services which address the core reasons for food poverty namely; financial difficulties, mental health concerns, homelessness, addiction, family breakdown amongst others. In our area these services are currently often difficult to access.

We are delighted, therefore, that our relatively small foodbank has been chosen by Trussell to be one of six participating in Trussell's Community Guider's pilot programme. This exciting new initiative aims to prevent people from reaching crisis point by providing early access to advice and support. By addressing the core issue of easily accessing local services, we hope to empower individuals and help them avoid a path which could lead to, or cause, extreme hardship.

This initiative aligns closely with Trussell's stated aim towards building a future where no one needs a foodbank.

As a participating foodbank in Trussell's pilot programme, we are able to offer someone an exciting opportunity to work with us and spearhead this project to initiate and develop local links to these services and make a real difference to those in need in our area.

Key Details

Hours: 22.5 hrs per week (some evening and occasional weekend working required), flexible schedule, some of which should coincide with foodbank opening hours. Overtime available if required

Location: Based at the foodbank St Mary's Church, Ambleside Road, Windermere LA23 1BA, with regular travel throughout the Northwest. Some home working will be involved. Must have a valid driving licence. Mileage allowance or vehicle available.

Salary: £14.50 per hour plus benefits

Holiday: 5 weeks (pro-rata) plus bank holidays

Contract: Fixed term of 12 months, with continuation subject to funding and pilot outcomes.

Reporting to: Foodbank Operations Manager

About the Role

The Lead Community Guider will be responsible for establishing, delivering and setting evaluation standards for the Windermere and District Foodbank's Community Guiders pilot programme. Once familiar with the foodbank's operation your first task will be to learn about the real issues affecting our client base and those, in some cases, affecting clients who attend our Food Larder operation, a separate venture to the Foodbank aimed at a different audience.. With this knowledge and working with our current support agencies, you will develop an awareness of what is lacking and required locally and how the current situation can be improved. The key task then is to explore and initiate new routes or links which enable these needs to be met locally.

The approach and it's outcomes, will also be monitored by Trussell, who are funding the project. Hence it will be necessary to interface with Trussell and other pilot foodbanks (throughout the Uk) and share experiences with them. It should be noted that our operation has been selected as representing what to Trussell is typical of a more remote, rural area which is lacking services available in big towns and cities, so the approach and initial aims will be different from others in the pilot.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the implementation and delivery of the pilot project in our region
- Undertake community mapping to identify priority locations, key community organisations and support services.
- Identify unmet needs and explore ways of developing links to expertise which can be encouraged to meet those needs
- Build a network designed to give access to the full range of support services, starting with existing signposting and referral pathways.
- Put in place mechanisms to measure effectiveness of the initiatives and modify as needed

Major Tasks Involved

- Understanding of key issues which are causes of crisis by talking with clients, our team and current support services and referral agencies.
- Develop and strengthen current links by building and maintaining relationships with providers.
- Forge new relationships to meet identified weaknesses locally, this may mean initiating new contacts outside our current geographic area.
- Encourage and assist third parties in development of new services in our area
- Promotion of the new services and routes to access them to potential clients
- Collection of impact data and maintenance of system to monitor success
- Production of reports on project activity, outputs and outcomes
- Capturing of case studies, feedback and learnings
- Close liaison with the foodbank team to enable improvements in the operation
- Become another ambassador for our operation with clients, support agencies and local groups, in particular relating to this new initiative
- Participation in learning and evaluation techniques required by Trussell and the wider guider programme

- Attending relevant training, meetings and learning events
- Attending and actively participating in networking with peers within this nationwide project
- Actively contributing to the development of the community guiders programme within Trussell
- Supporting the wider work and strategic objectives of Windermere and District Foodbank
- Complying with all organisational policies and procedures of the foodbank

Person Specification – Key Skills and Experience

It is essential that the successful candidate can demonstrate having the following:

- Experience working directly with people experiencing disadvantage, poverty or social exclusion
- Skills at building positive relationships with individuals, organisations and partner agencies
- Excellent communication and listening skills with the ability to engage people from diverse backgrounds
- Ability to be a self-starter with the ability to plan, prioritise and manage tasks independently
- Empathy, compassion and a commitment to dignity and inclusion
- Good organisational and time management skills – ability to meet agreed deadlines
- Ability to collect, analyse, interpret and communicate evaluation data
- Experience of partnership working and networking
- Awareness of the importance of confidentiality, safeguarding and professional boundaries
- A full driving licence
- Good IT skills
- Ability to manage requirements of a number of different task masters

It would be an advantage if the candidate can demonstrate having the following

- Knowledge of local support services, resources and issues
- Experience of delivering community-based projects
- Experience of handling stressful conversations
- Experience within the charity sector
- Access to a vehicle for travelling across the region or the willingness to drive the charity's van
- Negotiation skills
- A sense of humour

Closing date for applications: 28th September 2026

How to apply: CV and cover letter explaining why you are the right person for the job

Questions about the role: call Amanda on 07789 728811