



FOOD TRAIN WEST LOTHIAN

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Who are we?

The Food Train is a registered charity and voluntary organisation providing a vital grocery shopping delivery and home support service to older people living in Dumfries and Galloway in Scotland (please see the attached leaflet for further information). The ultimate objective of our organisation is to support local older people to live independently at home.

Our national development plans

In 2010, The Food Train is embarking on an exciting period of change and growth. Supported by national and local government, we are now beginning to take the benefits of our service to other areas of Scotland. The first area of Scotland to benefit is West Lothian, with the formal launch of this service having taken place in June 2010 and plans for the service to be operational (i.e. customer deliveries taking place) by September 2010.

Our track record

From our early days of a few deliveries every week to a handful of customers, Food Train is now a thriving charity with:

- 6 local bases across Dumfries and Galloway,
- 200+ volunteers,
- 10 delivery vehicles, working with
- 15 local shops, supporting
- 16,000 annual deliveries to up to
- 600 people across
- 2,500 square miles

The Service

The service has been designed by older people for older people to meet a specific need and has always been driven by the needs of older people. There are no minimum or maximum amounts for ordering and the flexibility of being able to get shopping weekly, fortnightly or less and either short term or long term allows older people to use it for any reason that makes shopping difficult, eg.

- Losing their driving license and being unable to carry shopping home
- Being housebound by periods of illness and having no-one to ask

- General failings of age making shopping tiring and arduous
- Wanting to stay independent and in control of what they eat despite not being able to do their own shopping
- After a fall or hospital admission for a short term until they are recovered

The service is more flexible and accessible than many other services provided, and is not linked to health assessments or means testing. The Food Train is about more than just food shopping, we help in other ways:

- Help for people who can't write their own shopping list due to visual or arthritis related problems
- Telephone ordering with prompting for people who have memory problems
- Varying payment arrangements to suit different needs
- Help to check, unpack and put away shopping
- Help to open stiff tops, packets etc. Volunteers are also happy to take letters for posting, bring coal in, put rubbish out, while they are already there
- Returns, refunds and exchanges on items and alternative/ substitute items provided
- Signposting to other services with leaflets in shopping boxes
- Silent monitoring of frailer customers who may need other help, referrals to other agencies can be made
- Regular volunteers become friends and often the only visitor that day or week, bringing welcome social contact.

Our Volunteers

There are over 200 volunteers working across Dumfries and Galloway in different roles. You should be over the age of 16 to volunteer and dependent upon the job you do, you will be Disclosure checked. Our volunteers are unable to work directly with our customers until their full Disclosure check has been completed, this can take up to six weeks. When you agree to volunteer, you will be asked to complete a Disclosure Information Form and two forms of ID which will be verified and returned to you.



Volunteer Roles

As a volunteer with the Food Train, you can help out in many different ways:

Drivers

There will be agreed delivery days as well as shopping list pick-up days each week. Drivers and helpers will be required to pick-up shopping lists from members, normally on a Monday, returning the completed lists either to the shops or to the Bathgate office.

On delivery days, you will be responsible for collecting the company vehicle (Peugeot Extra) and delivery list from the Bathgate office and going to the required supermarket. Drivers will work with the delivery helper to check orders and load them into the van according to the delivery list. The driver and helper will take the shopping box into the customer's house, unpacking it and putting it away if required. Once the order has been checked by the volunteers and the customer, payment for the shopping should be taken plus a £2 delivery charge. At the end of the delivery run, the van, delivery list and money taken should be returned to the office in Bathgate. The driver will be responsible for ensuring the van is left clean and tidy.

Helpers/Delivery People

All volunteers working directly with customers must work in teams of two. As a helper you will meet the volunteer driver at the relevant supermarket, helping them to check in orders and load up the van. You will work together to deliver shopping, taking shopping into people's homes and helping them to put their shopping away if required. You will be responsible for collecting payment for the shopping and noting monies received on a cash sheet. When you return to the office you will be responsible for handing in all monies collected to staff or volunteers at the office.

Shoppers

The supermarkets working with The Food Train will contribute staff hours to pick shopping but as we get busier, we will need volunteers to work with the supermarkets, to pick shopping, put shopping through the tills and to check shopping before it is loaded on the van.

Promotional work

Over the coming weeks and months, meetings will be organised with local community groups such as 50+ networks, bowling clubs, churches and Women's' Rural Institute, among others. We will also visit local Day Care Centres speaking directly to potential customers. Volunteers may be needed to help to speak to small groups or individuals either to promote volunteering or to speak to potential customers. For this job, you will need to feel comfortable talking to people.



Office Work

We will have an Administrator working 21 hours per week, and a full-time Manager. Help will be required to answer the telephone, take customers orders, complete shopping lists on behalf of customers phoning in their orders, helping with the volunteer rota, and doing office work as required. If you only wish to take on office work, you may not be required to be Disclosure checked.

Training

Before doing any voluntary work with the Food Train, you will be required to undertake some basic training, learning more about how the Food Train operates, your role as a volunteer, and how the shopping service works.

You will also have the opportunity to shadow a more experienced volunteer or member of staff, so that you can become accustomed to the service we offer, before volunteering.

From time to time training may be organised either by The Food Train or through West Lothian Council. Where relevant all volunteers will be advised of training courses and will be invited to attend.

Expenses

You are entitled to claim out of pocket expenses required to enable you to volunteer for the Food Train. Expenses such as bus fares taking you from your home to the relevant supermarket will be payable monthly in arrears and should be supported by a receipt where possible.

Mileage for the use of your own car, will be paid at a rate of 25 p per mile.

Expenses should be submitted to Bathgate no later than the 10th of the following month. Forms should be processed from the 11th of the month and cheques should be sent out by the middle of the month. When we send the cheque back to you, we will also send you a blank claim form and a SAE for your next claim.

Forms may be processed prior to the 11th of the month, but cheques will not be sent out until the middle of the month.

Healthy Working Lives

Having achieved an Award with Healthy Working Lives, The Food Train is committed to promoting healthy living for all staff, volunteers and customers. More information is available in the Volunteer Handbook.

Health & Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy ensures that all staff and volunteers comply with regulations covering safe lifting and handling, first aid, fire safety and vehicle safety. Details of procedures are included in the Volunteer Handbook which you will receive when you start volunteering.

Volunteer Rotas

When you start volunteering with us, we will ask you how often you can volunteer and your preferred days or times for volunteering. Staff will make up the rota one month in advance, and

you will be sent a copy of this. A copy of the Rota will also be held on the Volunteer Notice Board in the Bathgate office.

Branch Meetings

Every six weeks, we will hold a Branch meeting to which all volunteers will be invited. This will give us an opportunity to tell you any News about The Food Train as well as an opportunity for training and for everyone to get together to discuss any concerns or issues and to share stories. We will give you plenty of notice about these meetings. Dates will also be shown on the Volunteer Notice Board in the Bathgate office.



The Food Train Achievements

The charity has worked in the Dumfries and Galloway area for over 15 years and in that time has achieved a number of Awards: Queens Golden Jubilee Award 2004, Guardian Society Award 2004, Best Practice in Volunteering 2005, Age Concern Group of the Year 2005, UK Charity Awards Highly Commended 2007, Healthy Working Lives 2008 and the Herald Society Awards Commended 2008.

Contact Details

If you are interested in volunteering with The Food Train, please contact us at the address below. We would love to hear from you:

Unit 2 Waverly Industrial Estate
Bathgate
EH48 4HZ
Telephone: 01506 654360
Regional Manager: Alison Wright
Administrator: tba