



**2023
to 2025**

Volunteer Strategy



FareShare

Midlands

faresharemidlands.org.uk

0116 286 7735

Introduction

Welcome to Volunteering at FareShare Midlands

Our volunteers inspire and motivate us every single day. They are at the core of what we do and the scale of our achievements is only possible through working with them. Volunteers are critical to the success of our mission to maximise the social value of surplus food. Put simply, we cannot do what we do without them.

In the UK, on a yearly basis over 3 million tonnes of food is wasted by the food industry and 2 million tonnes of food that goes to waste is still edible. At the same time, 8.4 million people are struggling to eat – a number we know will increase as the cost of living crisis continues. 90% of our membership report an increase in the demand for their services since January 2022, with many of them reporting demand has doubled, and with many people accessing support for the first time.

To meet this growing demand, we need the ongoing support from volunteers more than ever, and equally we must support those that volunteer for us. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and many of them have been volunteering with us for many years. Others join us on a more temporary basis, either through our employability programmes to gain practical work experience, or from our corporate partners. What unites them all and inspires us on a daily basis is their passion, commitment and desire to make a difference.

Our aim is to ensure volunteering for us is easy and enjoyable. All our volunteers will have a named contact and clearly defined role descriptions – so you know what we expect from you. We will provide a full induction and necessary expenses, like travel, will be covered. There will be multiple opportunities for you to provide feedback and share ideas with us that help us grow. We will communicate with staff and volunteers as one group and ensure you are kept informed about what is happening at FareShare Midlands.

The strategy sets out our approach and commitment to volunteering over the next three years. We will continue to keep volunteering central to everything we do, adapting to meet changing demand ensuring we all – staff and volunteers – work side by side to realise our vision of a Midlands area where no one goes hungry.

Thank you for volunteering.

Paul Akroyd, Head of Volunteering and Employability



What FareShare Midlands does

FareShare Midlands is the region's largest food redistribution charity, turning an environmental problem into a social solution. With 8.4 million people in the UK struggling to afford to eat, and 131,000 children living in poverty in Birmingham alone, FareShare Midlands' core mission has never been more vital. The charity continues to supply good quality surplus food to local community organisations who are tackling hunger, poverty and the effects of the cost of living crisis.

We do this by working with a range of partners, including the UK's largest food redistribution charity - FareShare. Food is delivered daily to our warehouses across the Midlands, where upon arrival it is sorted and stored by our dedicated staff and volunteers. The supplies are then distributed to our members, which includes charities and community groups across the Midlands. These local organisations then turn the food into food parcels and delicious meals for vulnerable people. Last year we helped over 550 front line groups provide over 13 million meals.

We also offer Employability Programmes in Nottingham and Birmingham. People can find themselves unemployed for many reasons, and the rise in the costs of food, energy and fuel has only increased this. Unemployment frequently leads to financial hardship, debt, housing stress and family tension. It also has a negative effect on confidence, self-esteem and mental health – making it even more difficult to find a new job. FareShare Midlands' employability schemes are designed to fight these barriers. The programmes target different age groups to offer a wide range of advice, support, comprehensive training and hands-on work experience through volunteering in our warehouses, to empower participants to return to the workplace.

Mission, Purpose and Values

Our strategic aims are supported by five core values which guide us and the way we work. These reflect the charity we aspire to be and apply to all of us – volunteers and staff members alike. They reflect who we are, who we want to be and the organisations and people we want to work with.



Our Mission

Maximising the social value of surplus food.

Our Purpose

Fighting hunger, tackling waste, creating opportunities.

Our Vision

A Midlands region where no-one goes hungry when there is food being wasted, no child goes to school on an empty stomach, and where vulnerable people are supported to join to re-join the workforce.

Our Values

Passion: We have passion for our cause and the challenges that lie ahead.

Ambition: We go the extra mile and drive the changes that must happen.

Respect: We have respect for ourselves, each other, our volunteers, our partners, our members and the environment.

Collaboration: We will work better with others to strengthen our fight against hunger, poverty and food waste.

Accountability: We assume responsibility for our actions, our service, our decisions, our impact and our policies.

What Our Volunteers Say

Every year we ask our volunteers a range of questions. In 2022...



**of our
volunteers
were either
very satisfied
or satisfied**



**would
recommend
volunteering
at FareShare
Midlands**



**of them felt
valued
by the
organisation**



**thought it
was a
friendly
place to
volunteer**

Volunteer feedback to us is overwhelmingly positive, but that doesn't mean we can't do better and improve the experience. We know we can do better in the way we communicate with our volunteers. There are some barriers to volunteering with us and we need to remove these if we can. We also need to continue to work hard to make our volunteers feel valued and break down barriers that might exist between staff and volunteers.



“

FareShare are doing a wonderful job helping vulnerable people. It is hard to believe so much surplus food would have been wasted if it was not for FareShare.

”

Anonymous, Birmingham Volunteer

“

I came across this volunteer position when my previous volunteer position was ending. I chose this position because it was the most similar to what I was doing previously. This position has given me the opportunity to try many different things that I did not think I would have been able to try without coming to FareShare. I would recommend others to FareShare if they wanted to see if a warehousing role was good for them, they wanted to help people and it is reasonable for the person to get to the place. The people that work and volunteer at FareShare are very friendly and kind and a joy to around.

”

Paul Broad, South Wigston Volunteer

“

I enjoy what I do and think we achieve a lot with few resources. It is a very good experience every time I come in.

”

Sue Bishop, South Wigston Volunteer

“

It keeps my distribution skills up to date and I can do a good thing for other people who need help at the same time.

”

Theo Clarke, Birmingham Volunteer

Where Are We Now?

We have volunteers in our warehouses and out driving our vans, ensuring food gets to where it needs to be. Our recently opened kitchen in Nottingham means we need support to prepare and cook food. Our volunteers also support our back office functions – anything from processing orders to helping with social media.

We employ 70 staff who during a 12 month period will interact with over 1,000 volunteers. We are dependent on volunteers to do what we do. Our warehouses are open at least five if not six days per week, with volunteers typically filling 4 hours shifts.

Many of our volunteers have been with us for a number of years and have become part of the FareShare family. Others join us for shorter periods to gain a range of skills.

During 2022, our volunteers filled 15,000 shifts, gifting us 70,000 hours of support. Normal participation would be volunteering once a week, but this varies widely. We have calculated that for every hour of volunteering, 75 meals are provided for vulnerable people. This means during 2022, our volunteers have helped to provide a staggering 5.2 million meals.

Based on the living wage, we estimate the value of this support is around £60k per month and during early 2023 the total value of this support will exceed an unbelievable £1 million.

We can't thank our volunteers enough they are at the core of everything we do.





The Challenges We Face

In 2020/21, the Community Life Survey (CLS) reported 17% of respondents (approximately 8 million people in England) took part in formal volunteering at least once a month, the lowest recorded participation rate since data collection by the CLS.

This is lower than 2019/2020, when 23% of adults took part in formal volunteering at least once a month (approximately 11 million people in England) and even lower than 2013/2014 when the CLS reported 27% (approximately 13 million in England) took part in formal volunteering.

In less than ten years we have seen a 5 million drop in people reporting that they took part in formal volunteering. This might sound gloomy, but we know from surveys that the number of people who **intend** to volunteer remains high and post-pandemic has slightly increased. Almost half (49%) of British people intend to volunteer in 2023, an increase of 3% on the year prior, according to a new survey.

As the cost of living crisis takes hold, our membership reports that there has been a significant increase in demand for their services since January 2022. In many cases this has doubled, with a marked increase in people accessing support for the first time. We believe we have a responsibility to respond to this increased demand, to ensure no one in the Midlands area goes hungry when good food is going to waste. We have worked with our partners and now have more surplus food being delivered to us than ever before.

An increase in demand for food from us means we need more volunteers. In 2021 we worked with 275 regular volunteers, and by 2022 this had increased to 422. If demand for services increases at the projected rate, we estimate we will need 600 volunteers by the end of 2023. Over three years our need for volunteers has more than doubled.

Our Vision For Volunteering

Our ambition is that volunteering with us will be an outstanding experience for anyone that wishes to gift their time to us. To achieve this we have 4 goals.



Goal One: Grow and Diversify our Volunteer Base

The challenges we face are stark. Over a three year period the number of volunteers we need will double. We have the opportunity to develop roles with new volunteering audiences and we aspire to diversify demographics, ensuring our volunteer teams reflect the communities we work in. We will look to invest in our employability programmes that include volunteering as a world or work experience and develop more opportunities for corporate volunteering.

Goal Two: Recognise the Contribution of Volunteers and the Work we do

We cannot do what we do without our volunteers. Having appropriate recognition ensures our volunteers feel motivated to continue working with us and improves our volunteer retention. We know from our volunteer survey that volunteers want to feel like their contribution matters. A simple thankyou goes along way, but we need to do better than that and will set time aside on a yearly basis for the whole organisation to celebrate and recognise volunteers and the work they do.



Our Vision For Volunteering



Goal Three: Volunteers will be the Centre of Everything we do

We will continue to make sure volunteers are central to our work and if necessary invest resources to ensure this happens. We know from our survey that we need to get better at communicating with our volunteers and will offer a range of interventions to ensure this happens. We will present opportunities for volunteers to involve themselves in the wider work of FareShare. This is important because an engaged audience receptive to our message and willing to advocate on our behalf is key to our volunteering.


Goal Four: Embed Volunteer Best Practice to Support our Mission, Purpose and Vision

We will aim to offer a model volunteer experience which is recognised as best practice. Our ambition is for others to come to us to learn about what we do and how we do it. To achieve this we will continue to invest in our volunteering programmes and volunteering team. Key to this will be working with and listening to our volunteers.



Our Volunteer Commitment

Volunteers gift us their time and enthusiasm to make a difference to local communities. It is critical we support them in their roles. To achieve this we will ensure:

- That volunteering for us is easy. You will feel safe and your role will be both enjoyable and rewarding. You will have a clearly defined role description and understand what we expect from you.
 - You are introduced to all staff on site and understand who you need to talk to and where to access all the information you need.
 - You will always receive an induction and any necessary training for your role. If you need additional training for on-going development, we will provide that as well.
 - You have a dedicated Volunteering Team and named contact who you can speak to about any concerns or issues.
 - We will cover all travel and any other relevant out of pocket expenses. All PPE will be provided for you.
 - We always listen to you and give multiple opportunities for you to provide feedback and share ideas.
 - You have any concerns resolved promptly and fairly and that we follow our policies and procedures so volunteers feel safe and supported.
 - If you choose to leave us, we will offer you an exit interview to identify any learning for us so we can improve the volunteer experience.
 - We will communicate with staff and volunteers as one group and ensure you are kept informed on what is happening at FareShare Midlands
- 

Find Out More

If you have any questions, or would just like a quick chat, you can contact our Volunteering Team

Call: 07795 393 094

Email: volunteer@faresharemidlands.org.uk

We also have more information about volunteering on our website

[faresharemidlands.org.uk/volunteer-with-us](https://www.faresharemidlands.org.uk/volunteer-with-us)

What is it like to volunteer for us? <https://youtu.be/bUJENKSyMbY>

We also welcome teams of corporate volunteers to help us to sort, pack food, and deliver it to frontline charities feeding people in need across the region.

Read about our [corporate opportunities here.](#)

For corporate volunteering enquiries, please contact:

corporate@faresharemidlands.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and Tik Tok to keep up with our latest news

[@FareShareMidlands](#)



[faresharemidlands.org.uk](https://www.faresharemidlands.org.uk)

0116 286 7735

Fighting Hunger, Tackling Waste, Creating Opportunities

FareShare Midlands is a Company Limited by Guarantee (no. 757440)
and a Registered Charity (no: 1146847)