

## REFERRAL POLICY FOR PORTLAND FOODBANK

### *Introduction*

Portland Foodbank (PFB) uses a referral system to allow a wide range of agencies refer their clients to us for food support. We recognise that the help the PFB offers is only a part of the solution in aiding our clients to climb out of poverty and crisis. The support that PFB offer is only helpful if there is a clear next step of support made available to our clients. We are committed to helping people become independent of us by showing a clear pathway out of food poverty and by working closely with our referring agencies. Portland Foodbank was setup to assist people in immediate crisis whilst their food poverty issues are being resolved.

As we really are interested in helping those in genuine crisis and need, and as the PFB is somewhat susceptible to being taken advantage of, we would ask our agents to follow these simple guidelines. It is clearly documented and shown in other Foodbanks, that unless these simple guidelines are followed, the Foodbank can perpetuate poverty in people's lives. It is important that care is taken in the initial assessment of clients to ensure that an appropriate pathway is found to resolve their immediate food needs.

### **We ask our referral agents to:**

- Assess their clients to determine the reason why they are unable to purchase their own food. The following list provides valid reasons for providing a referral although this list is not exhaustive, and we do rely on the expertise of our referrers to make appropriate decisions.:
  - Waiting for Universal Credit (or other benefits)
    - Receiving UC but due to extenuating circumstances are still needing help with food: for example, where a client;
      - has been sanctioned,
      - is repaying loans from UC,
      - is still on legacy benefits,

**Clients must be prepared to engage with support and help from Citizens Advice or other appropriate agencies.**
  - In debt and working with a debt management company
  - Temporary unemployment
  - Addiction, and working with an addiction support organisation
  - Other short term health conditions
  - Bereavement

**We ask our referral agents to (continued):**

- Assess the length of time that clients will need the help of Portland Foodbank, and to give a brief description to say why this time is necessary on the referral form. We would not normally expect this time to be more than six weeks.
  - Provide a referral where children are not being fed, regardless of how the adult responsible for the child is spending their money. Referrers should verify that the client is directly responsible for the child(ren).
  - Issue additional referrals if required stating the number of weeks and giving a clearly defined reason for the extension to the referral.
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