**Advice Team Member : Role Description (volunteer)**

**What is the project all about?**

In 2023 we are beginning a new journey with a joint project with Skelmersdale & District Foodbank to provide a wholistic advice service or both debt and benefits advice. The aim of the project to ensure initial conversations within Foodbank settings and follow up appointments that are convenient and timely for service-users.

**Location(s)**

Skelmersdale Foodbank sites and Burscough Foodbank with occasional team meetings in Southport (for which travel expenses will be payable if required)

**Reporting to:**

Alison Read, Advice & Support Manager and liaison with paid advisers and the charity’s CMA debt advisers. Relationships with Foodbank project manager and Foodbank volunteers on a daily basis.

**What does an Advice Team Member do?**

We are seeking someone with excellent organisational skills, with empathy and emotional intelligence. You may come from a diverse background as many skills are transferable to this volunteer role.

The Advice Team Member must not override the autonomy and agency of the individual but nurture increasing confidence and the ability to navigate the challenges of modern life. The Team Member must be a good listener and have the ability to ‘triage’ the needs of the guest and give guidance on the next stage, making appointments for follow up appointments with a fully trained Adviser.

**Who are Compassion Acts**

We are a poverty reduction charity covering Southport, Formby and surrounding villages. We run Southport Foodbank, which like Skelmersdale/Burscough is in the Trussell Trust Network.

Our Vision

A hopeful future, where poverty is challenged at its root and brought to an end; with individuals and families seeing real change in their lives.

Our Aim

To tackle poverty and increase social wellbeing in all our neighbourhoods, through advice, guidance, food-distribution and other interventions.

Our Mission

Bringing Churches and other people together to ACT as good neighbours in Southport, Formby and surrounding areas, revealing the COMPASSION in the heart of Jesus for the marginalised and powerless.

**Main objectives of this volunteer role**

* To get alongside the S&D Foodbank client agreeing a course of action for the debt/benefits case and communicating clearly what the client can expect.
* To contribute to the whole Advice & Support team within Compassion Acts and exchange information and local intelligence.

**Personal characteristics**

Non judgemental

Able to process information, including figures

Be empathetic

Able to align with the charity’s values and sign the Compassion Acts Volunteer Agreement.

**Main responsibilities**

* To gather basic information from the client
* To maintain high standards of confidentiality,
* To deliver informal encouragement, which whilst falls short of formal life-coaching is empowering and useful.
* To refer into other services as appropriate.
* To encourage use of and evaluate income-maximisation services.
* Anything else as the project evolves and by mutual agreement activities can be included.

**Resources available**

* Training in welfare benefits advice (foundational level)
* Training in the requirements for debt advice
* A signposting manual for use with clients and the chance to feed ideas into its regular updating.
* A mobile phone, tablet/laptop if necessary.
* Access to and training in a new in-house database system for recording client data and statistics.
* Compassion Acts training in dealing with difficult people, solution focussed conversations, managing stress, coaching, safeguarding and other training for volunteers through the year.
* Regular review process from line manager to allow debrief and feedback about clients (or other aspects of work) in a safe/secure manner.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Volunteer applications are welcomed from all parts of the community.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure everyone can participate.

More information

[www.compassionacts.uk](http://www.compassionacts.uk)

[www.skelmersdale.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.skelmersdale.foodbank.org.uk)

[www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)