

## Changes to Finchley Foodbank

### From 1st August 2024

**We are making changes to the frequency with which you can visit us. You will ONLY be able to come to the foodbank once every 2 weeks, rather than every week.**

Whenever you visit, we will tell you the earliest date that you can next visit us. If you don't need to come then, you can come **after** that date on your agreed day and time. We ask that you **only** visit us when you are experiencing food poverty.

### Exceptional circumstances

In exceptional circumstances you may be able to visit us weekly. We will ask you to contact a relevant support organisation to help you improve your financial situation. Please ask the organisation to email us at: [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com) saying that they are working with you and how long they expect you will need weekly support. If after 2 months you still need more regular help, the support organisation will need to send us an update by email.

If you are in crisis and not in contact with any organisation and want to come more often than once every 2 weeks, we will consider your needs and if other support can be offered.

### Why we are making these changes

As we told you last year, the demand for Finchley Foodbank has been increasing steadily since 2020. There has been an increase in the number of people visiting us and the frequency of those visits, which means the foodbank's operation is being stretched beyond its capacity. The demands on our space, time and volunteers as well as the increase in the cost of food and a decrease in donations, mean we can't continue to support the large number of people visiting us each week.

As a charity our aim is **to prevent or relieve poverty amongst people in the London Borough of Barnet** by providing emergency food, essential toiletries,

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and household items to individuals and families in need, and providing support or signposting to relevant information and other advisory services.

In order to continue to meet our aim, we have decided to limit the number of visits each household can make to the foodbank so we can be there for those most in need.

### Visiting Finchley Foodbank for the first time

If you are in need of help, you can visit the foodbank on either Tuesday or Saturday between 11.45am and 2.00pm. Although you do not **need a voucher or referral, we need evidence:**

1. that you live in the borough of Barnet e.g. an official letter or a bill or a bank statement with your name and address on it dated from the last 3 months.
2. Of children living with you. You will need to show their date of birth and that they are living with you. For example, **child benefit, child tax credit, child maintenance, NHS red book or NHS letter. We require evidence which shows the child(ren)'s name, date of birth and address and so passports and birth certificates are not acceptable.**

If you do not have the evidence with you on your first visit, you must bring it next time you visit us. If you do not provide evidence after 3 visits then we will be unable to support you.

We can signpost you to support to check if you are receiving all the help you are entitled to and to access advice e.g. housing, debt, filling out forms and getting into work.

**Each household can visit the foodbank ONCE every 2 weeks on your agreed day and time. You do NOT have to come every 2 weeks; we ask that you only visit us when you are experiencing food poverty.** If needed, new clients can visit weekly for up to 8 weeks and then once every 2 weeks.

## *How we will operate from 1st August 2024 - Questions and Answers*

### ***Who can come to Finchley Foodbank?***

**Anybody experiencing food poverty who lives in the borough of Barnet can visit Finchley Foodbank.** We operate on a basis of trust – no voucher or referral is needed. You will need to provide us with proof of your address and contact details for the foodbank's records e.g. a letter/bill/bank statement with your name and address dated from the last 3 months. **We will not share your personal details with anyone.**

**If you have children, you will need to provide evidence of their date of birth and that they are living with you. You can provide this by showing a document for example, child benefit, child tax credit, child maintenance, NHS red book or NHS letter. We require evidence which shows the child(ren)'s name, date of birth and address and so passports and birth certificates are not acceptable.**

### ***How does Finchley Foodbank operate?***

A volunteer will register you when you arrive. You can come inside and choose the items you want. **We will ask you to contact a relevant support organisation to help you improve your financial situation.** We will give you a copy of a leaflet called 'Worrying about money: Support available in Barnet' which signposts you to useful organisations. You will also be able to talk to advisors from BOOST, Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), and West London Works who visit our sessions. **We know that many of you have already been in contact with one of these organisations but we want to make sure you have all the support that you are entitled to.**

### ***How will I know when to come to the Foodbank?***

The foodbank is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays between 11.45am-2pm. If you are already registered with us, we will confirm the next date that you can next visit us at your regular appointment time. If you do not need to visit us on that date, please come in your timeslot on your regular day after that date when you are experiencing food poverty.

### ***How often can I visit the Foodbank?***

**Each household can visit the foodbank ONCE every TWO weeks on your agreed day and time.**

**You do NOT have to come every two weeks; we ask that you only visit us when you need to.**

If needed, new clients can visit weekly for up to eight weeks and then once every two weeks.

### ***What happens if I can't come to the Foodbank on my agreed day and time?***

**If you can't come on your agreed day, please contact us by email at [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com) or phone on 07849 558307 with your full name to arrange your**

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**next visit.** If you come at a different time on your agreed day, you may have to wait a while to choose your food.

### ***What happens if I need to come more often than once every two weeks?***

If you feel you need to visit us weekly, please contact the organisation(s) you are in touch with and ask them to let us know (by emailing [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com)) that they are working with you and how long they expect you will need weekly support. If after that time you still need more regular support confirmation from the support organisation will need to be resent.

### ***What happens if I am not in touch with any support organisations?***

If you are not in contact with any organisation and want to come more often than once every two weeks, you will be referred to a member of Finchley Foodbank's Management Group to discuss your needs, what we can offer and what other support is available.

### ***What happens if I visit the foodbank when it's not my week?***

If you come to the foodbank when you are not due, we will remind you that we expect you to contact a support organisation to get help and when you can next visit us. If necessary, we will give you an emergency bag of food as a one off, and you will **NOT** be able to choose items.

### ***Can someone else collect food for me?***

**In exceptional circumstances by arrangement another person can collect food on your behalf. You must contact the foodbank IN ADVANCE with your full name.**

### ***Can I bring someone into the foodbank to help me?***

Only registered clients will be able to enter the foodbank. We ask that children, including those in buggies/prams and other adults wait for you in the car park. If there is no one to look after your child(ren), you will be asked to complete a selection list and we will pack your bags and give them to you outside.

### ***How many items of food and toiletries can I choose?***

The number of items you can choose will depend on the number of people in your household. There are clear instructions about the number and type of items you can choose inside the foodbank. We will offer you bread, fresh fruit and vegetables if we have them. **We ask that you only take the items you NEED.**

### ***How much time will I get to choose my items?***

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You will have around 10 minutes to choose your items, but this will depend on the number of clients attending the session. We ask you to be as quick as possible and to leave the hall promptly.

***Will shopping bags be provided or shall I bring my own bags?***

**You must bring your own bags for packing your items.** Only people visiting for the first time will be given bags. The foodbank does **not** always have spare bags.

***Can I put my items straight into my own shopping bags?***

No, you will be given a wheeled basket to use while choosing your items. Then you can transfer your items into your own bags.

***Will I get help carrying my items to the car park?***

If necessary, we will help you with your bags. Bring bags (some people use suitcases on wheels) that you can manage yourself.

***Remember that the people at the foodbank are volunteers and are here to help you. Volunteers will treat you with respect and expect the same in return.***

***A Session Leader is available at Tuesday and Saturday sessions to answer any questions.***