

Volunteers desperately needed as Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts reaches breaking point

The charity, Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts (EKFH) has issued a plea to anyone who is able to volunteer some of their time to the charity which feeds 1400 people a day in the city to contact them urgently.

EKFH uses food and produce which is donated by supermarkets, and which would otherwise have gone to waste, to create day packs with three meals. These are distributed to those who need them, and the charity has sent out 855,000 meals in the last twelve months.

The demand for food and meals is not reducing, but the availability of volunteers has which is causing a major problem for the organisation.

If you could volunteer your time packing, cooking or delivering food, then contact Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts on hello@emptykitchens.co.uk or telephone 07895347157 or visit the website to find out more: emptykitchens.co.uk/volunteer.



EKFH was set up last year in response to a need for food among many people all over Edinburgh. It was originally created by chefs who were no longer working in restaurants and hotels, but of course they are steadily going back to work.



Sam Mallalieu, a Director at EKFH said: “We couldn’t be happier to see the reactivation of the economy and the reopening of various sectors across Scotland and the return to some semblance of normality with cafes, pubs, restaurants, shops, and offices starting to open up again last week. But for Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts, this means a huge drop in our volunteer workforce, made up heavily of furloughed workers.

“While we’re thrilled to see them go back to work, this means that we’re losing roughly 45% of the amazing people who donate their time to volunteer with us day after day to feed those in Edinburgh who wouldn’t otherwise have safe and secure access to food.

“We’re running at about 55% capacity in terms of the number of volunteers we need to meet the demand, and it’s just not sustainable. We are fast approaching breaking point. The pandemic may be coming to an end, but the need for services like Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts isn’t.

“For example, we usually provide oats to make porridge in our day packs. We have kilos and kilos of oats at our site in Leith, but for the last week we haven’t been able to make use of them, simply because we don’t have enough volunteers to portion them up and pack them.”

