

ACTS  
435

# Partner with us

---

A guide to partnering  
with Acts 435

[acts435.org.uk](https://acts435.org.uk)

# What is Acts 435?



**Acts 435 enables churches and local charities to provide specific practical help for those people known to them to be in need. Acts 435 was set up in 2009 in recognition of the increasing needs of people in UK poverty, in a time of recession and austerity. Today, the need exists more than ever and over 600 churches and local charities around the UK have partnered with Acts 435 to make a positive difference to the lives of those they meet in their communities.**

**Acts 435 facilitates the direct connection between those who are in need, and those who want to help, via our online giving website. The partner church or charity, knowing the genuine needs in their community, nominates an Advocate who posts the requests for help onto the website. Once a request is posted it can be met by one donor, or more donors, giving what they can towards a small gift that can make a big difference; lifting a burden or preventing a crisis for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.**

---

# How does partnership with Acts 435 work?

---

Acts 435 exists to serve churches and local charities who are already seeing the desperate need in their communities, or who want to engage with those in need further. Through partnering with Acts 435 your church or local charity can be enabled to meet the practical everyday needs of those facing poverty and hardship in your local community. Partnering with Acts 435 is free, and couldn't be simpler! To get involved each church or local charity must have agreement from their leadership, and then nominate an Advocate, who is the person responsible for posting requests onto our website. You can choose to have more than one Advocate, which some churches and charities find helpful. Advocates must have a heart for those in need and basic admin and computer skills (see our Advocate role description on page 6). Once you have nominated an Advocate, and returned the partnership document, we can set up a login for your chosen Advocate. There is an Advocate Handbook for them to read, and then they can begin posting requests onto our website.

When requests are met by our community of donors, the money is sent from Acts 435's bank account to your church/charity bank account and the Advocate organises getting the item/money to the beneficiary. They are also responsible for writing a thank you message from the beneficiary on our website system which goes to the specific donors who gave towards the request.

The Advocate may see needs in their

job or voluntary work, they may be given referrals from other areas of your church or charity, or they may also hear about or seek referrals from local agencies such as housing associations, schools or prisons (for example). There is also an expectation that churches and charities may help to meet the needs of those in their area who have contacted Acts 435 directly, although this is not a regular occurrence.

Acts 435 requires that the local church/charity develops a sense of ownership of the partnership, and for the Advocate(s) to operate with, and under the authority of, the church or charity's leadership. Although there are important guidelines for implementing Acts 435 it is essentially designed as a tool for churches and local charities to use in their pastoral and outreach work, and it will be different in every context; **each church or charity will develop its own ways of effectively implementing Acts 435.**

Alongside meeting the needs of those in your community, there is also an expectation that as a church or charity you will promote your partnership with Acts 435 to your congregation, and wider community, to encourage those in your local area to donate towards requests. Acts 435 Head Office can provide literature for you to display on your noticeboard, or to handout to potential donors.

There is ongoing support for your Advocate(s) in their role including an annual Advocate Gathering and opportunities to be part of a regional group.

# What do churches and charities say about partnering with Acts 435?



“At a time when the need is perhaps at its greatest, it’s good to see how generous people are being, in so many ways, and to be involved in spreading that generosity to where it’s most needed.”

*Alan, local Advocate, Cleckheaton Methodist Church*

“The Noah’s Ark Centre is much stronger with Acts 435 in our toolbox. The real value of Acts 435 is not in the requests, it’s a part of a valuable service to those in need in the local Halifax community.”

*Andrew, local Advocate, Noah’s Ark Centre, Halifax*



“It really does bring hope to despairing people when they’re in crisis. They’ve really lost hope and one act of kindness from the donors of Acts 435 can really make such a difference, and bring hope. It helps them to see that you know they can move on and that people do care.”

*Sara, local Advocate, The Well, West Auckland*

“As a fairly small church we do what we can to engage with the poor in our community through ministries like our CAP Job Club. However, working with Acts 435 has opened the door to reach out further. We could not do this with our own church finances, and we are able to bring a witness of faith and love to people.”

*Nick, local church leader, Champions Church, Skipton*



# What do beneficiaries say about Acts 435?



“The cold weather makes me so anxious, but having a lump sum put on both gas and electric has lifted my mood. It’s such a basic need but I spend my life trying to provide gas and electric for the kids. I go without food to save pounds which I feed into my meters. But for now I am at peace.”

“There is so much going on at the moment, I feel in a constant dreamlike state - is this happening to me? Your help really does seem like divine intervention because I didn’t know what I was going to do and yet from nowhere you came into my life and have answered my prayers. Thank you so much for your kindness and generosity. In spite of everything I feel very much blessed.”



“I’ve been exhausted for so long I can’t remember a day I didn’t feel tired and hopeless. However since getting my Debt Relief Order approved I feel like a weight has been lifted from my shoulders and I can do anything! Please know this means the world to me and words cannot express my deepest gratitude. Thank you so very very much.”

“I cannot believe that a total stranger wants to help me. I’ve been so trapped and slowly I’m building my life back again. Your generous donation will help so much and the normality of looking for a bed gives me so much joy. I don’t feel so lonely anymore knowing someone out there has my back and with that my heart has hope! I will be forever grateful and thank you so much.”



---

# What is the role of an Advocate in a partner church or charity?

---

The role of the Acts 435 Advocate can vary depending on the church or charity context.

The number of Advocates per church/charity will depend on the size of the organisation and/or the workload. More than one Advocate makes sure that the workload is spread, holidays are covered and ensures security for all concerned. Where there is a group of churches and charities they may decide to appoint one Advocate to cover the whole group/area. This can be particularly beneficial for a group of smaller churches.

The Advocate's name will not go on the Acts 435 website but we do display each partner organisation so that those who have a need can reach out for help. We also encourage the local church/charity to make contact details available in their community so that people in need know who to contact.

## The requirements of the individual

---

- They must have some basic administration skills and computing knowledge to be able to post requests, and process the applications. Training and support is provided.
- They must have heart for those in need and a desire to help make a difference.
- If you are a church, Advocates must be a worshipping member of your church community. If you are a charity, Advocates must be employees or regular volunteers for the charity. They will need to be considered an honest and trustworthy person, as it is vital that an Advocate keeps all applicants' information confidential.
- Acts 435 expects Advocates to be willing volunteers who will take a pro-active role in ensuring Acts 435 is promoted within the church/charity and the wider community.
- The amount of time given by Advocates for meeting with applicants will be agreed locally with the church/charity leadership. However, alongside posting requests pastoral outreach is encouraged since Acts 435 is not designed to be merely a financial hand-out but as a tool to reach those in need with God's love. The Advocate doesn't need to be the one who directly meets with the people in need. You could choose to have the Advocate in a more administrative role, working closely with other members of the church/charity who know who is in need through their work/outreach.

---

# Getting Started as a Church or Charity

---

Acts 435 has helped some churches and charities who were previously not engaged in their communities to step out into the local area, and it is often a useful way to engage with local schools or councils. It has proved a useful way to engage with local schools or councils. Other churches and charities make Acts 435 available through ministries they currently run such as a food bank or debt advice centre. If you are a church wanting to use Acts 435 as a way to connect with people in need, not already coming to one of your activities, you might want to consider the following as a way to engage with your community.

Here are some key questions to ask as a church/charity before you begin:

- Do you know what the main issues in your local area are? Is it unemployment, asylum seekers, or a high level of single parent families?
- Do you know which local charities operate in your area and who they work with?
- Are there any in particular organisations struggling with funding who would welcome an additional resource?
- What connections do your congregation have that you could explore?

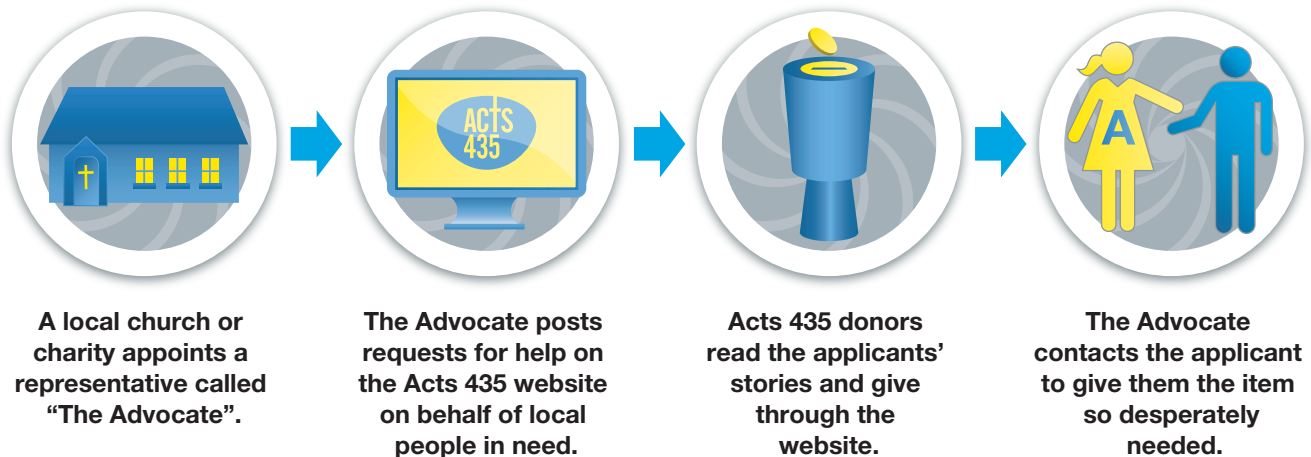
It's worth investing a month in researching these points and having some conversations with potential referring organisations, and seeing where there is interest in getting specific help for people in need.

Once you have identified where the need is, the next question to ask is how can you engage with those who are needing help?

There are many ways you can engage with people in particular need, some more formal than others. We do not attempt to dictate how you should do that but only offer some suggestions. Where you choose to focus will often depend on the contacts you already have and any activities your church or charity are already running. However, the more you can network and spread the word about Acts 435, the more opportunities you can create to help people through Acts 435. Here are just a few ideas to get you started:

- Approach your local doctors surgery, local school or local children's centre - they may already be seeing needs of local individuals and families.
- Approach local housing associations, and sometimes councils to see whether they would want to refer requests to your Advocate.
- Put up posters in already existing activities, such as toddler groups, food bank drop-ins or counselling sessions.
- Create a drop-in session to invite the community into your space, which can help you to identify needs.

# Ways to Use Acts 435



Here are two examples of how Acts 435 has been utilised in different contexts throughout the UK.

St. Mary's in Chipping Norton, a small town in the Cotswolds, quickly identified people in need through their debt counselling work and through their weekday parent drop-in. The Advocate also approached the local school and housing association for referrals too, and helped to meet requests for many struggling. The Advocate says:

"It is a complete joy being an Acts 435 Advocate - as, with the support of all the wonderful donors, you can help to bring about an almost immediate difference to an individual or family. Especially when they are used to being stuck in systems where they are told there is going to be a 6-week delay or wait. If they are a family without a cooker, and you tell them you will apply to a charity, and often within a week you have the money and can get a cooker delivered, they are overwhelmed. It is such a fabulous, generous and practical way of showing Jesus' love for them."

**"It is such a fabulous, generous and practical way of showing Jesus' love for them."**

A church in Oldham was already seeing much need through its Job Club and other activities based at the church, as well as receiving referrals from the Probation Service too. Because of the overwhelming need the church decided to split the Advocate role in two - one person seeing the need and meeting with the applicant, and another person to post the request and fill out the paperwork. This is a great example where you can utilise Acts 435 as a tool to effectively meet the needs of those in a community, whilst making it manageable for those involved.



---

# Partnering with Acts 435: A Summary...

---



## What does your church/charity need to do?

---

Your church needs to nominate at least one volunteer who is the known contact for Acts 435, and who has some basic computer and admin experience. We ask that you help us spread the word to potential donors that you're now partnering with Acts 435.



## What does Acts 435 provide?

---

Acts 435 provides training for the nominated volunteer (from the partner church, known as an Advocate). The training is online and takes around one hour to complete. Once completed Acts 435 provides that person with the login details and support to get started. We can also provide ongoing help, and are on hand to answer any questions.



## Are there any costs involved?

---

No, the organisation and administration of Acts 435 is funded entirely by Gift Aid reclaimed on applicable donations. Therefore, there are no costs incurred by the local churches and charities who partner with us. 100% of donations go towards the direct need of the applicant.



## What is the role of the Acts 435 Advocate?

---

The role of the Advocate is to post requests onto the Acts 435 website on behalf of those who are directly known to be in need. They may see this need through ministries their church run such as a food bank, debt advice, community café, job club or toddler group, or through referring organisations such as the local school or Citizen's Advice. Some have used Acts 435 as a way to start connecting with people in need. Others use it alongside ministries they already run to meet the needs in their community. The Advocate then arranges getting the item/money to the person in need and writes a thank you message from the beneficiary to the donors who generously gave.



## How does your church sign up?

---

Our Operations Team would love to hear from you! Firstly, email them - [admin@acts435.org.uk](mailto:admin@acts435.org.uk) and they will send you the Advocate Handbook (training manual), an Advocate Commitment document (that must be signed by a leader of your church/charity and the Advocate) as well as details of other information we require. Once we receive these documents we can create the Advocate login, and you can begin helping those in need through our wonderful resource.



Acts 435 is a charity, registered in England (number 1131305) and Scotland (number SC042550); and a company registered in England & Wales (number 06919051).  
Registered office: Acts 435, The Gateway Centre, Acomb, York, YO24 3BZ.

© 2021 Acts 435

[acts435.org.uk](https://acts435.org.uk)