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Organisation name	<b>The Free Shop</b>
Charitable status	<b>Charity</b>
Registration number	<b>1194346</b>
Year the organisation was founded	<b>2021</b>
Address	<b>7 Carline Road</b>
Town/City	<b>Lincoln</b>
Post code	<b>LN1 1HL</b>
Website	<b><a href="https://www.thefreeshoplb.org/">https://www.thefreeshoplb.org/</a></b>
Logo	<b>Logo transparent background.png</b>
Briefly describe your organisation (max 30 words).	<b>Centered around our Free Shop, we relieve poverty among families living in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. Syrian refugees lead the operations, giving local agency, supported by trustees in the UK.</b>
What problem(s) does your organisation address? (max 150 words)	<p><b>Many displaced families in Lebanon live in poverty, perpetuated by their barely affording 'rent' (in tent settlements) and food, making investing in improving their prospects, let alone buying essential items, impossible. Through material aid, our project aims to relieve this poverty.</b></p> <p><b>In the last month, with the start of further conflict, almost one million people in Lebanon have become internally displaced. For Lebanese, there are schools open as shelters. The most vulnerable, mostly Syrian refugees as well as Palestinian refugees and disadvantaged Lebanese families, rely on shelters run by NGOs.</b></p> <p><b>The decision by the Ministry of Social Affairs that only Lebanese people can access school shelters is made worse by the fact that many NGOs moved from Bekaa to work in Syria in 2025, meaning there are now big gaps in the support network in this new crisis.</b></p>
How do you address the problem(s) identified and how are the beneficiaries involved in developing the solution? (max 200 words)	<p><b>According to local need, namely this month's new conflict that has already displaced nearly one million people in Lebanon, and as we have in years previously, we have quickly expanded our project to rent buildings as shelters, wherein we continue to supply essential material aid.</b></p> <p><b>We are part of the Emergency Response Charities Group of the West Bekaa, with a distinguishing role providing material aid from our free shop. In total, there are now around 12 shelters in the Bar Elias area of the West Beka, of which we are responsible for running 3/12 with one partner, Endless Medical Advantage, hosting 60 families in these three shelters alone. This equates to around 300 people to whom we provide items such as clothes from our free shop, though we support the other nine shelters through the network. While other organisations provide other dedicated aid, such as solar lights, sleeping materials and jerry cans, our work has a crucial part to play, as many of the families we</b></p>

meet arrived in only the clothes they had left their homes in.

Run by Syrian refugees and local volunteers, our work is community-led, giving local agency.

What relevant skills and experience does the leadership team have to achieve the organisation's objectives? (max 100 words)

Four FTE staff; Nine volunteers. All of our staff are Syrian refugees from the community and know the true needs of the beneficiaries. Three of them have been working with us for three years. One joined us 6 months ago but used to work at an NGO where she gained great experience. Our team has been to various training sessions including first aid, safeguarding, monitoring and evaluation, and project management. All of our nine trustees have experience of international aid work at various charities in Europe/the Middle East, for example, as fundraisers, logistic managers, project coordinators and general volunteers.

### Your organisation at a glance

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) your organisation addresses

**SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**

Error

You can only select three options.

Theme(s) that best describe your work

**Human rights, Migration & displacement, Poverty alleviation**

Checkbox calculation

No answer given

Error2

You can only select two options.

Beneficiaries

**Refugees & asylum seekers, Local community**

Checkbox calculation

No answer given

Country you work in

**Lebanon**

Number of FTE staff in your organisation

**4**

Number of volunteers in your organisation

**9**

Does your organisation have a safeguarding policy in place?

**Yes**

Photo of your work

**PHOTO-2026-03-17-13-51-05.jpg**

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How many people does your work directly benefit in a typical year? (number only)

**34,000**

What evidence do you have that your solution is effective? (max 200 words)

**We have direct feedback from families that they really appreciate the way we work and see us as very different to other charities in the region who use more traditional distribution models.**

**With regard to our emergency response thus far this March, we believe the number of people finding refuge in our shelters should be self-evident: we have opened three shelters, housing around 60 families and therefore around 300 people. Our part of the local West Bekaa network means that we are a crucial link between local families and the available local assistance.**

**More broadly, the model of our Free Shop invites our beneficiaries to take more responsibility in the process of receiving aid, and we have found this to work very effectively. It not only reduces the workload on our team but it also prevents waste; other charities distribute standard packs of aid and all families get the same items, but not all families have the same needs.**

**We can also prove this through our data, collected in a web-app over years and we are currently working on a report with the charity Boxtribute, to detail how The Free Shop model returns power to the people who receive aid.**

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**Text Grid****Most recent year**

Financial year	2025
Income (£)	116,115
Surplus/deficit (£)	5,293

**Title**

Financial year	2024
Income (£)	58,614
Surplus/deficit (£)	8,677

**Title**

Financial year	2023
Income (£)	119,657
Surplus/deficit (£)	2,839

What is your projected income in the current financial year? (£) 120,000

What are your main sources of funding and how long are these secured for? (max 100 words)

- Choose Love. Around 40% of our budget - secured for 2026.
- Public Donations. Around 10% of our budget - on track to secure for 2026.
- We have raised some funds for the current emergency situation and these are to be spent within the next three months. Details are in the budget attached.
- We have an annual donation from The Philip Henman Trust of 5,000 GBP, which is secured for 2026, 2027 and 2028 depending on our continued reporting.
- We are waiting on replies from The Lotto Foundation and some other foundations considering new funding applications

**Charity/CIO**

What is your reserves policy and target level of free reserves? (max 100 words)

Our target level of reserves is 15,000 GBP but we have struggled to reach this amount due to the current difficult context of fundraising for relief and development projects in the Middle East. We have generally managed to keep our reserves at around 5,000 GBP.

What were your actual free reserves in your last published accounts? (£)

**5,293**

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What is your current level of free reserves and date thereof? If applicable, please explain any material difference between current and target reserves levels (100 words)

**Our reserves, as of today, are 4,000 GBP. Due to the current difficult situation in Lebanon resulting from the conflict in the region, we have spent 1,000 GBP from our reserves in order to cover the rent for a shelter for families to move into. We have a donor willing to retrospectively fund this, so we expect our reserves to increase again in the summer of 2026 depending on the developing situation and needs in the region.**

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Please upload your most recent signed and independently reviewed accounts here.

**Annual Report TFS.pdf**

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Name of your proposal	<b>March 2026 Escalation in Conflict in Lebanon: The Free Shop's Emergency Response</b>
First name	<b>Elizabeth</b>
Last name	<b>Tasker</b>
What is the purpose of the funding you are applying for?	<b>Scaling a proven project</b>
How would you use the grant received from TFN? (max 450 words)	<p><b>This month's escalation of the conflict in Lebanon has unfortunately only exacerbated the poor living conditions of refugees in Bekaa Valley, where this project 'The Free Shop' operates, as well as increasing the number of families needing assistance.</b></p> <p><b>The project centres around its 'Free Shop', dedicated to material aid, where beneficiaries can shop for clothes, basic school supplies, and hygiene items for free in a dignified way that encourages agency. To help meet the imminent needs of people we are meeting, the project has adapted to help establish three shelters housing around 60 families, continuing to provide aid from the shop in these shelters. This is crucial in levelling society as the Lebanese government has only permitted schools to be used as shelters for Lebanese people, ignoring the many other refugees.</b></p> <p><b>The project, therefore, needs acute funding to continue to provide targeted material aid, with the long-term view of it relieving chronic poverty, as supplementing essential material supplies can help break the financial cycle that perpetuates poverty. The purpose of the funds would reflect the imminent needs of the people: it would be used to pay rent to establish shelters and to expand the project to volunteer kitchens in Bar Elias for the people in the shelters, as well as sustaining the running costs of the Free Shop project with its augmented current needs.</b></p>
How does your proposal seek to achieve social justice? (max 150 words)	<p><b>Poverty - families well under the poverty line in Lebanon struggle to afford essential items, stuck because all and any money must be spent on basic food and rent in tent settlements, leading to poor standards of living with no prospects.</b></p> <p><b>Emergency Relief – nearly one million people have already been internally displaced this month: people most urgently need shelter, followed by food and material aid.</b></p> <p><b>Community/Agency in Refugees - led by Syrian refugees, it encourages local agency and delivers aid in a dignified way, as the 'Free Shop' model allows choice, unlike the distribution styles of other NGOs.</b></p> <p><b>Women's Health - women and girls cannot afford menstrual products; we stock sustainable pads in the shop and connect women to local services.</b></p> <p><b>Education - we provide basic school supplies, helping children make the most of school.</b></p>
Please upload your project or operational budget here (whichever is most relevant)	<b>Annual Report TFS.pdf</b>