



FOOD AND COMMUNITY TRUST
SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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VERSION: 1.0

VERSION HISTORY

Version	What	Who	When
1.0	Policy Overhaul – reforming the Safeguarding policy and creating separate policies for Safer Recruiting and Safer Practice.	Sandie Keene, Jayne Franklin and Rowann Nall	June 2005

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Food and Community Trust (FCT) is a Christian Charity focused on relieving poverty. We aim to address practical, emotional and spiritual needs across Sheffield and the UK through the provision of food, debt support and youth work, individual and family support. We recognise the Duty of Care we have and the requirement to provide safe environments and support for beneficiaries of our services to thrive. This policy is supported by detailed procedures and demonstrates our commitment to following best practice in working with individuals and families and in our response to safeguarding concerns.

We are committed to:

- Promoting a safe environment and culture
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and adults at risk within the organisation
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Supporting victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons when appropriate
- Supporting those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected people
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk

We will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all
- Have a named Safeguarding Lead to work with the Board to implement policies and procedures, supported by a Safeguarding Lead Trustee
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse
- Respond appropriately and without delay to any disclosure of abuse, listening carefully to the information and, where necessary, informing and cooperating with the Police and Local Authority in any required actions
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse, regardless of the type of abuse, when and where it occurred

- Care for and monitor anyone who uses our services who may pose a risk to children and adults, whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties
- Challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust
- Ensure there are appropriate systems of accountability and supervision at all levels of FCT
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedure and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed at least annually
- Ensure there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children, young people and adults undertaken in FCT
- Ensure that the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs is available to all workplaces, all volunteers and on the website
- Follow legislation, guidance, and recognised good practice in our safeguarding policy, procedures and practice.
- Review the Safeguarding Policy, procedures, practices and their implementation at least annually

ACCOUNTABILITY

FCT is overseen by the Board of Trustees. Their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding are:

- To ensure FCT provides a safe space for all who come into contact with it
- To set a culture that makes staff and individuals in contact with FCT feel supported and comfortable to raise concerns
- To reduce risk and ensure the organisation has assessed its risk profile
- To make sure the right policies are in place for raising issues and encouraging speaking up
- To ensure that when issues are raised, they are investigated correctly and thoroughly
- To ensure openness and accountability in relation to safeguarding.

The ultimate accountability for Safeguarding within the organisation lies with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board will:

- Accept the prime duty of care placed upon them to ensure the well-being of people that are part of the organisation's work.
- Appoint a safeguarding lead to implement policy and procedures. The safeguarding lead must ensure that any appropriate concerns about the safety of a child or adult are reported to the statutory agencies. The board will receive reports at each meeting concerning the number and type of safeguarding risks and incidents.
- Ensure that all those authorised to work with children, young people and adults at risk and/or are in a position of authority are appropriately recruited according to safer recruitment practice and are trained and supported. Ensure all authorised personnel (staff and volunteers) have a copy of the appropriate safeguarding policy and have the appropriate support when dealing with issues of disclosure.
- Ensure there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children, young people and adults undertaken in FCT
- Review the Safeguarding Policy, procedures, practices and their implementation at least annually

Responding to concerns

- Anyone must raise a concern to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy if they have information which may indicate a safeguarding risk or incident. Actions required are set out in accompanying practice guidance.
- The Board will appoint a named safeguarding lead and named deputy with responsibility for overseeing the timely review of concerns and reporting to statutory agencies as required, ensuring management oversight of cases as required.

Safeguarding Lead

The Safeguarding Lead has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that any concerns about a child, or an adult, are appropriately reported to statutory services when it comes to their attention.
- Contact the Police if they suspect that a crime has been committed.
- Monitor and oversee incidents ensuring actions and decision making is in line with best practice.
- Supervise the process of recruiting and training staff and volunteers to work in line with safer recruitment practices.
- Ensure that Health and Safety audits of our premises and risk assessments of other premises, with a particular emphasis on the safety of children and adults are carried out.
- Ensure there is a regular (at least annual) review of the safeguarding policy and procedures. Ensure that the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy's contact details are displayed anywhere where work is undertaken under this policy
- Provide information to the Board concerning incidents and risks
- Ensure Regulatory authorities are informed of incidents and risks as required.

Safeguarding Trustee

The Safeguarding Trustee has responsibility to:

- Provide support to the Safeguarding Lead and provide independent advice where appropriate
- Ensure reports to the Board are scrutinised and any risks identified and addressed
- Support the review of Policies and Procedures.

Partnership working

FCT works with many partners across the UK. This includes:

- Working with and in schools and colleges
- Working with churches and community projects delivering FCT Foodbanks
- Working to deliver Foodbank's in venues owned by the City Council and/or other bodies
- Working with national partners to deliver Debt Services and Foodbanks e.g. Christians Against poverty, Community Money Advice and Trussell Trust.
- Working with Foodbanks across the UK to provide food stock.

The roles and responsibilities of the partners are described within 'Partnership Agreements' contracts and/or rental agreements which are signed and agreed by both parties. All agreements **MUST** make clear how the safeguarding duties and responsibilities of the respective partners are discharged and overseen.

For guidance and general principle:

- When working within schools, the school safeguarding procedures are followed, and school staff take the lead in reporting concerns raised by FCT staff/volunteers

- Churches delivering Foodbanks take the lead in reporting and managing safeguarding concerns from within their service, using their own Safeguarding Policies. Advice and support is available from the FCT Safeguarding Lead who will also collect the numbers of incidents which will be reported to the Board.
- FCT will oversee concerns raised in respect of FCT delivered Foodbanks, debt and family support services.
- FCT will report incidents and concerns as required to National partners.

Commitment to Best Practice

The policy and procedures of FCT are informed by and are consistent with:

- Local Authority (Sheffield) Children and Adults Safeguarding Procedures
- FCT Health and Safety Policy
- FCT Complaints policy
- FCT Whistleblowing policy

Other policies and practices maybe helpful to refer to in specific circumstances e.g. Keeping Childre Safe in Education (KCSIE 2022)

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

CONTACTS

Safeguarding Lead: Jayne Franklin (jaynefranklin@fctrust.uk)
Safeguarding Deputy: Rowann Nall (rowannnall@fctrust.uk)
FCT Office Telephone Number: 01143211740

Local Authority Social Services
Safeguarding Hub: 0114 273 4855

Helplines

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
Childline: 0800 11 11
Stop It Now: 0808 1000 900
NAPAC: 0808 801 0331
Samaritans: 116 123
Family Lives: 0808 800 2222
National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247
Men's Advice Line: 0808 8010 327
National Careline: 0800 0699 784

Sheffield children's services procedure manual

<https://sheffieldcs.trixonline.co.uk/>

Sheffield Adults Safeguarding Partnership Board

<https://www.sheffieldasp.org.uk/sasp>

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

INTRODUCTION

These procedures and guidelines are concerned with the protection of any individuals or families that employees, volunteers and contractors of Food and Community Trust come into contact with during their service with the organisation. It is designed primarily to help employees and volunteers to recognise and respond to safeguarding issues, to:

- Identify potential and actual risks or incidents of suspected abuse
- Respond quickly and sensitively to suspicions or disclosed incidents of abuse
- Provide a process to report issues of concern in respect to suspected, disclosed or observed abuse

SCOPE

We want to promote a safe culture in everything we do. The wellbeing of children, young people and adults is our priority as together we seek to support those in need of practical, physical, emotional or spiritual need. As a Christian organisation, we seek to serve those with all faiths or none and follow the Biblical principles of loving our neighbour and seeking to do good.

We know that in our relationships with people, we are likely to provide support in several situations. It may be that individuals have experienced abuse in the past, may currently be at

risk or be suffering actual harm. Safeguarding is everyone's business and responsibility. We recognise that staff and volunteers may be working with specific groups e.g. either children, young people or adults at risk. It is important that all staff and volunteers know the signs of risk and abuse for all individuals irrespective of their specific role e.g. employees or volunteers working with adults may see or hear issues of concern about children and visa versa.

All employees and volunteers have a duty of care to the people they serve, to recognise the signs of abuse and to take action where it is reported. Employees and volunteers will receive training on what abuse is, how to recognize, respond and report it. The policy and procedures commit employees and volunteers to responding promptly to all allegations or suspicions of abuse.

This guidance is mandatory reading prior to taking up any responsibility within Food and Community Trust.

The ultimate accountability for safeguarding within the organisation lies with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

RECOGNISING POTENTIAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Significant harm

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of children. The local authority is under a duty to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, and the extent of premeditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse. Sometimes a single event may constitute significant harm, but more often it is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. In every case it is necessary to consider any ill-treatment alongside the family's strengths and weaknesses.

Children In Need: Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

All local authorities have a duty to consider the needs of those children who are referred to it by means of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Some children, for instance, because of a level of disability, will automatically be children in need. Others will be assessed using the CAF. To be assessed as a child in need does not imply there are issues of abuse: this is often a useful assessment for the child because it can trigger the provision of additional help or services to the family.

Disclosures of historical (past) abuse

In the course of their work, many of those offering pastoral support in the charity will find themselves hearing disclosures from adults concerning abuse that happened to them when they were children.

There is no single, correct procedure for dealing with a disclosure of historical abuse by an adult. The wishes of the person disclosing abuse will be very important. For some, just being able to talk to a trusted person about their experiences can be a powerful healing event. The pastoral care of the person who has been abused should be a priority. A referral to the police will not always be necessary unless the individual wishes to report the offence; however, they

should be encouraged and supported to do so. They do need to be made aware, however, that if the alleged abuser is still working with or caring for children a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be made by the person hearing the complaint or with the Safeguarding lead or deputy, who must in any case be informed. People who have committed sexual abuse against someone years ago could well be abusing children today.

CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve failing to-

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- Protect from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Physical abuse is defined as deliberately hurting a child and causing physical harm. Injuries may include bruises, burns, cuts, broken bones. It may involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or any other method causing non-accidental injury.

Sexual abuse involves force or persuasion to take part in contact or non-contact sexual activities. Contact abuse could involve touching, kissing, oral sex and rape by penetrative sex. Non-contact sexual abuse includes involving children in looking at and producing sexual images, watching sexual activities, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (this could include via the internet).

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's development. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved. It could involve developmentally inappropriate expectations imposed on a child. These may be beyond a child's capability or overprotection that could prevent a child from participating in normal social interaction. It could also involve seeing or hearing maltreatment- for example witnessing persistent domestic abuse. In addition, serious bullying, exploitation, or corruption of children are examples of emotional abuse.

When someone harms a child, or a child is at risk of harm it is vital that those working with the child know what to do. Child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, or involve neglect. In many cases, children will experience harm from more than one of these categories. Children who experience abuse may find it difficult to speak out or even recognise that they are being harmed. Recognising and responding to concerns around a child's welfare are therefore vitally important to all working with children and young people.

OTHER HARMFUL BEHAVIOURS WHICH CAN INDICATE CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION

- **Domestic abuse** - any type of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or have been in a relationship regardless of gender or sexuality. Being exposed to domestic abuse in childhood is child abuse
- **Child sexual exploitation** - occurs when an individual takes advantage of an imbalance

of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity, often in return for gifts, drugs, money or affection. It can take place in person, online or using a combination of both

- **Problematic or Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)** - developmentally inappropriate or socially unexpected, sexualised behaviour. This could be child-on-child sexualised behaviour which may not be abuse but is harmful
- **Bullying and cyber bullying** - bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable. It can involve people of any age and can happen anywhere. It encompasses a range of behaviours which can be verbal, physical, emotional abuse, cyber or online bullying
- **Online abuse** - any type of abuse that happens on the internet, using computers, tablets, mobile phones, games consoles and other internet-enabled devices
- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)** - the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. This is an illegal practice carried out on girls between infancy and adolescence. There is a mandatory duty on all professionals working with children to report to the police if they become aware that a child has had FGM or is at risk of FGM.
- **Child trafficking and modern slavery** - recruiting, moving, receiving and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation
- **County lines** - a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce and force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns
- **Spiritual abuse** - this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership, penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in young people experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual harm

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CHILD ABUSE

This summary gives a brief outline of some of the signs and symptoms which can give cause for concern. They should **NOT** be regarded as definitive and require professional investigation before any attribution of child abuse as the cause.

Physical Abuse

Bruises

- In or around the mouth
- Fingertip bruising on arms, chest or face indicating tight gripping or shaking Bruises of different colours indicating injuries of different ages
- Two simultaneous black eyes without bruising to the forehead Bruising showing the marks of a belt or implement or a handprint Bruising or tears around the earlobes
- Bruising to the head or soft tissue areas of the body

Bites

- Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped and can leave a clear impression of teeth

Burns and scalds

- Burns with a clear outline are suspicious
- Circular burns from cigarettes
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electric elements Burns of a uniform depth over a large area
- Friction burns from being pulled across a floor
- Scalds producing a water line from immersion or pouring of hot liquid Splash marks around the main burn area are caused by liquid being thrown
- Old scars indicating previous burns

Fractures

- Any fracture in a child under one year is suspicious Any skull fracture in the first three years is suspicious

Female genital mutilation (circumcision)

- This is illegal except for very rare health reasons

Neglect

Often difficult to identify, neglect leads to physical and emotional harm of a child. The signs and symptoms include:

- Failure of a parent/carer to provide adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene, medical care or supervision.
- Failure of a child to grow within the normally expected pattern; they may show pallor, weight loss and signs of poor nutrition.
- Failure of a parent/carer to provide adequate love and affection in a stimulating environment, a child may look listless, apathetic or unresponsive with no apparent/carer medical cause.
- A child may be observed thriving when away from the home environment.
- Children who are not allowed to participate in social activities and who are isolated.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can also be difficult to identify. It is the result of ill treatment in the form of coldness, hostility and rejection; constant denigration or seriously distorted emotional demands; extreme inconsistency of parent/carer. Some of the signs and symptoms are:

- Low self-esteem Apathy
- Being fearful and withdrawn or displaying “frozen watchfulness”
- Unduly aggressive behaviour
- Excessive clinging or attention seeking behaviour Constantly seeking to please
- Over-readiness to relate to anyone, even strangers

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse can be suspected based on physical signs, the child’s behaviour or following a direct statement by the child. It is often investigated because of a combination of these signs.

- Physical signs:
 - Recurrent abdominal pain Unexplained pregnancy Difficulty walking and sitting Faecal soiling or retention Recurrent urinary tract infection
- Behavioural signs:

- Knowledge unusual for the age of the child Sexually provocative relationships with adults Sexualised play with other children
- Hints of sexual activity through play, drawing or conversation
- Requests for contraceptive advice
- Lack of trust or marked fear of familiar adults
- Sudden onset of soiling or wetting
- Severe sleep disturbance
- Change of eating habits
- Social isolation and withdrawal
- Role reversal in the home e.g. a daughter taking over the mothering role Inappropriate displays of physical contact between adult and child Learning difficulties, poor concentration
- Inability to make friends
- Using school as a haven, arriving early and reluctant to leave Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Truancy, running away from home
- Self harm, mutilation or suicide attempts Dependence on drugs or alcohol
- Anti-social behaviour including promiscuity and prostitution.

WHO ABUSES CHILDREN?

Child abuse is not new: it has, however, been increasingly recognised, named and condemned during the course of the twentieth and into this century. Its manifestations vary in time and place, and currently we are witnessing a new manifestation in the use of the new electronically based technologies to abuse children. Child abuse occurs in all cultures, religions and classes. It affects girls and boys, babies and young people of all ages up to the age of eighteen, children with learning difficulties, with physical disabilities and children from any kind of family background.

Most child abuse is committed by those closest to the child: parent/carers, brothers or sisters, stepparent/carer or other carer, members of the extended family, babysitter or family friend, or other trusted adult such as a neighbour. It is known to be perpetrated by children against other children: child perpetrators will have greater power than their victims, perhaps due to age, gender, physique or ability. Both men and women can abuse children.

Within a charity setting, a worker may encounter child abuse or harm when a child discloses, fully or partially, or when the worker picks up clues that things are not right at home. Children may be suffering from neglect or physical abuse and the symptoms may be spotted by charity workers.

There could be offenders who use access to the wider charity to gain access to children. However, the existence of rigorous safeguarding procedures offers some protection to children, because the deterrent factor is significant and if the procedures are followed there will be no opportunity to abuse. The procedures and safer working practice, if followed, also provide some protection for workers against any false allegations of abuse.

Sexual abuse of children does not simply just happen. It is a process that is planned, manipulated and repetitive. You cannot tell by looking at someone that they are an abuser and abusers come from all classes and groups within society. People in positions of trust and authority can be involved in abusing children: they may be youth workers, teachers, social workers or leaders.

Vigilance is a key weapon in the battle against child abuse. Sadly, this means being vigilant within our own groups and activities. Workers with children need to be aware that some adults are unable to provide consistent care, that some may manipulate themselves into positions of trust where they can exploit children physically, emotionally, or sexually. The reasons why people sexually abuse children are usually very different from the reasons why children are neglected or physically abused but all potential situations where children can come to harm must be monitored.

Sexual abusers may involve or “groom” children by befriending them, by spending time with them and paying them a lot of attention, by giving them money or gifts. The children are usually told to keep the gifts a secret and thus begins a process of encouraging secrecy. Such offenders often target vulnerable children and their families, who may be isolated or who have been victims of emotional deprivation, neglect or earlier abuse.

Sexual abuse may also occur in ways that do not involve physical contact: such as taking photographs or videos, or by being shown illicit and pornographic material on the internet, or by deceiving children into relationships by pretending to be of a similar age and persuading them to behave sexually on camera.

RECOGNISING POTENTIAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF ADULTS

Our commitment is to provide a safe space for all who come into contact with our activities. We aim to promote physical, emotional and spiritual wholeness, and seek to ensure the wellbeing of all whom we meet irrespective of history, background and belief.

The significant majority of adults we meet have capacity and self determination to take full part in our activities without recourse to additional support. There will be some, however, who may experience specific vulnerabilities which may change with time and according to circumstance. Strengths can change and grow and, in some circumstances diminish or disappear. Some people, because of their physical or social circumstances and past experiences have higher levels of vulnerability than others. It is our duty to recognise this and support those who are vulnerable or at risk in a way which affords them as much independence as possible. We must do this in a way that allows compassion and empathy without undermining dignity.

Some of the factors which may increase vulnerability are learning, sensory or physical disability; physical or mental illness; addictions; frailty in old age; a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events e.g. bereavement, previous abuse, trauma or family breakdown.

As with children and young people, there are defined types of abuse of adults which fall within the guidelines to raise and report to the leadership of FCT where there are concerns. There is a statutory framework under the Care Act 2014 for the reporting and investigation of abuse of adults with specific care needs (described later). However, we wish to be alert to any instances where individuals may not feel safe for whatever reason.

CATEGORIES OF ADULT ABUSE

Sexual abuse - A sexual act carried out without the informed consent of the other individual is abuse. Such behaviour includes contact and non-contact abuse.

Physical abuse - The ill-treatment of an adult, which may or may not cause physical injury, is regarded as physical abuse. Instances might include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking,

inappropriate restraint, withholding or misuse of medication, squeezing, biting, suffocating, poisoning, drowning or killing.

Emotional or psychological abuse - the use of threats, fear or the abuse of power. Bullying, sexual and racial harassment would also come into this category if physical harm were not used. It includes lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation, making someone feel worthless, lack of love or affection, threats, verbal abuse, humiliation, blaming, controlling, pressurising, coercion, fear, or ignoring the person. Other behaviours which may take place within a working relationship include public or unreasonable criticism, insults and shouting, ignoring a person's wishes or point of view, setting unreasonable work targets, removing areas of responsibility, or undervaluing a person's efforts. Harassment may include name calling, victimisation and ostracism, unwanted sexual attention, stalking, compromising invitations or gifts, the display of images that are racially or sexually offensive, or the suggestion that sexual favours might further promotion prospects.

Financial or legal abuse - wilful extortion or manipulation of legal or civil rights eg misappropriation of monies or goods, the misuse of finances, property or possessions, withholding money, the exploitation of a person's resources or embezzlement.

Neglect - failure to intervene in situations where there is danger to a vulnerable person or to others, particularly when a person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk, not giving personal care, deliberately withholding visual or hearing aids, withholding food, drink, light and clothing, restricting access to medical services, denying social, religious or cultural contacts, denying contact with family, lack of appropriate supervision.

Domestic abuse - Any incident, or pattern of incidents, of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or who have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This includes emotional/psychological, physical, sexual or financial abuse and stalking/harassment, honour-based violence, female genital mutilation or forced marriage.

Modern slavery - slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhuman treatment

Spiritual abuse - this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership, penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual harm

Discriminatory abuse - harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse - Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practice within an organisation.

ADULTS IN NEED OF SAFEGUARDING

The Care Act 2014 has updated the definition of adults who fall within the duties of safeguarding. This now applies to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

It may be that you are concerned about someone who would not immediately fall within this definition. You should report any concerns. It may be that the individual has a support worker and the Safeguarding Lead can liaise with the worker to share any concerns and agree a plan of action. Except in rare circumstances of immediate or urgent risk constituting the need for a Police or statutory agency referral, it is for the FCT Safeguarding Leads to determine any appropriate actions and next steps.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS, ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR ALERTS ABOUT A PERSON WHO MAY BE EXPOSED TO HARM

If you suspect that someone is being mistreated in some way you should always take responsibility for doing something about your concerns. Doing nothing is not an option.

Concerns may be raised after the observation of action, behaviour or general presentation which alerts to the possibility of risk and/or abuse (e.g. unexplained bruising, unexplained behaviour around certain individuals, reluctance to take part in events if certain people are present, difficult family dynamics). Some people will not disclose if they are in trouble. It cannot be assumed that any of the examples above indicate abuse but they may prompt you to discuss with your team leader and submit an incident report and. Any concerns can be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead.

Disclosing abuse is often very difficult and there are a number of barriers to being open about the circumstances. If you have concerns and someone begins to disclose, the following guidelines will assist in having the conversation.

Do:

- Listen
- Take what is said seriously
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding
- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your Safeguarding Lead what is believed to have happened, when and where
- Check what the person hopes to happen as a result of the disclosure
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next

Do not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information).

- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Investigate
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made
- Do a physical or medical examination

Record

Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible (complete the safeguarding incident form with this information)

Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the statutory authorities.

Record the date, time, place and actual words used, including any swear words or slang

Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.

Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

Reporting incidents and allegations

Every incident of concern in respect of an adult, child or young person must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead at FCT.

All urgent allegations or concerns (risk of/or actual current harm) must be reported to your manager and then the Safeguarding Lead immediately. It is helpful and preferable to complete the information on the online safeguarding incident reporting form as shown on p.18-20 but if circumstances dictate, this can be done later. The Safeguarding Lead will advise on immediate action. Where the Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not available (e.g. out of hours) and immediate danger or medical attention is required, the Police and Social Services should be called.

Non urgent concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead (by using the form) as soon as practicable.

The referral flow chart (below) shows the process followed once a concern is raised.

FORMS FOR REPORTING A CONCERN OR INCIDENT.

All safeguarding concerns should be recorded using our online incident reporting form (found here <https://fctrust.uk/leaders>).

Please see below a screenshot of the online Incident Reporting Form.

In the first instance, raise your concerns with your team leader (e.g. for foodbank sites) or line manager who will assist and/or advise you with completing the form.

There are 11 questions on the form.

The first part of the form is the form fillers details:

- Name, email, phone number

The second part is about the incident details:

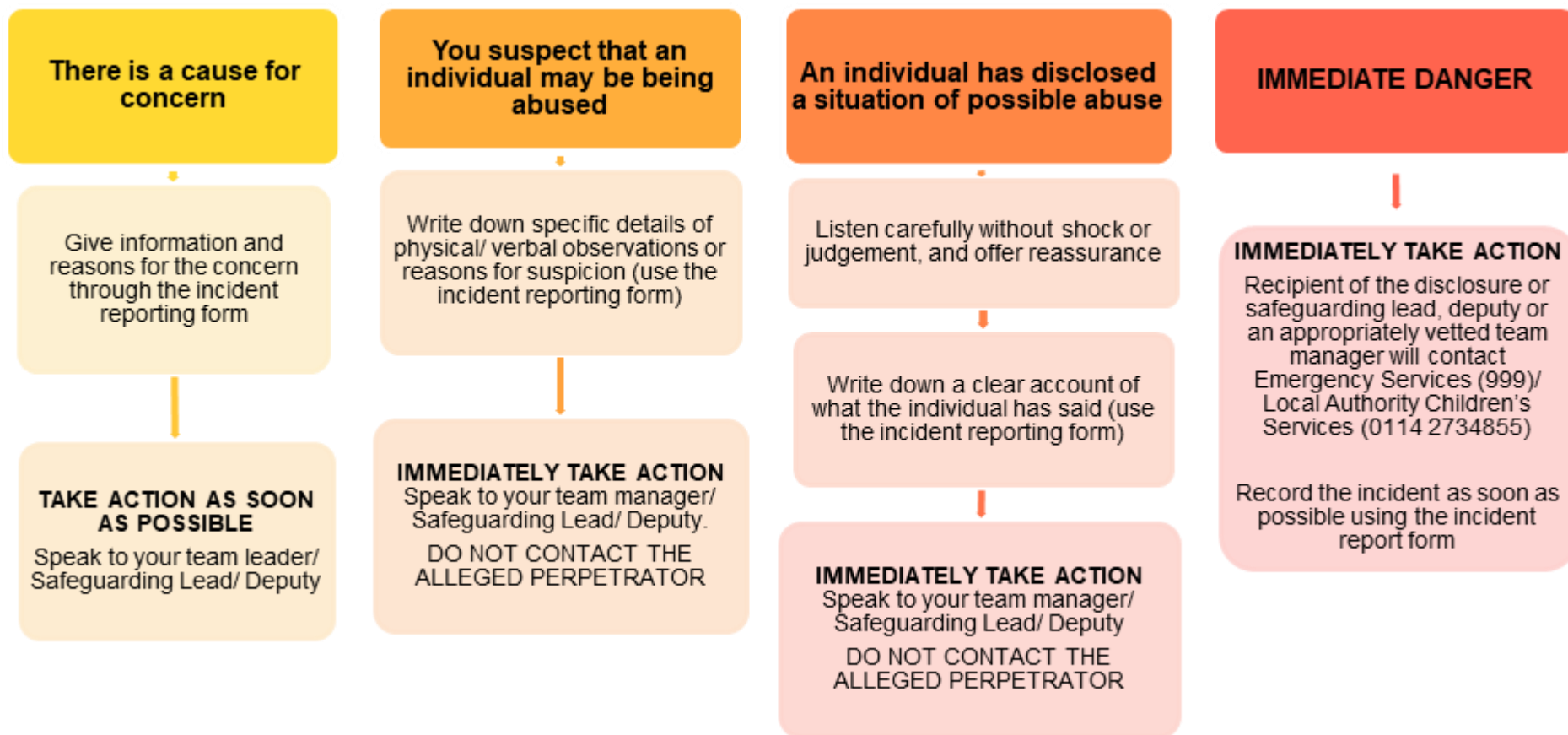
- Individual(s) involved, project involved, date, time, location.
- Details of incident/conversation, immediate action taken, further concerns.

LEADERSHIP

FCT is committed to supporting employees and volunteers to work well with the recipients of our services. Further practice guidance is available for working with individuals. Employees and volunteers are required to read the Safeguarding Policy of FCT. Implementation is overseen by

Safeguarding Lead, deputy and Chief Executive, supported by the Safeguarding Lead Trustee and Board of FCT.

REFERRAL FLOW CHART

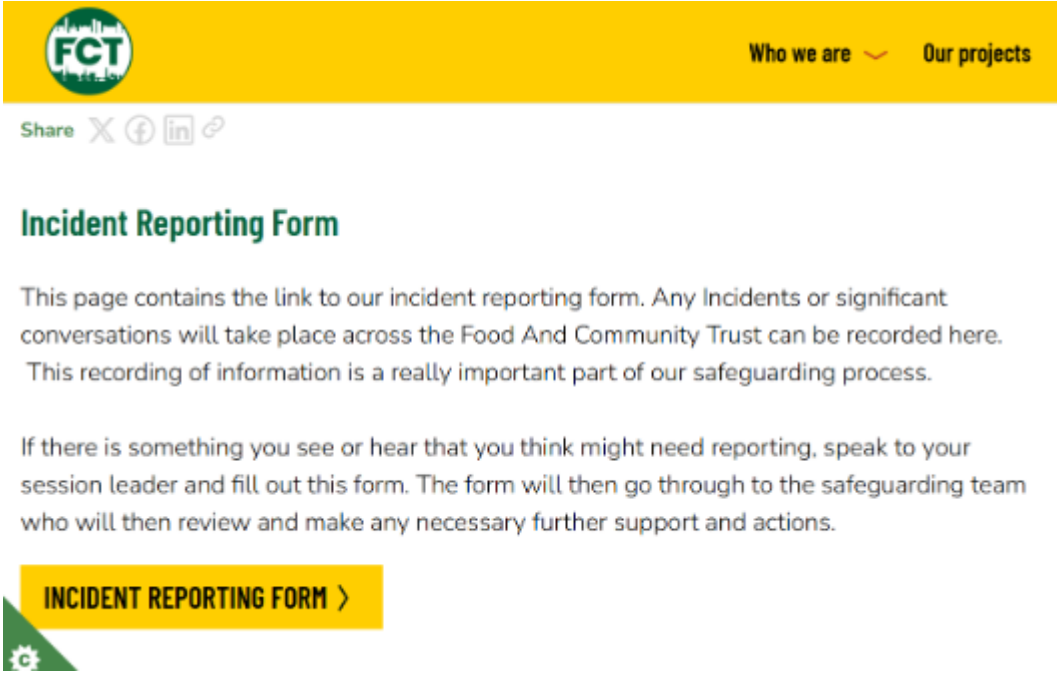


THE SAFEGUARDING LEAD WILL CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE SERVICE FOR ADVICE.

INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

<https://fctrust.uk/leaders>

Screenshots from website/ online form.



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Food and Community Trust website. It features the FCT logo on the left, and links for 'Who we are' and 'Our projects' on the right. Below the navigation bar, there are social media sharing icons for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and a general share icon. The main heading 'Incident Reporting Form' is displayed in a large, bold font. Below this heading, a paragraph explains that the page contains a link to the incident reporting form, which is used to record any incidents or significant conversations. It states that this recording is a crucial part of the safeguarding process. Another paragraph advises that if someone sees or hears something that might need reporting, they should speak to their session leader and fill out the form, which will then be reviewed by the safeguarding team. A prominent yellow button with the text 'INCIDENT REPORTING FORM >' is located at the bottom of the section.



The screenshot displays the 'Incident Reporting Form' interface. At the top, there is a teal header with the FCT logo and the title 'Incident Reporting Form'. Below the header, a section titled 'Your Details (The person filling out the form)' is shown. A note indicates that details should be provided so the organization can get in touch if further information is needed. The form consists of three numbered fields, each with a red asterisk indicating it is required:

1. Name *
Enter your answer
2. Email Address: *
Enter your answer
3. Phone Number *
Enter your answer

At the bottom left of the form, there is a teal button labeled 'Next'.



Incident Reporting Form

* Required

Details of Incident

Please give details of the incident or conversation here

4. Project Involved *

- ☐ Foodbank Site
- ☐ Foodbank Phonenumber
- ☐ Forge Youth
- ☐ Family Worker Home Visit
- ☐ Debt Visit
- ☐ School Session

5. Name of individual(s) involved *

Enter your answer

6. Date Of Incident *

Please input date (dd/MM/yyyy)



7. Time Of Incident *

Enter your answer

8. Location Of Incident *

Enter your answer

9. Details of the incident or conversation (please describe in detail using only the facts) *

Enter your answer

10. Any immediate action taken by person reporting the incident or conversation

Enter your answer

11. Do you have any further concerns?

Enter your answer

Back

Submit

SAFE RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE GUIDELINES

POLICY STATEMENT

Food and Community Trust is a Christian Charity focused on relieving poverty. We aim to address practical, emotional and spiritual needs across Sheffield and the UK through the provision of food, debt support and family support. We recognise the Duty of Care we have and the requirement to provide safe environments and support for beneficiaries of our services to thrive. Recruiting the right staff and volunteers is crucial to achieving our aim. This policy and procedural guidance sets out how we will do this.

We will:

- Ensure our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent those who might harm children or adults from being in positions of respect, responsibility or authority where they are trusted by others
- Adhere to safer recruitment legislation, guidance and standards, responding positively to changing understandings of good safer recruitment practice.
- Monitor adherence to practice and provide best practice guidance where appropriate

RECRUITMENT COMMITMENT

It is important that anyone who works for FCT whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, should be chosen with care. While there are no procedures which can give an absolute safeguard against appointing people who present a risk, the consistent application of procedures designed to vet for offenders against children or adults at risk has a significant deterrent effect. This is not sufficient of itself: continued monitoring and a culture of supervision and review are also important in ensuring our beneficiaries are protected from harm.

Our practice relies on a recruitment process for all paid staff and volunteers as well as criminal checks via the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) service where appropriate for the role.

We will:

- Be clear about who is responsible for appointments
- Have a Policy Statement for the recruitment of ex-offenders (see p. 4 of this document)
- Publish our Safeguarding Policy statements
- Ensure advertisements/applicants understand the responsibilities of the role
- Ensure each role in the organisation has a job description or role outline. Paid roles must additionally have a person specification
- Determine the level and nature of potential contact with children, young people and adults at risk to determine the safeguarding risks and issues with the role
- Specify which roles require a DBS check. All paid roles and volunteers working directly with children, young people and adults at risk (see DBS guidelines) will require a DBS check. We will be guided by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 regarding the level. We will seek self-disclosure in all other instances, recognising its limitations.
- Determine an appropriate selection process.
- For paid roles this will involve an interview as a minimum and may involve consultation and engagement with others in the organisation. Two written references will be required. For volunteer roles this will involve informal chat with the project leader, trial visit and depending upon the role outline may require two written references.
- Seek DBS checks or self-disclosure (see above). Ensure decisions on appointment are

made by someone with the relevant level of safeguarding expertise (at least the same as the requirement for the role)

- Identify training needs of the role (including any induction requirements) and ensure they are put in place
- Establish a probationary period for paid staff with appropriate measures and monitoring to demonstrate competence and safety.
- Put in place arrangements for continued oversight and support of safeguarding elements of the role are discussed on a regular basis
- Ensure Data protection requirements are followed for the handling of personal data during recruitment.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The following process of recruitment is essential if we are to be confident that our recruitment of workers, of any who carry out “regulated activity” and of those who occupy positions of trust is as safe as possible.

Process of recruitment

Step one

Provide a job description and application form for staff and volunteers wishing to work in FCT. The confidential declaration **must** be used. This step may be combined with Step three. The confidential declaration is important for two reasons: it affords the potential worker an opportunity to make a self- declaration of any matter which may appear on the DBS Disclosure, in accordance with good employment practice and the guidance from DBS, and it asks about other situations where someone may have been identified as having caused harm which would not necessarily appear on the DBS Disclosure.

Step two

Take up the references provided by the applicant. One reference should be from the current employer, if possible, and at least one should be from someone who has known the person at least two years. Do not accept an open reference e.g. “To whom it may concern”. All references should be specific to the individual and to the post and signed by the person who is supplying the reference.

If the references or declaration give cause for concern, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Must be consulted.

All references and declarations must be stored in accordance with all relevant information law and access to them restricted to those who need to be involved: for instance, the group leader and those who work in relation to Safeguarding

Step three

Have an appropriate interview: at least one of those interviewing should be the leader of the group in which the applicant will be employed. Those taking on any role involving the caring for, supervision or training of children and young people must be appropriate individuals: the DBS Disclosure is only one aspect of determining whether someone is suitable to work with children and young people and the interview may assist that determination. In most case two individuals will do the interview and it is desirable that one member of the interviewing group should be a relevant member of staff or be the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

All interviewees should be given access to this policy and agree to abide by it.

Step four

The decision whether to employ anyone in work with children and young people or adults at risk (whether paid or a volunteer) must be conditional on a satisfactory DBS Disclosure (where appropriate) and this should be made clear to the potential worker.

Obtain a DBS disclosure via the On line system. The safeguarding Lead/deputy or group leader will be able to instruct individuals on how to complete this.

Should an applicant come from overseas, further information is available here

www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

Step five

The decision to appoint should be made conditional on a probationary period, depending on the nature of the post (probably three months for volunteer posts).

Step Six

All workers should be given and sign volunteer agreements or contracts depending on role.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Helpers aged under 18.

Young people aged under 18 are often a valuable source of assistance, particularly in respect to children's work.. They should not be asked for a DBS disclosure. They should never be solely responsible for a group and should always be supervised and supported by an adult. They cannot count towards fulfilling the required staffing ratios. Once they reach 18 they should be treated as adults, should complete and application from and will be asked to apply for a DBS disclosure if appropriate

Recruitment of Ex Offenders

We welcome all applications, for paid or voluntary positions - from interested and suitably qualified people, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), including the DBS Update Service and associated registered bodies, to assess applicant's suitability for eligible posts. FCT undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

We consider:

- Legislation outlined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- National best practice in Safer Recruitment and People Management for organisations supporting children, young people and adults at risk
- The DBS Code of Practice when handling disclosure information, including that obtained from the DBS Update Service (all registered bodies are also required to comply with this).

Individuals from outside the UK

For paid employees;

To comply with the Government's immigration requirements, anyone who comes from overseas and wishes to work in the United Kingdom must be sponsored by the employer in the UK in accordance with the UK Border Agency immigration points-based system. Employers must carry out the necessary immigration checks to verify that those they wish to employ have the right to work and have no restrictions on working in the UK. Further information on preventing illegal working can be obtained from www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers/.

For paid employees and volunteers;

Safeguarding procedures, including the above recruitment process should be carried out for those from overseas, including those who have lived outside of the UK for a period of time, in the same way as for UK residents. This includes a DBS disclosure, if they have spent any significant time in the UK within the last five years. Additionally, a certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy or police force should be obtained where this is available.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE DISCLOSURES

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is an executive agency of the Home Office. Its purpose is to help employers make safer recruitment decisions and should be understood in this context. It is not an agency for deciding who is suitable to work with children or adults at risk, but as an aid to identifying those who are not. The DBS continues to operate, providing disclosures as before and employers still need to obtain one for potential employees and volunteers in relevant work.

It is the policy that:

- All those who work regularly with children, including those who work on a rota, should have a DBS Disclosure.
- Those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for a DBS Disclosure if they fulfil the legal requirements for DBS
- Those who manage or supervise those who work with vulnerable groups will also be required to obtain a DBS Disclosure
- Those in a leadership capacity who carry responsibility for safeguarding will be required to obtain a DBS Disclosure.

The Disclosure and Barring Service is responsible for making decisions concerning barring of individuals when they receive referrals from employers and others. It is a criminal offence to knowingly permit anyone engaging in regulated activity (i.e. relevant work with children and/or vulnerable adults) and a criminal offence to seek or offer to engage in an activity if an individual is barred. The information as to whether an individual is barred will be supplied on the DBS Disclosure if the individual is undertaking regulated activity and the relevant box on the form has been ticked. It is therefore essential, to avoid the possibility of committing an offence, that a DBS Disclosure is sought for anyone undertaking regulated activity. Any activity of a specified nature that involves contact with children frequently, intensively or overnight is regulated activity. The specified nature is defined as: teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment and transportation of children.

There can be confusion about who should be subject to DBS checks, arising from the complexity of activities, from the need to translate activity from the statutory sector for whom most guidance is provided, from the changing thresholds suggested over time by different government departments, and the most recent understanding of what is necessary and proportionate.

Roles which usually require a DBS check

Careful evaluation of these roles will be needed and assessed in advance of recruitment.

- Youth workers
- Those with management responsibilities for safeguarding
- Approved home visitors for schemes which are wholly or mainly for families with children or adults who may be at risk and classed as a regulated activity

- Trustees

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE POLICY:

1. A disclosure is only requested where DBS eligibility criteria is met.
2. For those positions where a disclosure is required, the level of check will be made explicit on the job or role advertisement.
3. Advertisements are required to state that a DBS check will be requested in the event of an individual being offered the position.
4. Job offers are conditional based on satisfactory completion of the check. Where a DBS check forms part of the recruitment process, a Confidential Declaration form (CDF) must be completed, and this should be referenced in all recruitment documentation from the outset.
5. For volunteer positions we will require the completion of the Self-declaration form (see appendix 2) and some volunteer positions are conditional on satisfactory completion of a DBS check.
6. CDFs will only be viewed by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment and selection process,. A privacy notice specific to the Confidential Declaration form is available.
7. Unless the nature of the position allows for questions about an entire criminal record to be asked, we will only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
8. All involved in recruitment are sign-posted to suitable training and for those requiring it, guidance in the relevant legislation, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
9. We will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place between those involved in the recruitment process about any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position.
10. In the case that disclosure information is received, we will assess the information in the context of level of risk and/or required mitigation. This is not necessarily a barrier to the person undertaking the post applied for but the needs of our beneficiaries will always be paramount.

Implications of Failure to Reveal Information

Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant could lead to withdrawal of the offer of a post or role.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of work (paid or voluntary).

If there is doubt about whether to carry out a DBS check then the Safeguarding Lead/deputy may be consulted.

The DBS has laid down guidelines as to how these checks should be obtained. The DBS

process does not replace but enhances good personnel practices. Those making appointments should continue to ask for the confidential declaration to be completed, take up references, and adhere to safe working practices.

The Process

1. Identify those for whom a DBS disclosure is necessary, and the eligibility criteria is met. Please use the list of posts which follows. The actual nature of the work must be taken into account and forms the basis for justifying the application, not solely the title of the work or post.
2. Staff will email the applicant the link to the DBS application form
3. The applicant completes the form online
4. The applicant must present the identification specified in the information leaflet, to the validator. This will normally be the Safeguarding Lead/deputy or relevant staff.
5. The online form will be actioned and sent to the DBS.
6. The DBS returns one copy of the disclosure to the applicant.
7. It is essential that the charity (FCT) sees the DBS disclosure, notes the name and number and keeps a record that the disclosure is clear. If the disclosure is not clear then the recruiter must obtain a photocopy, with the applicant's permission, and liaise with the safeguarding lead/deputy.
8. Where something is disclosed on a DBS, the safeguarding lead/deputy will determine whether there is a safeguarding issue. If so, further enquiries will be made appropriate to the circumstances, resulting in a determination whether there is a potential risk. If a risk is identified, the applicant will not be able to proceed. The CEO will be informed of the risks and outcome. The outcome will be communicated confidentially to the applicant.
9. There is an appeals process if the applicant is unhappy with the outcome and the applicant will be informed of this.
10. The Charity will keep a simple record of those who have been checked under this process and of the outcome. These records will be confidential and kept according to the requirements of the DBS.

WORKING WITH THIRD PARTIES AND PARTNERS

All partners delivering Sheffield S6 foodbanks are responsible for the recruitment including the vetting process of personnel, to a specification no less thorough than FCT's. The Partner is responsible for the documents involved in this process and remains responsible for the appropriateness of these but may use FCT's proformas.

FCT will monitor and review the above at the annual review held between FCT and partners.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. DBS definition of a vulnerable adult.

The DBS defines a vulnerable adult as;

A person aged 18 or over who receives services of a type listed in paragraph 1) below and in consequence of a condition of a type listed in paragraph 2) below, has a disability of a type listed in paragraph 3) below:

1) The services are:

- Accommodation and nursing or personal care in a care home.
- Personal care or support to live independently in his or her own home.
- Any services provided by an independent hospital, independent clinic, independent medical agency or National Health Service body.
- Social care services.
- Any services provided in an establishment catering for a person with learning disabilities.

2) The conditions are:

- A learning or physical disability.
- A physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise including an addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- A reduction in physical or mental capacity.

3) The disabilities are:

- A dependency upon others in the performance of, or a requirement for assistance in the performance of basic physical functions.
- Severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others.
- Impairment in a person's ability to protect him/herself from assault, abuse or neglect.

Those who regularly care for, train, supervise, or are in sole charge of vulnerable people as described by the above definitions are the only ones who should obtain a DBS Disclosure.

It follows from this that many people who work with adults will not be able to be checked. It also follows from this that careful recruitment of those working with adults should take place, including references and a Confidential Declaration

APPENDIX 2 - self declaration form:

Food And Community Trust

Self-declaration Form

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

As a organisation we undertake to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 General Data Protection Regulations (from 25th May 2018) and all other relevant legislation, and the expectations of the Information Commissioners Office relating to the data privacy of individuals. This information will only be seen by those responsible for appointment and, where appropriate, the safeguarding lead.

All applicants are asked to complete this form and return it in person or via email to the recruiter:

1. Do you have any unspent convictions including cautions? This includes countries outside the UK.

Yes No

If yes, please give details including the nature of the offences and the dates. Please give details of the court(s) where your conviction (s) were heard, the type of offence and sentence(s) received. Could you also give details of the reasons and circumstances that led to the offence(s). Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

2. Have you ever been the subject of a police investigation that didn't lead to a criminal conviction?

Yes No

If yes, please give details below, including the date of the investigation, the Police Force involved, details of the investigation and the reason for this, and disposal(s) if known.

3. Has your name has been placed on a list of people barred from working with children or vulnerable adults, previously held by ISA now by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Yes No

4. Has there ever been any cause for concern regarding your conduct with children, young people, vulnerable adults?

Yes No

If yes, please give details.

DECLARATION

Please select **one** of the below:

- ☐ I am not aware of any reason why I should not undertake this role.
- ☐ There are matters I need to declare before an appointment is made and have provided more information in the above form.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you would like any guidance on declaring a conviction, please take a look at the following website: <https://www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/support-for-individuals/disclosing-criminal-records/rehabilitation-offenders-act/> for advice on this.

Appendix 3 - Volunteer Agreement:

Food and Community Trust

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Dear

Thank you so much for agreeing to volunteer with us. We hope that you will find the work satisfying and rewarding. First of all, please read the Safeguarding Policies that relates your area of volunteering carefully. Copies as appropriate are attached to this letter/email. All volunteers must be familiar with, and fully comply with, the Safeguarding Policies, whenever their role involves under 18's or Vulnerable Adults.

All our volunteers are also asked to:

- Respect the role of their team leader, and be present at the times agreed or otherwise let the team leader know as soon as possible;
- Comply with other relevant policies like fire, health and safety, and buildings security;
- Keep any sensitive personal information they acquire confidential;
- Give as much notice as possible when they want to stop volunteering.

Your team leader (who may also be a volunteer) is responsible for:

- Agreeing with you how many hours you want to volunteer for;
- Providing information and any necessary training to help you carry out your role;
- Trying to resolve fairly any problems or difficulties you may have as a volunteer.

You may also like to know that

- We have an insurance policy that also covers volunteers (details of cover on request);
- We will normally pay expenses incurred in your role; your team leader will have details of how that applies to the particular activities you are volunteering in.

Where relevant our staff team, is also available to help if there is anything further you would like to know, or if you have any problems or difficulties that cannot be resolved with your team leader.

Yours,
Sam Evans
Chief Executive

Please sign and return the enclosed copy of this letter to confirm your agreement to the above.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

SAFER WORKING PRACTICE GUIDELINES

WORKING WITH ADULTS AT RISK

Promoting good working practice

Promoting a safe organisation is more than a matter of procedures and rules, it includes staff/volunteers and adults at risk working together to provide the right environment for everyone to grow and thrive. It is important that those working together agree on standards of conduct and how activities are to be carried out (as outlined in this policy and by managers). This is particularly necessary if those adults involved in the activity cannot speak for themselves. Attitudes of respect and consideration should be developed in all work with adults, ensuring that everyone is able to maximize their life chances. Privacy and confidentiality are important to everyone and especially people who are dependent on others for aspects of their everyday living.

Prevention of abuse

Prevention of abuse is best achieved by both the careful training of staff/ volunteers and the provision of supervision or mentoring for all those working with adults at risk. Staff/ volunteers need to understand that they hold a position of power and influence, even if they do not feel this is the case.

Adults at risk are best protected from potential abuse when those working with them do not feel isolated and are trained and supported. Those working with adults at risk or in beneficiary facing roles should meet regularly with their line manager or the Safeguarding Lead to discuss concerns, receive support and to identify any training needs. Food and Community Trust will provide training, and it is recommended that those with responsibility for working with adults at risk attend the training offered at biannual intervals. Staff with leadership responsibility should attend additional training beyond this and keep up to date with the Safeguarding Lead's training recommendations.

A culture of informed vigilance is one where abuse is less likely to take place. This requires that we all accept the possibility that people can be abused by individuals and by groups within the organisation, and to develop an awareness of such situations. Risks are increased when people have individual contact with adults at risk. Having people working together in groups can be one way in which harmful behaviours can be prevented. This is not always the case, however, and there have been many instances of a culture of abusive behaviour or attitudes developing in organisations or amongst groups of staff/ volunteers.

CODE OF CONDUCT; GUIDELINES FOR THOSE IN POSITIONS OF TRUST WITH ADULTS AT RISK

All those undertaking activities with adults at risk at Food and Community Trust, whether paid or unpaid should be working to the guidelines below. Following these should both ensure that adults at risk are protected and that staff/ volunteers are less likely to be accused of abuse or misconduct.

Interaction with adults at risk

Staff/ volunteers should always be aware of their language and behaviour, ensuring a level of professionalism in their conduct.

In all activities the Staff/ volunteer should consider in advance:

- The place of the meeting, arrangement of the furniture and lighting

- The staff/ volunteer's clothes/ outfit
- The balance of privacy for conversation with the opportunity for supervision (open doors or windows in doors, another person nearby).
- The physical distance between people determined by hospitality and respect, being aware that someone may have suffered abuse or harassment in the past
- Whether the circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction.
- The propriety or danger of visiting or being visited alone, especially in the evening.
- The personal safety and comfort of all participants.
- Establishing at the outset, at least in a general sense, the nature of the meeting in respect to subject matter, confidentiality and duration.
- The appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, for example gestures of comfort, which may be unwanted or misinterpreted

Use Of Transport

- It is uncommon for staff/volunteers to need to drive adults, occasionally this maybe necessary to help them access an appointment. Where possible adults need to be encouraged to make their own way.
- There may be some risk to transporting an adult who is not well known to the service. Whenever this is the case the driver should consult their line manager and will be instructed to be accompanied in the car by another staff/volunteer.
- If it is deemed necessary, this must be agreed by line manager and the driver must ensure that they have adequate insurance before offering to transport anyone. This would normally be comprehensive insurance, and insurance for business use in the case of paid staff/ volunteers.
- All those who drive adults should be competent drivers. Drivers must be fit to drive, i.e. not over-tired, not under the influence of alcohol, not taking illegal substances and not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.
- All cars that carry adults should be roadworthy, and adults should wear seat belts.
- Any driver who has an "unspent" conviction for any serious road traffic offence, such as drink driving, dangerous driving or racing on a public highway should not transport adults for the charity. Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their license should inform their manager who will then consult the safeguarding lead so a decision can be made about their suitability for transporting adults.

Working Relationships

Staff/ volunteers need to develop an understanding of themselves and how they relate to others, how they impact the well-being of others and how they ensure their own well-being and safety. People in positions of trust have power, although this may not be apparent to them, therefore respecting professional boundaries is particularly important.

- Staff/volunteers should be aware of the dangers of dependency in working relationships with beneficiaries and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise.
- Staff/ volunteers should recognise their limits and not undertake any activity that is beyond their competence or role (examples may include: therapeutic counselling, counselling victims of abuse and domestic violence, or giving legal advice). Where clarity is required, please refer the query to their line manager or the Safeguarding Lead.
- Staff/volunteers should avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships.
- Staff/ volunteers should treat those with whom they engage or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence and choice.

Home Visits

- On occasions it is necessary for a volunteer/staff to visit an adult in their home. If this is deemed necessary, then before any visit is undertaken there must be:
 - a) a risk assessment needs to be completed (for all home visits)
 - b) a home visit and the level of risk identified deemed acceptable needs to be agreed by the volunteers/staff line manager
 - c) any visits must take place with 2 volunteer/staff members unless another professional is present OR if a comprehensive risk assessment has been undertaken and it has been agreed that a volunteer/staff can visit alone.
- Each time a lone home visit takes place, following the agreement with the line manager then a line manager or responsible team member needs to be informed of time/date/address of visit and what time the visit is to end. The responsible team member is to contact the visiting volunteer/staff member at the allocated time and if no response to contact Safeguarding Lead immediately

Record keeping and privacy

- Staff/ volunteers should consider taking contemporaneous notes as appropriate and may log them with their line manager, however, they must keep due regard for information law and regulation. They should raise any queries with their line manager or the Safeguarding Lead.
- The content of any encounter should only be recorded with the person's verbal consent unless it is a matter of child protection or might be a record of abuse.
- Records concerned with abuse should be kept indefinitely.
- Any record should be factual and avoid rumour or opinion.
- The publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images should follow the appropriate legislation.

Working with colleagues

The standards maintained within a beneficiary relationship are equally relevant in relationships with colleagues.

- All staff/ volunteers need to be aware of the possibility of stress in the workplace.
- Staff/volunteers involved in work with adults at risk should know to whom they are accountable and have a designated person with whom to regularly discuss their work.
- Staff/ volunteers should be aware of the role and responsibilities of their colleagues and encourage cooperation and consultation in the tasks they do.
- Staff/ volunteers must not be unlawfully discriminated against, harassed, bullied or abused for any reason.
- Staff/ volunteers will not be penalised for following this guidance, or for taking action regarding others and this guidance.
- Outside of designated working hours or the boundaries of their designated role, volunteer/staff should relinquish any beneficiary relationship, except with the agreement of the organisation.

Sexual conduct

- It is never appropriate for staff/ volunteers to take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with anyone with whom they have a beneficiary relationship. Staff/ volunteers should be aware of the power imbalance inherent in such relationships.
- Staff/ volunteers must not sexually abuse any adult or child.

- Staff/ volunteers must take responsibility for their actions if wishing to make physical contact with another adult (e.g. a hug may be misunderstood). This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and responding to non-verbal communication, and refraining from such contact if in doubt about the person's wishes.
- Staff/ volunteers must take responsibility for their words and be mindful of the subject matter. This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and responding to non-verbal communication, and refraining from such conversations if in doubt about the person's wishes.
- Staff/ volunteers must not view, possess or distribute sexual images of children and must refrain from viewing, possessing or distributing sexually exploitative images of adults.
- Staff/volunteers should avoid situations in their work for the organisation where they feel vulnerable to temptation or where their conduct may be misinterpreted.

Any failure to adhere to these guidelines is likely to be gross misconduct and result in dismissal.

Financial integrity

Financial dealings can have an impact on the organisation and those it serves and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems.

- Staff/ volunteers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary, recognised allowances or other gain unless the Board, having taken proper advice/ consideration of the Articles of Association, have sanctioned otherwise.
- Staff/ volunteers should ensure that charity and personal finances are kept apart except for personal expenses.
- The Fundraising Code of Practice and Financial Controls Policy should be followed.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

The statutory basis for working with children is the following:

"A person who does not have parent/carer responsibility for a particular child but who has care of the child may (subject to the provisions of this Act) do what is reasonable in all the circumstances of the case for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare." (Children Act 1989 Section 3 (5)).

Prevention of abuse

Children and young people are best protected from potential abuse when those working with them do not feel isolated and are trained and supported. Those working with children should meet regularly with their line manager, Safeguarding Lead or Deputy to discuss concerns, receive support, and to identify any training needs. Food and Community Trust will provide training, and it is recommended that those with responsibility for working with children and young people attend the training offered at biannual intervals.

Staff/ volunteers who work with children and young people can reduce the potential for abuse, and best protect themselves, by following recommended safer working practices.

CODE OF CONDUCT: GUIDELINES FOR THOSE IN POSITIONS OF TRUST WITH CHILDREN

All those undertaking activities with children at Food and Community Trust, whether paid or unpaid should be working to the guidelines below. Following these should both ensure that

children are protected and that staff/ volunteers are less likely to be accused of abuse or misconduct.

Staff/ volunteers should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
- Always aim to work within sight of another adult.
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the bathroom.
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around.
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parent/carers are aware of this and its nature beforehand.
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around.
- Obtain parent/ carer consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed.
- Record any concerning incidents and give the information to your group leader
- Always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another staff/ volunteer with your group leader and/or the safeguarding lead or deputy

Staff/ volunteers should not:

- Initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact should be initiated by the child.
- Invade a child's privacy while washing or toileting.
- Play rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in "fun".
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favouritism to any one child or group.
- Allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own or your own.
- Smoke tobacco or use electronic cigarettes in the presence of children.
- Drink alcohol when responsible for young people.
- Share sleeping accommodation with children.
- Invite a child to your home by yourself.
- Arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organised group occasions.
- Allow unknown adults to access children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a well-known person.
- Allow strangers to give children lifts.

In addition to the above, the group leader should:

- Ensure all health and safety requirements are adhered to.
- Undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept
- Keep the register and consent forms up to date.
- Always have an awareness of what is taking place and who is present

- Create space for children to talk.
- Liaise with the line manager or safeguarding lead or deputy over good practice for safeguarding.
- Always inform the safeguarding lead or relevant staff of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise.
- Liaise with the board when necessary.

Consent

Consent to children's activities should be obtained from a parent/carer or carer. This should be in writing and regularly renewed. This should be taken within the context of the Unaccompanied Children section.

Personal Tasks

It may be sometimes necessary for staff/ volunteers to offer help of a personal nature to children, particularly if they are very young or have Additional Needs. These tasks should only be undertaken after discussion with the parents/ carers, and it is advised that parents/ carers are asked to sign a consent form for this. Staff/ volunteers undertaking such tasks should always inform another staff/ volunteer at the time they are carrying out the task. In an emergency, which requires such assistance, parents/ carers should always be fully informed as soon as possible as to any action taken.

Staffing Ratios

There should be a minimum of two adults for each group; where it is possible, it is recommended to have three adults.

Those under the age of 18 should not be counted in the requirement to fulfil staffing ratios. With groups of mixed gender there should be both male and female staff/ volunteers where possible, and it is recommended that wherever possible one of the leaders should be female.

The staffing ratios below are minimum requirements, and in many circumstances, more adults will be needed.

Age Group	Staff	Children
0-2 years	1 for every	3
2-3 years	1 for every	4
3-5 years	1 for every	8
5-8 years	1 for every	8
Over 8 years	1 for every	10

However, on no account should an adult be by themselves. Staffing ratios with all age groups should always consider the need and nature of the group.

The following factors should always be considered in deciding how many adults are needed:

- Age and age range of the group
- Additional Needs, e.g. health, disability, behavioural problems
- Provision for accompanying a child home or to hospital
- Layout of the building being used and proximity of adults to each other
- Activities requiring staff/ volunteers with specific skills or qualifications
- Activities requiring closer supervision
- Activities taking place outside the building

Senior staff may also be contacted for further information.

Adults with specific skills who have been asked to help may be treated as a visitor for the specific occasion but should always be supervised by an appointed staff/volunteer. If they are to become a regular helper for the group, they must go through the usual recruitment process. Similarly, any adult who assists on one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed staff/volunteer. Thereafter, they should become part of the team and be appointed through the normal recruitment process.

Additional needs

Children and young people with additional needs are welcome to groups but reasonable adjustments should be made to accommodate them e.g. try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for those with disabilities. Where possible, discuss with the parent/carer how best to meet the child's additional needs and do not see this as the responsibility of the parent/ carer to fulfil. Consider recruiting another adult, if necessary, to assist that child. Continue to have discussions with the parent/carer as the child's needs change.

Physical contact

Restraint

In very extreme circumstances it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming him/herself or others, using the least possible force. Police may need to be called in extreme situations. Make every effort to inform the parents/carers as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded with the details of any witnesses noted. The information may be given to the Safeguarding lead or relevant staff.

Inappropriate behaviour by children towards adults

Children or young people can sometimes make suggestive approaches to adults. They may have a 'crush' or may act inappropriately because of previous experiences. If an adult feels uncomfortable about a child or young person's behaviour he or she must:

- Make it clear to the child or young person, with sensitivity, that their language or behaviour is inappropriate.
- Tell another adult including the safeguarding lead or deputy and agree what measures should be taken to prevent recurrence.
- Accurately record the incident in the event of evaluation in case accusations are made in the future. Ensure it is placed with other confidential records.

Unaccompanied Children

Sometimes children may attend children's groups apparently without the knowledge of their parents/ carers. No hard and fast guidelines can be given, as each situation is different, but the following advice may assist:

- Establish whether the child attends with their parent/carers' knowledge, or at least without their parent/carers' objections.
- Seek to establish their full name, address, and contact details of the young person and those of the parent/carer. Include them on the register. Where suitable, provide information about the group for the child to take home.
- Seek to obtain parent/carer consent to the child's involvement, preferably by direct contact with the parent/carer rather than by using the child as an intermediary.
- Bear in mind the child may have some personal or family difficulty which they may not wish to disclose, which may require sensitive handling.

- Do not include the child on trips away from the usual place of meeting without explicit written parent/ carer consent.
- If the child stops attending after having attended frequently, it may be appropriate to undertake some level of outreach, but this should be done very carefully and only after discussion with group leaders

Safe Environment

- Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.
- Insurance, First Aid kit and a Health and Safety check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards:

Venue

On our premises and otherwise, where reasonably possible, where we operate:

- Meeting places should be warm, well-lit, and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities should be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate obtained.
- Children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Drinks should always be available.
- Groups must have access to a phone to call for help if necessary. It is recommended that at least one member of staff/volunteer has a mobile phone with them.
- Adults should be aware of fire procedures. If using an external venue check with them that Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are fitted throughout the premises.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should be discouraged from walking to and from your premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A First Aid kit should be available on the premises and a system to keep records. The First Aid kit should be stored in a waterproof container and clearly marked. Group leader to check the contents (consider termly).
- The Safeguarding Lead and deputy contact details should be displayed.

Use Of Transport

- Children and young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents/ carers or carers.
- There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as a driver. If in an emergency a driver must transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.
- All those who drive children on activities must ensure that they have adequate insurance before offering to transport anyone. This would normally be comprehensive insurance, and insurance for business use in the case of paid staff/ volunteers.
- All those who drive children should be competent drivers. Drivers must be fit to drive, i.e. not over-tired, not under the influence of alcohol, not taking illegal substances and not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.
- All cars that carry children should be roadworthy, and children should wear suitable seat belts or age-appropriate seats. At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the passenger number.

- Any driver who has an “unspent” conviction for any serious road traffic offence, such as drink driving, dangerous driving or racing on a public highway should not transport children for the charity. Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their license should inform the group leader and the safeguarding children representative so a decision can be made about their suitability for transporting children.
- Regular drivers who are not children’s staff/ volunteers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process, including a DBS check.

Use of a minibus or coach

Many groups rely on the use of minibuses for transporting children and young people. The guidelines below should be used in addition to the above guidance for transportation;

- Drivers of a minibus must ensure that they are licensed to do so. Most drivers are required to take a test before they can drive a minibus with more than eight passengers, other than one used purely for social or voluntary purposes.
- Adequate insurance cover must be arranged for the driver, passengers, and the vehicle.
- You must be satisfied that the vehicle documentation is up to date and the vehicle is safe to drive. The minibus must have forward-facing seats and three-point diagonal seat belts throughout.
- The leader should have a list of the names and addresses of those you are transporting both on their person, and a copy left behind with another responsible person. These details should include the parent/carer consent forms.
- The minibus needs to be appropriate for its user group, e.g. with wheelchair adaptation if necessary. Any luggage should be secured and driving times should be reasonable. Ensure there is a qualified co-driver if the journey is more than six hours in total. You should be accompanied by another adult in any event. If the driving has been outsourced to a professional travel company, then you may follow their protocols.
- The vehicle should be covered by a breakdown cover, and access to a mobile phone is essential.
- Staff/ volunteers, and helpers should sit among the group and not altogether. If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored.

Outdoor Adventure Activity

If you are providing any outdoor adventure activities as part of a group activity, you should check that the centre or hostel being used has adequate insurance, qualified instructors and is currently licensed by the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority. This can be checked by visiting their website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/>

Overnight stays

- A consent form must be completed. For overnight stays, special activities or hazardous activities it is essential that parents/ carers or carers complete the consent form, and the details of the activity must be specified. No child should be allowed to participate in such activities if a consent form has not been completed and returned to the group leader.
- Parent/carers must be given full details of the event, including:
 - Aims and objectives of the activity,
 - date and duration,
 - details of the venue including arrangements for accommodation and supervision,
 - travel arrangements,
 - name of group leaders and contact numbers.

- A full risk assessment must be completed and should be given to parents/ carers and carers upon request.
- Ensure your group has adequate and appropriate insurance cover.
- Always have separate sleeping arrangements for leaders and children/ young people.

One to One work

One-to-one work consists of meeting up with a young person on a one-to-one basis outside of youth club, school, small group, etc. Though not a major element of the work at Food and Community Trust it is a useful way of working on occasion. There are, however, risks involved with this type of work for both the young person and the staff/ volunteers. Thus, one-to-one work must be practiced safely, appropriately and within agreed guidelines, procedures and considerations which are laid out below.

Anyone wishing to undertake one-to-one work must, in addition to normal requirements:

- have proved their willingness to work within the policy and procedures of the Safeguarding Policy
- have demonstrated their capacity to respect appropriate boundaries in their relationships with children and young people
- undertaken Safeguarding training within the last 2 years
- been given express permission in writing to undertake one to one working by relevant staff within the senior leadership team at the Food and Community Trust

On each occasion, the following procedures for one-to-one work must be followed:

- If staff/ volunteer wish to undertake one to one work they must email their line manager to obtain permission informing their manager of: which young person they are meeting, where they are meeting, when they are meeting them and how long they expect to be meeting the young person.
- The staff/volunteer must inform the parents/carers that they are meeting the young person. They must also inform them of when and where they are meeting and how long they expect it to be.
- Following the meeting the sessional form should be completed in detail including: the essence of the conversation, advice given or recommendations made.
- The one-to-one meeting should be discussed by the staff/ volunteers at their next supervision.

One-to-one guidelines:

- One-to-one working is permitted when working with secondary school-aged children; we do not permit this work to take place with young children.
- Where possible, one-to-one work should not be done with members of a different gender; however when working under safeguarding policies from other organisations.
- All meetings should take place at a suitable venue in a public place in view of other adults. Staff/ volunteers should consider how a young person would travel to the venue when considering suitability.
- Meetings should be a suitable time 10am – 7:30pm (and not while a young person should be in school)
- One-to-one must not operate outside of the law.

One to one consideration;

- The frequency and content of meetings is important. Ensuring you are working within your capabilities and that the young person is not developing a dependency.

- The behaviour and existing relationship with the young person as there will not be another team member available for support.
- Signposting and referring to other agencies when appropriate.

Making and publishing images of children

The making and publishing of images of children is something which is enjoyed by children, parents/carers and carers and those involved in children's work and can bring positive publicity to activities. However, there are issues to bear in mind when such an activity is planned. The issues are the same, whether the images are still photographs, digital images or films, and regardless of the technologies involved.

Images count as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998, and therefore the principles of that Act apply. It is important that the consent of children and parent/carers/carers is obtained for the making and use of images of children. The Data Protection Act 2018 should also be considered and complied with.

Those taking photographs need to bear in mind that there may be good reasons for withholding consent, such as:

- Some children may have been involved in legal disputes; local authority proceedings or adoption, and their whereabouts should not be too widely known.
- If individual children are identified by name, it would be possible for potential abusers to use them to target potential victims.
- Images made using digital cameras can be manipulated to produce indecent or abusive images.

Good Practice is therefore:

- Obtain consent from parent/carers and children before making images. Consent need not be in writing if it is not proposed to publish the pictures in any way, but if they are to be displayed, used in publicity via newspapers or put on a website, then specific written consent should be obtained from the parent/carers/carers. A consent form is available from the Food and Community Trust.
- If the event is to be filmed, then a verbal notice can be given out at the beginning of the service/activity asking any parent/carer who does not agree to images being made of their child to remove them from the view of the camera, and to ask the group leader afterwards to ensure that any image inadvertently taken is not used.
- Where possible, each child should be part of a group
- If the image is to be published, avoid naming the child. If a name has to be used, use only first names.
- If a child is named in full, avoid using their image.
- Avoid images of scantily clad children, such as at swimming parties.
- Be clear if the image is to be retained for further use.
- Store the image securely and destroy it if there is no further use for it.

Guidelines for the use of the Internet and other e-technologies

These Guidelines are designed to address the potential safeguarding issues resulting from the use of the Internet and other technologies in connection with charity activities.

There are potential risks if

- Your computer can be accessed by children
- You run your own website
- You use e-mail, social networking or electronic messaging to communicate with children.

If computers are accessible to children:

- Fit a locking device or use passwords to prevent unauthorised access to the internet.
- Consider using filtering software to govern which sites can be accessed.
- Young people must be supervised when using the internet.

For websites:

- Follow the above guidance on images of children.
- Ensure that the site is frequently and regularly monitored for content and inappropriate use.

If you use social media, e-mail or electronic messaging to contact children:

- E- mail: wherever possible ensure any communication is public, not private. Staff should use their work emails. Send group e-mails rather than individual ones if possible. Save the e-mails you send and receive. Complete electronic communication forms following conversations and where reasonably possible inform parent/carers.
- Electronic messaging: take great care when using this medium. Ensure you save text messages as text files, if possible, so that a record exists. Complete electronic communication forms. Avoid any extended conversation in these messages and point towards a face-to-face conversation or phone call where needed.
- Group messaging is a more accountable way of messaging young people. If you are to send a group message to young people, please ensure that 2 adults (vetted with the organisation) are in the group and that at least 1 of the adults is a member of staff.
- Social networking sites: Keep everything public and accessible to all users. If using social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), ensure that the page you are using is acceptable for professional work purposes and does not contain any offensive material or material that would bring the charity into disrepute. Do not initiate friendships with young people. Remind yourself of appropriate boundaries before you send your message. Ask yourself, how could this message be interpreted by the recipients and any onlookers? Be wary of slippage between how you would use this facility with friends and how you use it professionally. It is the responsibility of the adult staff/volunteer to monitor themselves and other users in terms of appropriateness of language, content, and style. Where possible, do not message young people privately. Do not communicate before 9am and after 10pm. Fill out electronic communications forms for any communication that has not been seen by another leader.

Further information is available from Youth Org UK: <http://www.Youth.org.uk>, CEOP and the Internet Watch Foundation (see resources page).

Mixed- Age Activities

Care should be taken to ensure that children in mixed-age activities are safeguarded. It is no longer possible to request DBS checks for all adults in those groups unless they have specific responsibilities for children: as with other activities with children if an adult is undertaking regulated activity with children (see recruitment section) then a DBS check must be obtained in the normal way.

In mixed-age groups, at least one person in addition to the person leading the activity must be recruited using the safer recruitment process and be designated to supervise the welfare of the children involved. It is likely to be more convenient to have a team of such people taking responsibility for allowing holidays, illness etc.

DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS.

Key Principles

- Any complaint or dispute should be dealt with at the lowest level necessary for resolution.
- All staff and volunteers working with adults at risk and/ or children must know who to contact to report concerns or allegations of a breach of a break of the safeguarding policy.
- No action should be taken that could undermine or jeopardise a subsequent statutory investigation. Examples of this are: checking an individual's story, visiting the parent/carers of the child concerned.
- Staff/ volunteers themselves may be suspected of mistreatment of an adult at risk or another staff/volunteer.
- Staff/volunteers may not be following the guidelines set out in the Code of Conduct (above).
- The Safeguarding Lead should be informed as soon as an allegation is made against any volunteers or staff. The Board of Trustees may also be informed if appropriate.
- If the allegation relates to the Chief Executive Officer, any decisions about its management will be made by the Chair of Board, in consultation with the Safeguarding Trustee. If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Lead, then the matter will be dealt with by the CEO. The organisation's solicitors will be consulted as required.
- Consultation with the Safeguarding Lead should be undertaken (who may seek external support or support from the Board of Trustees), and a decision will be made as to whether the staff/ volunteer should be suspended during any investigation (with the support of organisation's Directors or solicitors (as required)).
- If the allegation concerns the possible commission of a criminal offence, the police will be informed.
- With less serious matters such as inappropriate behaviour or attitude, not amounting to abuse, the staff/ volunteer's immediate superior should approach the staff/ volunteer, with wider management support as required, and discuss the concern with the staff/ volunteer with the aim of improving the situation. The staff/ volunteer should be informed that disciplinary proceedings might be brought or their position as a volunteer reviewed if there is no improvement or deemed appropriate.
- The emotional cost to someone making a complaint can be very high. It is important that the charity takes complaints very seriously. Complaints should be dealt with promptly and transparently.
- Careful records should be kept.

When the allegation concerns behaviour that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child or adult at risk, or the possible commission of a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or adult at risk, or that the individual has behaved in such a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children or adults at risk, the following process must be followed;

- To reiterate, allegations against volunteers or staff should be referred to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy or Chief Executive.
- If the allegation concerns the possible commission of a criminal offence, the Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy will inform the police.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Persons in Position of Trust (PIPOT) will be informed of the allegation (where deemed necessary) and the relevant statutory bodies may investigate. (The LADO is the person in each local authority area who has management and oversight of individual cases).

- Reporting to the LADO does not transfer responsibility from the employer to take disciplinary action if appropriate. The LADO may convene one or more strategy meetings to plan the investigation; a suitable representative of the employer should attend. All relevant information should be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know and with the statutory agencies. Confidentiality should be maintained outside this group.
- Unless the police have requested a delay, as soon as preliminary enquiries and consultation indicate that an employee or volunteer may have committed serious misconduct, the allegation should be put to him or her and he/she should normally be suspended while the complaint or allegation is investigated.
- At the time of the suspension the employee/volunteer should be asked whether he or she undertakes any other work with children. Where there are other employers (paid or voluntary posts), the LADO must be informed, and those employers will be told of the allegation. The employee/volunteer will be told that this will happen. He or she should also be asked whether they live in a household with children or adults at risk (who may need protective measures).
- The Chief Executive/ Safeguarding Lead will discuss with the LADO/ PIPOT whether any further details are needed and whether there is information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.
- The LADO/PIPOT and the Chief Executive/ Safeguarding Lead will consider the following factors:
 - Does the allegation indicate that the person has:
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have caused harm?
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence.
 - Behaved in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to continue in post?
 - Which may lead to:
 - A police investigation
 - A social care enquiry and assessment
 - Consideration of disciplinary action/investigation by the employer

If these criteria do not apply, and depending on the evidence and individual circumstances, it may be the case that no further action is taken.

Outcome

The outcome of the investigations may result in various actions. The investigation may conclude there is no case to answer. The person may be charged with a criminal offence, and the Crown Prosecution Service asked to consider prosecution. The person may admit the allegation and accept a police caution.

If the investigations are inconclusive or if concerns remain, the charity will need to consider carefully whether the suspension should be lifted, and, if so, on what conditions. The strategy meeting and the LADO may give advice in this situation. Professional advice should always be sought.

It is important that employers keep a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were followed up and resolved, and of any action taken and decisions reached. This should be retained indefinitely.

Employment Issues

Will be considered in line with the Employee Handbook and relevant legislation.

Volunteers

For the purposes of the allegation procedure, it makes no difference whether the person is paid or a volunteer. Please refer to the Employee Handbook.

Insurance advice

The employer should inform the claims manager of the insurance company as soon as any incident arises that may lead to a claim. Advice should be sought about the insurance position and any steps needed to be taken to safeguard against it. The claims manager will also need to keep in touch with developments. Any person accused of abuse where they have the benefit of insurance should also inform their insurance company.

Pastoral Support

During the investigation, the person making the allegation may need support. The person against whom the allegation has been made will also need support by someone unconnected to the investigation and disciplinary process. It is important that those giving the support should not communicate with each other about the allegations to avoid the possibility of contaminating evidence.