

FOOD BANK AID

Safeguarding Policy

1. Purpose

Food Bank Aid is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of anyone who might come into contact with its work. This includes staff, volunteers, people making donations to Food Bank Aid and people working at food banks that receive goods from Food Bank Aid for distribution to those in need. No person must suffer harm, intentionally or unintentionally, as a result of their association with, or coming into contact with, Food Bank Aid.

This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with Food Bank Aid
- The design and implementation of Food Bank Aid's programmes and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by Food Bank Aid and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by Food Bank Aid or associated personnel.

Children under 18 and any school or youth groups visiting the premises of Food Bank Aid must be at all times by parents, carers or responsible group leaders.

Any vulnerable adult visiting the premises of Food Bank Aid must be similarly accompanied by an adult who will remain responsible for such a person at all times.

2. What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Abuse can be physical, financial, verbal or psychological. It can be the result of an act or a failure to act.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes.

3. Scope

- All staff employed or contracted by Food Bank Aid

- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to Food Bank Aid, including but not limited to the following: trustees; consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, food bank personnel, celebrities, and politicians.
- All visitors to our premises are responsible for reading and understanding this policy. If visitors do not understand something in this policy when they read it, they will ask the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If visitors spot safeguarding concerns during a visit, they will take action to prevent or stop the abuse or neglect, working with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4. Policy Statement

Food Bank Aid believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Food Bank Aid will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

. Food Bank Aid commits to addressing safeguarding through its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

5. Prevention

5.1 Food Bank Aid responsibilities

Food Bank Aid will:

- Ensure all staff, volunteers and personnel associated with Food Bank Aid, have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy. This includes making individuals aware that the policy is important and keeping it up to date.
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with Food Bank Aid. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff, volunteers and associated personnel, including carrying out a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service where a role is eligible for such a check.
- Ensure staff, volunteers and personnel associated with Food Bank Aid receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation in order to help them identify abuse and the risk of abuse, and deal with it in the ways set out in this policy.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and personnel know about, and follow, reporting systems.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.
- Follow a safeguarding reporting line of enquiry if any instances of concern arise. This entails reporting the matter to the CEO. The CEO will investigate the matter and report to the Board of Trustees. If required, the incident will be reported to the police or necessary safeguarding body. Full records of all information relating to any safeguarding concern will be retained.

5.2 Staff and Associated Personnel responsibilities

Food Bank Aid staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a Food Bank Aid staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member.

Food Bank Aid will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

5.3 Food Bank Aid will also consider safeguarding concerns from external sources, including members of the public and organisations that Food Bank Aid works with and shall ensure that there are safe and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns.

6. Reporting

6.1 Bullying and harassment policy

Food Bank Aid is committed to creating an environment for volunteers and staff that is free of bullying and harassment. If volunteers or staff think that they are being bullied or harassed, they should refer to the provisions of the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy in the Volunteer Handbook or the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy in the Staff Handbook. All allegations of bullying and harassment will be taken seriously, investigated and, if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. Food Bank Aid will not tolerate victimisation of a person for making allegations of bullying and harassment in good faith or supporting someone to make such a complaint.

6.2 Whistleblowing

At Food Bank Aid, it is vital that everyone who works for us maintains the highest standards of conduct, integrity and ethics, and complies with local legislation. If an employee, volunteer, consultant or contractor has any genuine safeguarding concerns, we wish to encourage them to communicate these without fear of reprisals.

If you genuinely believe that the actions of someone who works for Food Bank Aid could lead to or has resulted in a safeguarding concern, please follow the procedure below.

6.3 How to report a safeguarding concern

Staff members and associated personnel who have a complaint or safeguarding concern should report it immediately to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads in person or by email [alyson-walsh@foodbankaid.org.uk or zoe-kessler@foodbankaid.org.uk]. If the staff member or associated personnel does not feel comfortable reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they may report to any other staff member.

External persons should report any safeguarding concerns to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads by email [alyson-walsh@foodbankaid.org.uk or zoe-kessler@foodbankaid.org.uk].

7. Response

Food Bank Aid will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns seriously and confidentially according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations. Investigations will be undertaken and solutions will be sought.

Safeguarding matters will be reported to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees. The Board will consider and determine the action to be taken in response to any safeguarding concerns raised. This includes whether a report should be made to the police or other external organisations and/or whether a serious incident report should be made to the Charity Commission.

Food Bank Aid will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff or associated personnel found in breach of policy.

Food Bank Aid will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel,.

8. Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should be kept secure at all times. We retain the right to disclose information in accordance with the statutory data protection regime in force in the UK where a legitimate interest is established, we are under a legal obligation to do so or this is necessary to protect the vital interests of a child, an at-risk adult, a beneficiary or any other person. In handling or sharing personal information, we are committed to following the seven data protection principles as set out by the UK GDPR.