



Safeguarding Policy

Charity Number: 1156841

Sherborne Food Bank is committed to safeguarding the rights, well-being and safety of children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the Food Bank. This policy outlines the steps the Food Bank will take to ensure that vulnerable adults and children are protected. It will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Safeguarding Officer(s) and Trustees.

Sherborne Food Bank follows the Charity Commission in its definitions of:

a. Safeguarding

- protecting from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe, effective care.

b. A vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult as a person aged 18 or over, who may need community care services because of a disability (mental or other), age, or illness. A person is also considered vulnerable if they are unable to look after themselves, protect themselves from harm or exploitation or are unable to report abuse. Vulnerable adults are entitled to: privacy; be treated with dignity; lead an independent life and to be enabled to do so; be able to choose how they lead their lives; the protection of the law; have their rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.

c. A child

For the purpose of packing a food parcel, a child is considered to be anyone under the age of 16 as it is assumed that older children will require as much food as an adult. However, for legal purposes a child is anyone under the age of 18.

Types of abuse

- a. Physical abuse is an act of another party involving contact intended to cause feelings of physical pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm.
- b. Sexual abuse is forcing undesired sexual behaviour by one person onto another.
- c. Emotional abuse is any kind of abuse that is emotional rather than physical in nature. It can include anything from verbal abuse and constant criticism to more subtle tactics, such as intimidation, manipulation, and refusal to ever be pleased.
- d. Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a person's basic needs
- e. Financial abuse is the misuse of a person's money, property or assets through theft or fraud.

Policy Statement

Sherborne Food Bank aims to help restore dignity and revive hope to people from all walks of life, is concerned with individuals and their circumstances and actively encourages an inclusive environment throughout all its outreach projects.

Sherborne Food Bank seeks to ensure that all team members are aware of what is required from them under the safeguarding policy. It is the responsibility of everyone to play their part in preventing the physical, sexual, spiritual, financial or emotional abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and children.

Sherborne Food Bank commits to co-operate fully with the appropriate statutory services when they are conducting official investigation into the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults, children or young people (by an adult or young person).

This statement is to be brought to the attention of all trustees and volunteers when they join, as part of their induction programme. Any amendments will be brought to the attention of all team members. The statement will be displayed at all locations in which the Food Bank operates and all team members will be asked to sign to say they have read it.

Implementation

Sherborne Food Bank will plan its volunteering so as to minimise situations where the abuse of vulnerable adults and children might occur.

Although the number of people who actively seek to abuse vulnerable adults and children is very small, Sherborne Food Bank will reduce opportunities for abuse in various ways, such as:

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision for all vulnerable adults and children.
- Ensure that any vulnerable adult or child volunteering with the Food Bank is aware of who they can talk to if they have concerns.
- Arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child where there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed by others. This good practice can be of as much benefit to the adult as to the child.
- Make sure the Safeguarding Officers receive correct and up-to-date training.
- Ensure that the Local Authority is informed of any safeguarding allegations, incidents or concerns.
- Ensure that the Charity Commission is informed of any suspicions, allegations and incidents of abuse or mistreatment of vulnerable beneficiaries. The Charity Commission's 'Serious Incident' guidance will be followed <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>
- Ensure the Disclosure and Barring Service is informed if the trustees have dismissed or ceased using an employee or volunteer because they think they have harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.
- Ensure trustees and volunteers who may come into contact with a vulnerable adult or child at the Food Bank are suitably trained, including understanding what to do in the event that a disclosure of abuse is made.
- Encourage a culture of transparency, ensuring that trustees and volunteers feel able and empowered to report any suspicious or concerning behaviour.

Volunteers should be aware that wherever they are located when volunteering for the Food Bank, they are legally governed by the Food Bank, even if the place in which they are volunteering is their home. This means that any allegations or concerns of abuse must be reported to the Food Bank's Designated Safeguarding Officers.

Designated Officers and their roles

Sherborne Food Bank has a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of vulnerable adults or children. There is also Secondary Safeguarding Officer (SSO), who is responsible for dealing with any related concerns in the event that the DSO is ill, on holiday or an allegation of abuse is made about the DSO.

The DSO and SSO can be contacted through Sherborne Food Bank office – telephone 07854 163869 or by email help@sherbornefoodbank.org

The Safeguarding Officers will be available for vulnerable adults and children, as well as trustees and volunteers, to speak with should they feel the need to talk with someone about an incident which has happened either within or outside of the Food Bank, particularly if they feel that a child or vulnerable adult has been physically, sexually, spiritually, financially or emotionally abused or neglected by an adult or another young person. The Safeguarding Officers will treat all concerns with the utmost importance.

Where volunteers have a concern about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult and the Safeguarding Officers are unavailable or acting inappropriately, they should contact the Police (111) or Safeguarding and Standards Team (01305 221122).

Recording Safeguarding Information

The Safeguarding Officers will make notes and keep confidential records of any disclosure or concerns they or another trustee/volunteer has and seek advice from the relevant Social Services Department or the Police if appropriate.

Trustees and volunteers must ensure that their recording of disclosures, incidents, assessments, referrals and case discussions are all sufficient, accurate and concise, up-to-date, legible, dated, and factual. When recording details it is important not to jump to conclusions or judge the situation and to remember that the role of the

Safeguarding Officer is to refer to appropriate agencies, not to undertake an investigation. Suspicions should be noted carefully and backed up with factual evidence. Opinions should be kept to a minimum and backed up by factual evidence.

These records must be stored in an individual file and held securely in a manner that safeguards the individual's right to privacy and security. These records are available to authorised individuals on request (not third party information) and may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings or in civil or criminal prosecutions.

Once Trustees and volunteers have passed on their records, they have no right to know what happens next. They will only receive more information about the case if they are required to be part of civil or criminal proceedings e.g. as a witness. Trustees and volunteers must refrain from talking to other team members or outside persons about the safeguarding concern (with the exception of the Safeguarding Officers, the Police or Social Services).

Disclosure of Abuse

Where a member of a Food Bank team receives a disclosure of abuse from a child or vulnerable adult they must:

1. Ensure they **do not promise confidentiality** to anyone wishing to share a secret. This is important in case information needs to be shared with the Safeguarding Officers or the Police/Social Services.
2. **Listen**-if the disclosure is particularly complicated and the person is not very young, this may mean asking permission to make notes as the disclosure is made to ensure nothing is missed. The team member hearing the disclosure can ask the child or vulnerable adult to repeat something if it has not been said clearly but must not ask leading questions.
3. **Reassure**-making a disclosure of abuse can be a frightening process and often the child or vulnerable adult is afraid that they won't be believed. Reassuring them that they have been brave and that the information will be passed on is vitally important.
4. **Record**-notes should be made as soon after the disclosure as possible. The notes should reflect what the child or vulnerable adult has said in their own words. The record should be signed and dated.
5. **Report**-the record must be passed on to a Safeguarding Officer at the earliest possible opportunity and the child or vulnerable adult told what will happen next.

The Safeguarding Officers will ensure that the trustees are informed of any incident, concern or allegation of abuse. The trustees must also notify the Charity Commission, following the Commission's 'Serious Incident' guidelines in the event of an incident, or suspected incident, during or resulting from a Food Bank activity.

Where a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure of abuse to a member of the Food Bank team they must never:

- Trivialise, play down or ignore allegations of abuse'
- Assume that somebody else will take responsibility for reporting/addressing concerns and making referrals'

It is important that everyone in the Food Bank is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional vulnerable adult and child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about someone.

If a vulnerable adult or child begins making a disclosure of abuse to a team member who feels unable to cope with what they are hearing, they should gently halt the conversation and contact a Safeguarding Officer immediately. If both Safeguarding Officers are unavailable, then the volunteer should ask the vulnerable adult or child if one of the Officers can contact them as soon as they are able.

The wellbeing of trustees and volunteers is of great importance. If a disclosure has been made which has caused upset to the person hearing it, the Food Bank will endeavour to offer or facilitate counselling or support if requested.

Domestic Violence

Where Sherborne Food Bank clients report an incident of domestic violence which has taken place whilst a child or vulnerable adult is in the home, this must be treated as a disclosure of abuse and should be passed on to a Safeguarding Officer with immediate effect. Where an incident of domestic violence is reported and there is no child or vulnerable adult present, Food Bank trustees and volunteers should signpost the client to an appropriate agency but must not attempt to coerce them to contact the police unless the client feels ready to do so. **Where Food Bank volunteers witness an act of domestic violence, they must contact the police immediately.**

For advice or information about anything relating to domestic violence the Food Bank team should contact the National Domestic Violence Helpline on: 0808 2000 247

Use of Images

Sherborne Food Bank recognises that protecting and upholding the rights of children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance and this includes on the internet and other promotional materials. The Food Bank endeavours to present children and vulnerable adults in a positive, empowering and dignified manner. Furthermore, images will only be used where the child or vulnerable adult and their parents/guardians give their informed consent. The following principles will be adhered to:

- Images will not be taken without consent from the subject and their parent/guardian.
- The Food Bank will explain to the subject and their parent/guardian how and where the images will be used and will adhere to this.
- Images used on the Sherborne Food Bank website and social media pages will not be used on personal social media pages.

External media, television crews and journalists are usually responsible for obtaining their own informed consent from clients.

Whistleblowing

Trustees and volunteers are encouraged to take action when suspicious that abuse is occurring – no matter what the setting, who the perpetrator is or who the victim is. The Food Bank will respect and not penalise those who stand up for anyone who is suspected of being abused.

Trustees and volunteers have a responsibility to report any occurrences or suspicions of adult abuse and those who report abuse are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

If a volunteer has concerns, they should raise them with the Safeguarding Officers. If it is brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Officers and not adequately dealt with, then either a trustee of the Food Bank, Social Services or the Police should be contacted for advice.

Protecting Trustees and Volunteers

Abuse of vulnerable adults and children is most easily concealed where there is confusion among adults about roles and responsibilities. Therefore all role descriptions, both for trustees and volunteers, will include a statement laying down the behaviour and values expected from all who volunteer as part of this team.

Over and above the written word, expected behaviour towards vulnerable adults and children will be explained to new volunteers in the Food Bank as part of their induction.

In all recruitment decisions concerning volunteers:

- A Volunteer's Form should be completed.
- An informal interview will provide an extended conversation in which the applicant's experience and motivation for volunteering can be explored in more detail.

Sherborne Food Bank will ensure that all trustees and volunteers, including young people or volunteers with additional needs understand the safeguarding policy. If the volunteer is likely to struggle to absorb the information contained within this policy by reading it, then a Trustee or a Safeguarding Officer will talk through the policy verbally.

Criminal convictions

All volunteers must complete a volunteering form before commencing volunteering at the Food Bank. Details of criminal convictions (except those 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) must be provided so an adequate risk assessment can be undertaken. (The Food Bank reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer and/or ban them from the property should they feel it is necessary.)

Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there are any legislative changes or amendments to guidance issued by relevant statutory bodies.

The Trustees,
Sherborne Food Bank
May 2022