



# MOORLAND FOOD BANK

## Safeguarding Policy

The Moorland Foodbank is committed to safeguarding the rights, wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the Foodbank. This means children and vulnerable adults who are volunteers within the Foodbank and the clients we deliver food to at their homes. This policy outlines the steps the Foodbank will take to ensure that vulnerable adults and children are protected. It will be reviewed on an annual basis, and when there are any legislation or guidance changes, by the Safeguarding Lead and the Trustees of the Foodbank.

Moorland Foodbank follows the Charity Commission in its definitions of:

### Safeguarding

Protecting from maltreatment

Preventing impairment of health and development

Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe, effective care.

### 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; to 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.

### A Child

For the purpose of the amount of food packed in a food box, 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 adults. However for safeguarding purposes a child is anyone under the age of 18.

### **Types of abuse**

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.

Sexual abuse is forcing undesired sexual behaviour by one person onto another.

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.



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Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a person's basic needs.

Financial abuse is the misuse of a person's money, property or assets through theft and fraud.

## **Policy Statement**

Moorland Foodbank aims to help restore dignity and revive hope to people in all walks of life, is concerned with individuals and their circumstances and actively encourages an inclusive environment in all its undertakings.

Moorland Foodbank seeks to ensure that all volunteers 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.

Moorland Foodbank commits to co-operate fully with the appropriate statutory services when they are conducting official investigations 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 members of the Trustee Board and each volunteer when they join, as part of their induction programme. Any amendments will be brought to the attention of the Trustee Board and each volunteer. The statement will be displayed in the Foodbank and all volunteers will be asked to sign to say they have read it.

## **Implementation**

Moorland Foodbank 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. Moorland Foodbank will reduce opportunities for abuse in various ways, such as:

- Ensure there is adequate supervision for all vulnerable adults and children.
- Ensure that any vulnerable adult volunteering with the Foodbank is aware of who they can talk to if they have any concerns.
- Make sure the Safeguarding Officer receives correct and up to date training.
- Ensure the Trustees and the Local Authority are informed of any safeguarding allegations, incidents and concerns.
- Ensure the Disclosure and Barring Service is informed if the Foodbank have dismissed or ceased using a volunteer because they have harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.



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- Ensure volunteers who may come into contact with a vulnerable adult at the Foodbank 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 volunteers feel able and empowered to report any suspicious or concerning behaviour.

Volunteers should be aware that when they are volunteering for the Foodbank, they are legally governed by the Foodbank, even if the place they are working from is their home.

If an allegation is made, or concern raised about the behaviour of a member of the Foodbank team, the Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately. If the allegation or concern relates to the Safeguarding Lead, the Trustee responsible for safeguarding should be informed immediately. The Safeguarding Lead or the Trustee responsible for safeguarding will liaise with the relevant statutory authority. Whilst waiting for the outcome from the statutory authority, the team member about whom concerns have been raised will either be closely supervised at all times or temporarily stood down, depending on the nature of the allegation or concern. A record of all discussions will be maintained and stored securely where only those directly involved in safeguarding can access them. No information about the allegation will be shared with any other member of the team, or with anyone else.

## **Designated Safeguarding Leads**

Moorland Foodbank has a designated Safeguarding Lead who is the current Co-ordinator, Allison Crisp (contact number: 07395171409 ). They are responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of vulnerable adults and children.

The Safeguarding lead will be available for vulnerable adults and children, as well as the 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 Foodbank, particularly if they feel 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 Lead will treat all concerns with the utmost importance.

## **Recording Safeguarding Information**

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

Volunteers must ensure that their recording of disclosures, incidents, assessments, referrals and case discussions are all sufficient, accurate and concise, up to date, legible, dates 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 Lead is to refer to the 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.



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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 and may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings or in a civil or criminal prosecutions. Records will be kept in accordance with the data retention policy.

Once 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, eg as a witness. Volunteers must refrain from talking to other volunteers or outside persons about their safeguarding concerns with the exception of the Safeguarding Lead.

### Disclosure of Abuse

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

Ensure they **do not promise confidentiality** to anyone wishing to share a secret. This is important in case information is needed to be shared with the Safeguarding Lead or the Police / Social Services.

**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 volunteer hearing the disclosure can ask the child or vulnerable adult to repeat something if it has not been said clearly but not ask leading questions.

**Reassure** - making a disclosure of abuse can be a frightening process and often the child or vulnerable adult is afraid that they will not be believed. Reassuring them that they have been brave and that the information will be passed on is vitally important.

**Record** - notes should be made as soon as possible after the disclosure. The notes should reflect what the child or vulnerable adult has said in their own words. The record should be dated and signed.

**Report** - the record must be passed on to the Safeguarding Lead at the earliest possible opportunity and the child or vulnerable adult told what will happen next.

The Safeguarding Lead will ensure that members of the Trustee Board are informed of any incident, concern or allegation of abuse.

Where a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure to a Foodbank volunteer 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 Foodank is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether



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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 volunteer who feels unable to cope with what they are hearing, they should gently halt the conversation and contact the Safeguarding Lead immediately. If the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, then the volunteer should tell the vulnerable adult or child that the Safeguarding Lead will contact them as soon as they are able to do so.

## Domestic Violence

Where Moorland Foodbank 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 onto the Safeguarding Lead immediately. Where an incident of domestic violence is reported and there is no child or vulnerable adult present, Foodbank 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 the Food Bank volunteer witnesses an act of domestic violence, they must contact the police immediately.**

For advice and information about anything relating to domestic violence the Foodbank volunteer should contact the National Domestic Violence Helpline on: 0800 2000 247

## Recruitment and Training of Volunteers

Anyone wishing to volunteer at Moorland Foodbank is required to complete an application form and have an informal interview with the Foodbank Coordinator. This interview should cover the applicant's experience and motivation for volunteering.

Reference checks will be carried out for any volunteer who is new to the team.

The application process includes the applicant declaring any criminal convictions (except those 'spent' under the rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974). If criminal convictions are declared, then a risk assessment must be undertaken by the Foodbank Coordinator with the support of Trustees. The Foodbank reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer and /or ban them from the Foodbank building should they feel it is necessary.

All Volunteers will receive Safeguarding Training prior to them commencing volunteering with the Moorland Foodbank. This will be undertaken by the Foodbank Coordinator who is also the Safeguarding Lead. Yearly training updates will be given to all Foodbank volunteers.

The Safeguarding Lead will complete all necessary training to carry out this role.

Safeguarding Lead: Allison Crisp (contact number: 07395171409 )

Somerset Safeguarding Boards:

<https://somensetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/>

<https://somensetsafeguardingadults.org.uk/>

Policy adopted by trustees on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024