



Leominster Food Bank Safeguarding Policy

Written April 2021

Last Reviewed April 2026

Leominster 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 and to upholding the law in regard to matters of safeguarding. 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.

Leominster Food Bank is committed to operating in a way that minimises situations where the abuse of vulnerable adults and children might occur.

We will:

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision for all vulnerable adults and children.
- Ensure that any vulnerable adult or child working with the Food Bank is aware of who they can talk to if they have concerns.
- Ensure any safeguarding allegations, incidents or concerns are appropriately reported to the Local Authority or police.
- 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.
- Ensure the Disclosure and Barring Service is informed if the trustees have dismissed or ceased using a paid staff member or volunteer because they think they have harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.
- Ensure staff and volunteers who may come into contact with a vulnerable adult or child at the Food Bank are suitably recruited and trained.
- Encourage a culture of transparency, ensuring that staff 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 working is not on the premises.

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 halt the conversation and contact the safeguarding lead immediately.

The wellbeing of staff 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.

Safeguarding guidance and procedures

Applying agreed procedures for protecting vulnerable adults and children to all volunteers

All procedures set in place are there to protect vulnerable adults and children and apply to all those in contact with them. This is not the same as treating each person who relates to vulnerable adults and children as being under suspicion, but a matter of taking sensible measures to protect vulnerable adults and children, which are then observed by everyone. If any staff member or volunteer has concerns, they should raise them with the safeguarding lead.

Disclosure of Information

There is a difference between confidentiality and secrecy. All personal and delicate information disclosed to us is confidential, but may not always be secret. Personal and delicate information about staff and volunteers will be confidential to the Food Bank; it will be shared with other staff and volunteers on a 'need to know basis' and can be shared with another agency when:

- Permission is given by the person about whom the information is held or
- There is an overriding justification to share information without the person's consent or
- The law requires it.

The Safeguarding Lead for Leominster Food Bank is:

Anne Clark 07464 975737

Where it is not possible to contact the Safeguarding Lead, please contact another member of the Management Committee.

They are:

Kathy Bland 07780 535571

Margaret Wilkerson 07769 819565

Caroline Arthur 07799036539

Safeguarding roles

As a small organisation, every member of the food bank team has a role to play in being alert to and taking action where appropriate with regards to safeguarding concerns and/or issues. In the first instance, any concerns should be raised with the designated Safeguarding Lead whose role is to:

- Be the first point of contact for any potential safeguarding concern, assess risk and potential and/or necessary courses of action, taking the lead on those with the appropriate partners and/or agencies
- Maintain up to date knowledge of current safeguarding legislation and compliance measures
- Communicate to the team any updates as relevant including updating the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Recommend any necessary training for Trustees, staff and volunteers to maintain current knowledge

Staff and Volunteer conduct

Any complaints received about a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with through Leominster Food Bank Complaints Procedure.

Any concerns expressed by a member of staff or volunteer regarding unfair or inappropriate treatment are taken seriously and will be investigated by a Trustee.

Staff and volunteers should make sure no-one is left on their own with a child or vulnerable adult. Volunteers and staff should work in sight of other volunteers when working with members of the public, for the protection of themselves and other people.

Safe Recruitment

At all times we seek to recruit, train and manage staff and volunteers who can help clients keep themselves safe and protect and uphold their rights, dignity and well-being.

This includes:

- volunteer application forms
- telephone/ video or in person interviews undertaken by a trustee or member of the management committee
- Reference checks
- DBS checks where required
- Induction and training

Where there is a safeguarding cause for concern - procedure to be followed

The following documents will be followed where there is a cause for concern, in order to ensure that Leominster Food Bank upholds the law in relation to safeguarding responsibilities.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf and in particular p19-21 in relation to GDPR and Safeguarding

Guidance on The Care Act 2014 -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>

Mental Capacity

The presumption in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 is that adults have the mental capacity to make informed choices about their own safety and how they live their lives. Issues of mental capacity and the ability to give informed consent are central to decisions and actions in adult safeguarding.

All interventions made by staff or volunteers should take into account the ability of clients to make informed choices about the way they want to live and the risks they want to take. This includes their ability to:

- understand the implications of their situation and to take action themselves to prevent abuse
- participate to the fullest extent possible in decision-making about interventions.

Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse

Respond

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 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 the Food Bank Safeguarding Lead and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- 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.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by 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.

Report

- If there is immediate danger to a child or adult contact the police.
- Otherwise report to the food bank Safeguarding Officer Lead immediately.
- If there is any doubt seek advice from Children's/Adult's Social Care or the police.

The Safeguarding Lead will note any safeguarding issues for reporting to the Trustees where appropriate and share any relevant information as necessary.

Guidelines for responding when there is a safeguarding concern

Emergency: If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, contact the emergency services on 999 and /or Social Services.

Non-emergency: Contact the Leominster Food Bank Safeguarding Lead in the first instance, within 24 hours.

- Record the details of the concern or allegation. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time (usually it will not be), make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the concern or allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter, etc. The record should include details of information provided to that person as well as the information received. Always sign and date the record. Keep it factual.

The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know (e.g. the statutory agencies and Food Bank Safeguarding Lead).

Domestic Violence

Where 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 the safeguarding lead. Where an incident of domestic violence is reported and there is no child or vulnerable adult present, Food Bank staff or 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 staff or volunteers witness an act of domestic violence, they must contact the police immediately.

Action:

Do not breach confidentiality but work hard to engage the client in a commitment to go to an appropriate agency.

- Record all actions taken.

Modern slavery**Causes for Concern:**

The client talk about:

- inability to move around freely
- lack of access to personal belongings like passport, phone etc
- lack of ability to state address of home or work in detail
- being poorly equipped in terms of clothing for seasonal changes.

Most important fact to establish:

- Is the individual being detained or being made to work against their will?

Action:

- If there is immediate danger, call the police in the area where the person states they reside
- Breach confidentiality without advising the individual
- If there is no immediate threat, call the Modern Slavery helpline on 0800 0121 700.
- Record all actions taken.

Historical Abuse

If a member of staff or volunteer is told of historical abuse against someone who is now an adult, the focus should be on getting support for the individual and matters of necessary reporting can be handled as relevant by that support agency.

If any member of staff or volunteer has cause for concern about a client, staff member, volunteer or trustee, please follow this procedure.

Introduction

Leominster Food Bank is committed to ensuring that any concerns regarding abuse or harm to clients and/or volunteers are taken seriously and addressed promptly and appropriately. Leominster Food Bank is committed to upholding the law in regard to the Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

Our objective is to prevent and reduce the risk of harm to adult beneficiaries and/or their dependents from abuse or other types of exploitation and we will do this whilst supporting individuals to enable them to maintain control over their lives and make informed choices about their futures.

We recognise that abuse and exploitation can take many forms which extend beyond our collective organisational experience, also recognizing the vital and sometimes difficult role that staff take in managing responses to its beneficiaries' lives.

Any member of staff or volunteer who hears or sees anything from, or in relation to, a person at risk regarding a safeguarding issue must take the matter seriously and respond with sensitivity and discretion, raising the matter immediately with the Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, a Trustee.

Should a safeguarding issue be raised, we will treat any person at risk as a unique and valued individual, respecting their dignity and well-being, keeping them involved and informed of all safeguarding decisions which affect them, with those decisions taking account of the individual's ability to give informed consent as defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Should the person be unable to give informed consent, their guardian, registered Power of Attorney or other appropriately nominated and authorised representative will be informed.

We will ensure that any necessary action taken is legal, proportionate and respects the rights and wishes of the person at risk. This includes respecting the rights of any alleged perpetrators who have their own care and support needs, raising concerns with any necessary third party bodies where these are not being met.

In particular, we aim to observe the six principles of adult safeguarding in relation to our role as a charity as set out in The Care Act 2014, namely:

- Empowerment: supporting and encouraging people to make their own decisions and give informed consent
- Prevention: taking action before harm occurs
- Proportionality: responding in the least intrusive way appropriate to the risk presented
- Protection: providing support, signposting and advocacy for those in greatest need
- Partnership: working closely with partners in the client's local community to create the best outcome
- Accountability: being transparent in what we deliver and accountable for how it is done

Safeguarding responsibilities apply to working with vulnerable adults who are at risk of harm as defined as:

- Having needs for care and support
- Experiencing, or being at risk of, abuse or neglect
- As the result of their care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect

Appendix

Definitions

Allegations are inclusive of complaints, concerns generated by colleagues or grievances.

Child relates to any individual aged under 18 years of age.

Conduct relates to how individuals behave on the phone, in meetings, during assessment decisions regarding beneficiaries and on visits to beneficiaries.

Protocols are the official procedure or system of rules governing how something is done.

Adults with additional needs are defined as anyone over the age of 18 who:

- requires care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of these needs), and;
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect;
- as a result of whose care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Different forms of Abuse

Volunteers should be alert to many different forms of abuse including:

Self-neglect: neglecting to care for oneself and/or their environment e.g. personal hygiene, hoarding

Modern slavery: forced labour, domestic servitude, slavery and human trafficking

Domestic abuse: this includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family and/or living arrangements

Discrimination: abuse based on a difference or perceived difference with respect to race, gender, disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act

Organisational: 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 the individual's home

Physical: this includes any form of physical contact made with inappropriate force, and/or aggression and misuse of medication or inappropriate sanctions

Sexual: this includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the individual has not consented or was pressurised into consenting

Financial or material: including theft, fraud, internet scamming and coercion in relation to an individual's financial affairs or arrangements which can be in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, possessions or benefits including their misuse

Neglect and acts of omission: e.g. ignoring medical or physical care needs and failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, as well as withholding the necessities of life including medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Emotional or psychological: this includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of human contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks

Online abuse: Use of the internet and other electronic communication to target, groom and abuse children. Adults may target chat rooms, social networking sites, messaging services, mobile phones, online gaming sites and the internet generally. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by adults who pretend to be children of similar ages when online and who try to obtain images or engineer meetings.

Bullying and cyberbullying: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying.

Electronic images: The downloading, keeping or distributing of indecent images of children are all classified as sexual offences.

Useful Contact Numbers Organisation	Phone Number	Website
Anti-Terrorist Hotline	0800 789 321	www.ltai.info (Let's Talk About It)
Barnardos		www.barnardos.org.uk
Citizens Advice	03444 111 444 (England) 03444 77 2020 (Wales)	www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Domestic Abuse	0808 2000 247	www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
Mind, the mental health charity	0300 123 3393 (Infoline) 0300 466 6463 (legal line)	www.mind.org.uk www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en
National Bullying Helpline	0845 225 5787	www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk
National Debt Helpline	0808 808 4000	www.nationaldebthelpline.org
National Stalking Helpline	0808 802 0300	www.suzyplamplugh.org
NHS 111	111	www.nhs.uk
NSPCC	0808 800 5000	www.nspcc.org.uk
Rape Crisis	0808 802 9999	www.rapecrisis.org.uk
Samaritans	116 123	www.samaritans.org
Stop Loan Sharks England Illegal Money Lending Team	0300 555 2222	www.stoploansharks.co.uk
Victim Support	0808 168 9111	www.victimsupport.org.uk