



Sherborne Food Bank Safeguarding Policy (Revised May 2026)

Sherborne Food Bank Charity Number: 1156481

1. Policy Statement

Sherborne Food Bank is committed to safeguarding the rights, wellbeing and safety of **children and adults at risk** who encounter our services at the Food Bank. We recognise our responsibility to protect people from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

This policy applies to all trustees, volunteers, and anyone representing Sherborne Food Bank in any capacity. It will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

2. Definitions (Updated to Care Act 2014)

2.1 Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It includes:

- Preventing harm and reducing the risk of abuse or neglect
- Supporting individuals to maintain control over their lives
- Promoting wellbeing and safe, effective care
- Taking action where abuse or neglect is suspected

2.2 Adult at Risk (Care Act 2014)

An *adult at risk* is a person aged 18 or over who:

1. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs),
2. Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
3. As a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

Adults at risk may include people with disabilities, mental health conditions, learning difficulties, age-related frailty, substance misuse issues, or those temporarily vulnerable due to crisis.

2.3 Child

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

2.4 Types of Abuse

(Aligned with Care Act 2014 categories)

- **Physical abuse**
- **Domestic abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Psychological/emotional abuse**
- **Financial or material abuse**
- **Neglect and acts of omission**
- **Discriminatory abuse**
- **Organisational abuse**
- **Self-neglect**
- **Modern slavery**

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO & Deputy DSO)

Sherborne Food Bank has two safeguarding leads:

- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**
- **Deputy Safeguarding Officer (DSO2)**

Contact details: 📞 07854 163869 ✉️ help@sherbornefoodbank.org

The DSO/Deputy DSO are responsible for receiving concerns, making referrals, maintaining safeguarding records, and liaising with statutory agencies.

3.2 Trustee Responsibilities

Trustees ensure:

- Compliance with safeguarding legislation
- Annual review of this policy
- Reporting of serious incidents to the Charity Commission

3.3 Volunteer Responsibilities

All volunteers must:

- Read and follow this policy
- Report concerns immediately
- Never investigate concerns themselves
- Maintain confidentiality

4. Reporting Concerns

4.1 Timescales

All safeguarding concerns must be reported:

- **Immediately** to the DSO where possible
- **Same day** and **within 24 hours** at the latest

4.2 If the DSO is unavailable

Contact:

- **Police (non-emergency): 101**
- **Police (emergency): 999**
- **Dorset Council Adult Safeguarding Team: 01305 221016**
- **Dorset Children's Services (MASH): 01305 228866**

4.3 Serious Incident Reporting

Trustees must follow Charity Commission guidance: **How to report a serious incident in your charity** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity> ([gov.uk in Bing](#))

5. Responding to a Disclosure

When someone discloses abuse:

1. **Listen** without interrupting
2. **Do not promise confidentiality**
3. **Reassure** them they have done the right thing
4. **Record** the disclosure in their own words
5. **Report** to the DSO immediately

Volunteers must **not**:

- Ask leading questions
- Investigate
- Discuss the disclosure with anyone except the DSO or emergency services

6. Recording Safeguarding Information

Records must be:

- Factual, accurate, dated, and signed
- Stored securely
- Shared only with authorised persons
- Passed to the DSO without keeping personal copies

Volunteers will not be informed of case outcomes unless required for legal proceedings.

7. Domestic Abuse

If domestic abuse is disclosed **and a child or adult at risk is present**, this must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately.

If no child or adult at risk is present, volunteers should:

- Offer signposting (e.g., GP, local support services)
- Not pressure the individual to contact police unless they choose to

If domestic abuse is **witnessed**, volunteers must call **999**.

8. Online and Digital Safeguarding

Sherborne Food Bank recognises that safeguarding extends to digital environments, including:

- Email communication
- Social media
- Online meetings
- Digital storage of personal information

We commit to:

- Using secure systems for storing personal data
- Ensuring volunteers do not contact clients via personal social media
- Prohibiting sharing of client information online
- Ensuring images or videos of clients are only used with informed written consent
- Monitoring official social media channels for inappropriate content

Volunteers must report any online safeguarding concerns (e.g., cyberbullying, harassment, inappropriate contact) to the DSO within **24 hours**.

9. Use of Images

Images of children or adults at risk will only be used when:

- Informed written consent is obtained
- The purpose and use are clearly explained
- Images are stored securely
- Images are not used on personal social media accounts

10. Whistleblowing

Volunteers are protected under the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**. Concerns about unsafe practice or misconduct should be reported to:

- The DSO
- A Trustee
- Or directly to Police/Social Services if necessary

No volunteer will be penalised for raising a safeguarding concern in good faith.

11. Protecting Volunteers

To minimise risk:

- Volunteers receive safeguarding training
- No volunteer should be alone with a child
- Home-based volunteering is still covered by this policy
- Role descriptions include expected behaviour and boundaries

12. Recruitment and Criminal Convictions

All volunteers must:

- Complete a volunteer form
- Declare unspent criminal convictions
- Undergo DBS checks where roles require them

Sherborne Food Bank reserves the right to refuse or terminate volunteering arrangements where safeguarding risks are identified.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- **Annually**, or
- Following legislative changes, or
- After any safeguarding incident

Next review due: May 2027