



Safeguarding Policy

Last Updated: 16 Apr 24

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all FEAST With Us employees, including temporary, voluntary, contracted, trainees/students, volunteers, and independent personnel.

FEAST With Us (hereby referred to as FEAST) events are free and open to all, regardless of age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, or any other protected characteristic.

Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. We all need to act as good neighbours and citizens in looking out for one another and seeking to prevent isolation which could lead to an increased risk of abuse and put adults at risk of harm.

FEAST is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse. FEAST is committed to working with partners and statutory agencies to promote safe communities, prevent harm and abuse, and report suspected or actual cases of abuse. Our procedures aim to make sure that the safety, needs and interests of vulnerable people are always respected and upheld.

Trustees' Commitment & Duties

The Board of Trustees' commit to the following actions to ensure all FEAST staff, volunteers, and service users are protected from harm to the best of FEAST's capabilities:

- Review and update the safeguarding policy, code of conduct, and other safeguarding procedures in place every year. Make sure information is available to the public and relevant stakeholders are kept aware of any safeguarding issues should they arise.

- Identify possible risks to all stakeholders within FEAST, including beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, and partners, and record these in a risk register. Set out clearly the procedures to recognise, respond to, report and record safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding procedures, risks assessed, and have completed DBS checks (where applicable or appropriate) prior to participating in on-site activities for FEAST.
- Responsible for managing safeguarding risks and escalating serious incidents to local authorities and the Charity Commission as required. Trustees bear the responsibility for failure in adequately managing risks, which could be deemed a breach of trustee duty under supervision of the Charity Commission.

Safeguarding Principles

Our activities and interactions with the service users are guided by this safeguarding policy, based on safeguarding principles recommended by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC):

- **Empowerment** - Presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent. We set out clear information on procedures and support available for individuals to recognise and act for their safety and the safety of others.
- **Protection** - Support and representation for those in greatest need. We commit to supporting individuals and ensure safeguarding and risk assessments work effectively through regular review and transparency of governance.
- **Prevention** - It is better to act before harm occurs. We ensure staff and volunteers are adequately and routinely trained to effectively identify and respond to signs of abuse.
- **Proportionality** – Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. Proportionality of possible actions to risks are discussed with individual and where appropriate with partner agencies before action is taken. Where individuals lack capacity to make decision, we commit to acting in the best interests of those involved.
- **Partnership** - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse. We commit to work with statutory agencies – local councils, police, NHS, and other local voluntary organisations to promote safer communities, prevent harm and abuse, and to deal with suspected or actual cases of abuse. We commit to working within the framework of multi-agency policy and procedures to improve inter-agency working, avoid people falling between gaps in services, and ensure appropriate sensitivity in sharing of personal information between agencies.
- **Accountability** - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. We have clearly defined accountability roles that define how we effectively implement safeguarding processes as an organisation.

Roles & Responsibilities

Trustees – responsible for managing and escalating safeguarding concerns to local authority and statutory bodies where required and ensure safeguarding procedures in place are adequate and clearly communicated to all stakeholders involved. Ensure volunteers and staff working contact with adult at risks are appropriately trained and background checked.

Designated Safeguarding Officer – responsible for managing, escalating and sharing safeguarding concerns up the escalation chain. Responsible for operational compliance in accordance with this policy. Current Designated Safeguarding Officer is: Eleanor Butterworth (eleanor@feastwithus.org.uk / 07309 731520).

CEO / Managers / Coordinators / Staff – responsible for managing and escalating safeguarding concerns to the site Safeguarding Lead, Operations Manager and CEO (in order of escalation), logging incidents, debriefing with volunteers, and ensuring all volunteers and beneficiaries are aware of safeguarding procedures. Staff hold current DBS certificates where applicable or appropriate.

Facilitators – responsible for working in collaboration with host and partner organisation, escalating any witnessed and informed cases of abuse to host and FEAST coordinator. Facilitators are required to be trained in safeguarding policies and DBS checked (where applicable or appropriate) and protect confidentiality of volunteers and beneficiaries.

Volunteers – responsible for escalation of witnessed and informed cases of abuse to facilitator. Volunteers are required to be familiar with safeguarding policies and report to the facilitator.

Partner / Host Organisation – responsible for ensuring internal safeguarding procedures are followed with duty of care for FEAST volunteers and facilitators. Any incidents related to FEAST should be communicated to the Kitchen Coordinator or Operations Manager.

Service Users – ensure clear communication and appropriate understanding of safeguarding procedures and personnel available for support any safeguarding concerns.

In cases where person involved would be more comfortable speaking to someone other than outlined above, concerns should be raised directly up the reporting ladder.

Note that FEAST's scope of work includes meal delivery in private and public settings for vulnerable people. We aim to safeguard participants that are considered vulnerable within reason and within the context of FEAST, and incidents arising from participants' own behaviours may fall outside the policy. FEAST is not responsible to vulnerable people as friends or professionals, or for any incidents that may arise due to participants' behaviour.

Staff & Volunteer Recruitment

For roles in which there are regular direct work with vulnerable people, including cooking/hosting in community kitchens and delivering our Healthy Eating on a Budget programme, the recruitment process includes proportionate safeguarding training, DBS checks (where applicable or appropriate), appropriate referencing, and relevant interview to ensure safer recruitment.

The staff and facilitators agree to provide the organisation with a current DBS certificate (less than one year old) or to work proactively with the organisation to issue a new DBS at the organisations' expense. This is required as a condition of the commission under the terms herein. A copy of the certificate will be kept on file by the organisation and may be shared with educational institutions or project partners.

Personnel & Training

It is the joint responsibility of the designated safeguarding officer, Operations Manager, and CEO to ensure the implementation of effective safeguarding and adherence to the safeguarding policy. Such people would maintain an overview of safeguarding concerns, take the lead on liaising with other agencies and keep informed about local safeguarding protocols, and keep an updated risk register.

All staff and volunteers at FEAST will be provided with relevant training prior to working directly with beneficiaries and refresher training will be provided on an ongoing basis. There will also be opportunities to discuss incidents and learning points with senior staff.

All FEAST staff, volunteers, and facilitators accept and recognise their responsibility regarding child and vulnerable adult safeguarding and agree to adhere to the organisation's Safeguarding Policy.

All FEAST staff, volunteers and facilitators should not communicate digitally or via telephone with project participants under the age of 18 years or with vulnerable adults without prior consent from the organisation. All communication with these participants will occur through the organisation.

Child & Young Persons Safeguarding

FEAST is committed to the protection and safeguarding of any child or young person (under 18) involved in FEAST services and programmes. FEAST staff and volunteers will treat children and young people in accordance with FEAST policies, including but not limited to safeguarding, equal opportunities, whistleblowing, bullying & harassment, data protection.

Volunteers should not be left with children alone and there should always be others present in the vicinity when interacting with children or young people.

FEAST staff and volunteers will be trained to recognise signs of abuse as noted in the Safeguarding Policy Glossary and report any abuse using the procedure pertaining to adults in this document.

Disclosure of Abuse

If vulnerable people experiencing abuse or neglect raise an instance of abuse, follow the below guidance:

DOs:

- Assure them that they are taken seriously. Listen carefully to what they are saying, stay calm and get a clear and factual picture of the concern.
- Be honest and avoid making assurances that FEAST would not be able to keep, for example, complete confidentiality.
- Try to prevent participants disclosing abuse early on and explain the scope of confidentiality, namely any threat of harm to themselves or others would need to be shared with appropriate parties.
- Do not be judgemental and try to keep an open mind.
- Continue to safeguard the individual who has disclosed abuse after their disclosure.
- All staff (professionals and volunteers) of any service involved with vulnerable people should inform the relevant manager and Designated Safeguarding Officer if they are concerned that a person is/has experienced abuse or may be at risk of harm.
- If one hears about an incident of abuse from a third party (this is when someone else tells one about what they have heard or seen happen to a vulnerable person at risk), encourage them to report it themselves or help them to report the as much information as they can in-line with the guidance in this policy.

DON'Ts:

- Keep concerns relating to potential abuse of vulnerable people to oneself. Always escalate any concerns up the safeguarding reporting ladder.
 - Hold information if there are concerns that the vulnerable person or another person is at risk of harm. Always report concerns to the appropriate personnel.
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Suspecting Abuse

Whilst always maintaining their own safety, everyone with a duty of care to a vulnerable person should:

- Act to protect the vulnerable person.

- Deal with immediate needs and ensure the person is, as far as possible, central to the decision-making process.
- Report the abuse to an appropriate person or service according to responsibilities defined for respective safeguarding roles.
- If a crime has or may have been committed, contact the police to discuss or report it as soon as possible.

A concern may be a direct disclosure by the vulnerable person, a concern raised by staff or volunteers, others using the service, a carer or member of the public, an observation of the behaviour of the person, or the behaviour of another.

All staff and volunteers should follow their safeguarding roles and responsibilities defined for escalation of abuse concerns:

- Volunteers should escalate concerns to the volunteer lead / facilitator, Kitchen Coordinator or Healthy Eating Coordinator.
- Volunteer lead / facilitator should report concern to Designated Safeguarding Officer and Host Organisation and inform the participant that this is the course of action.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer should report concerns to Operations Manager / CEO and take actions to inform external authorities where delegated/signposted by local safeguarding leads.
- Operations Manager / CEO should take actions to inform appropriate external authorities and services to address cases of concern.

When volunteers themselves are vulnerable people, the volunteer facilitator, Volunteer Coordinator, and Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible for addressing any safeguarding concerns in relation to the volunteer.

Reporting Abuse

All concerns of abuse or neglect of a vulnerable person can be reported to corresponding Social Care Services and Local Safeguarding Board:

BARNET

Office hours contact: 020 8359 5000

Outside office hours: 020 8359 2000

Email: socialcaredirect@barnet.gov.uk

CAMDEN

Office hours contact: 020 7974 400
Outside office hours: 020 7974 4444
Email: adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk

HARINGEY

Office hours contact: 020 8489 1400
Outside office hours: 020 8489 0000
Email: firstresponseteam@haringey.gov.uk

ISLINGTON

Office hours contact: 020 7527 2299
Outside office hours: 020 7226 0992
Email: access.service@islington.gov.uk

WESTMINSTER

Office hours contact: 020 7641 2176
Outside office hours: 020 7641 6000
Email: adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk

HACKNEY

Office hours contact: 020 8356 4458 / 020 8356 4459
Outside office hours: 020 8356 2300
Email: dais@hackney.gov.uk

If a serious crime has taken place or there is a need for an immediate police response to protect the adult at risk, consider dialling 999.

For less urgent cases, contact non-emergency Police on 101.

Serious incidents must be reported to the Charity Commission promptly (as soon as reasonably possible) with full disclosure and is the responsibility of the charity's trustee or delegates.

If senior staff are unsure about the nature of an incident, these should be discussed with the trustees and recorded. The following actions need to be taken:

- Take immediate action to prevent or minimise any further harm, loss, or damage.
- Report to Charity Commission what happened and how the charity has dealt with the incident.
- Clearly state your authority to report on behalf of the trustee body as a trustee or delegate.
- Reporting to police or other relevant agencies if suspect a crime has been committed.
- Review incident and internal controls/procedures to prevent incident from happening again, following any internal or external investigation or advice from professionals.
- Contact the Charity Commission should the circumstance change materially.

Serious incidents can be reported by emailing: RSI@charitycommission.gov.uk

Allegations of Abuse

Referrals to Local Social Care Services (details included above) would be taken from anyone who has a concern that person is at risk. Details from the referrer about the allegation of abuse will be needed so it is helpful to have the facts of the circumstances ready to hand.

The referral may be passed to local safeguarding team or allocated to a worker who will seek to:

- Clarify the circumstances of the alleged abuse or neglect.
- Take any immediate steps to protect the vulnerable person, if needed.
- Decide if the safeguarding procedures are the required and appropriate response to the situation.
- Work in partnership with other agencies, like the police or health services, where necessary.

The allocated worker will call a multi-agency strategy meeting where details of the investigation and responsibilities will be agreed. Protecting vulnerable people is the responsibility of all the agencies working together and they will all follow the “London multi agency adult safeguarding policy & procedures”. ([http://londonadass.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Pan-Lon don-Updated-August-2016.pdf](http://londonadass.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Pan-Lon_don-Updated-August-2016.pdf)).

Feast Staff Responsibilities

After reporting of abuse, volunteers would be contacted by their manager within 48 hours of reporting, to ensure:

- Volunteer concerns are heard, and staff offer debrief/safe spaces to listen to promote volunteer wellbeing and confidentiality.
- Feedback on information or practices that would be useful to inform improvements for future safeguarding processes.

Allegations of Abuse Against Staff & Volunteers

Volunteers and staff may be the subject of an allegation of abuse. If volunteers or staff are the subject of such an allegation or made aware of an allegation then this must be reported immediately to the lead member of staff responsible for ensuring the implementation of the safeguarding policy.

In these instances, FEAST will report allegations to Social Services and ensure that they are given all assistance pursuing any investigation. Suspension and/or disciplinary action may be taken.

For complaints and disciplinary procedures in place to manage concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers, refer to employee contract, code of conduct for volunteers, volunteer policy and grievance procedure.

Allegations of Abuse from Staff & Volunteers

FEAST commits to creating environment for volunteers and staff that is free of abuse. If volunteers or staff think they are being abused, they should speak to their manager, or where their manager is the individual concerned, to roles up the safeguarding escalation ladder or trustees as appropriate.

All allegations of abuse will be investigated and, if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. The charity will also not tolerate victimisation of a person for making allegations of abuse in good faith or supporting someone to make such a complaint.

All cases of allegations will be treated seriously and confidentially. Investigations will be undertaken, and solutions will be sought in discussion with the complainant who will be protected against any form of victimisation that may arise because of making the complaint.

In these circumstances FEAST will be as supportive as possible to the employee or volunteer concerned, who will also be encouraged to seek appropriate external help and support.

Bullying & Harassment

FEAST commits to creating environment for volunteers and staff that is free of harassment and bullying. If volunteers or staff think they are being bullied or harassed, they should speak to their manager, or where their manager is the individual concerned, to roles up the safeguarding escalation ladder or trustees as appropriate.

All allegations of bullying and harassment will be investigated and, if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. The charity will also not tolerate victimisation of a person for making allegations of bullying and harassment in good faith or supporting someone to make such a complaint.

All cases of allegations will be treated seriously and confidentially. Investigations will be undertaken, and solutions will be sought in discussion with the complainant who will be protected against any form of victimisation that may arise as a result of making the complaint.

Whistleblowing

If staff suspect wrongdoing within the charity such as criminal offences, malpractice/ misconduct, or health and safety breaches, this should be raised directly with trustee or other member of trustee board if incident concerns negligence of one trustee. Please refer to FEAST's Whistleblowing Policy for more details.

If the charity fails to deal with concerns appropriately or one continue to suspect serious

wrongdoing, one can report to the Charity Commission, protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Data Protection

For safeguarding in relation to protection of data gathered and withheld by the charity, including, but not limited to, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners, donors, and other related contacts, refer to FEAST's GDPR Policy.

Contacting Us

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact us at info@feastwithus.org.uk.

Reviewed and approved on 16 April 2024 by Caroline Monkhouse Flower, CEO, and Helen Burgess, Chair of the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the board.

Signed by:



Helen Burgess
Chair of the Board of Trustees

FEAST With Us, Registered Charity in England and Wales
Charity Number: 1172884
Address: 2A, The Quadrant, Epsom, KT17 4RH