



Critical Incident Policy

Updated: 5 July 2026

Policy Scope

FEAST With Us (hereby known as FEAST) is committed to identifying, managing, escalating and reporting critical incidents promptly, transparently and proportionately. This policy explains how FEAST identifies, records, escalates and reports serious incidents, including incidents that may need to be reported to the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

- This policy applies to trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors, placement students, interns and anyone acting on behalf of FEAST.
- It covers actual or alleged incidents affecting FEAST's service users, staff, volunteers, assets, property, services, operations, governance, finances or reputation.
- It should be read alongside FEAST's safeguarding, health and safety, finance, data protection, complaints, whistleblowing, risk management, business continuity and media policies.

This policy does not replace emergency, safeguarding, employment, finance or data protection procedures. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, FEAST will prioritise safety and contact emergency services, safeguarding authorities, police or other relevant agencies as appropriate.

Definitions

A critical incident is any adverse event, whether actual or alleged, that results in, or risks, significant harm to people who come into contact with FEAST through its work; significant loss of money or assets; damage to property; or harm to FEAST's work, operations or reputation.

A serious incident is a critical incident that meets the Charity Commission reporting threshold. "Significant" means significant in the context of FEAST, taking account of the charity's staff, volunteers, service users, operations, finances, services and reputation.

Examples may include safeguarding concerns, abuse or mistreatment, serious health and safety incidents, food safety incidents, food contamination, physical harm including anaphylactic shock and foodborne illness, incidents arising at partner venues during the delivery of FEAST services, fraud,

theft, significant financial loss, cyber-crime, serious data breaches, loss of charity assets, fire, flood, major service disruption, terrorism-related concerns, or incidents likely to attract significant media, donor, public or regulatory attention.

Responsibilities

The board of trustees has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that FEAST identifies, manages and reports serious incidents in a timely manner. Trustees may delegate practical reporting tasks to the CEO, Operations Manager or professional advisers, but trustees remain accountable for the decision to report and for the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of any report.

- All staff and volunteers must report any suspected critical incident to their line manager, the Operations Manager or the CEO as soon as possible.
 - The CEO or delegated incident lead will assess the incident, take immediate protective action, notify trustees and coordinate internal records.
 - Incidents involving the CEO should be reported directly to the Chair of Trustees.
 - The Chair of Trustees should be informed promptly of any incident that may meet the Charity Commission reporting threshold.
 - Incidents involving the Chair of Trustees should be reported to another trustee.
 - Where appropriate, FEAST will also notify police, insurers, funders, safeguarding authorities, the Information Commissioner's Office or other regulators.
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Immediate Response

When a critical incident is identified, FEAST will act quickly to protect people, secure evidence, reduce further harm and maintain essential services where safe to do so.

- Make people safe, provide first aid where appropriate and contact emergency services if there is immediate danger.
 - Follow safeguarding procedures and notify the relevant safeguarding authority where required.
 - Secure records, equipment, premises, systems and financial assets to prevent further loss or harm.
 - Nominate an incident lead to coordinate communications, actions, records, trustee updates and external notifications.
 - Record the date, time, location, people involved, immediate impact, actions taken, decisions made and any evidence secured.
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Assessing Whether to Report

FEAST will consider whether the incident is significant in the context of the charity and whether it has caused, or risks causing, serious harm to people, significant financial or asset loss, property damage, operational disruption, regulatory concern or reputational harm.

The assessment should consider the facts known at the time, whether the incident is actual or alleged, the potential impact on people and services, whether other authorities have been notified, and whether public trust and confidence in FEAST could be affected.

If FEAST decides not to report an incident that appears serious, the reasons for that decision must be recorded, including who made the decision, what information was considered and what further monitoring or action will take place.

Reporting to the Charity Commission

- Serious incidents must be reported to the Charity Commission promptly, fully and frankly, even where FEAST has also reported the matter to police, funders, insurers, safeguarding bodies or another regulator.
- Reports should be made using the Charity Commission's online serious incident reporting service, by a person authorised to report on behalf of the trustee body.
- The report should explain what happened, when FEAST became aware of it, the actual or potential impact, whether trustees are aware, what action has been taken, which policies apply, whether those procedures were followed, and what steps will reduce the risk of recurrence.
- FEAST will avoid including unnecessary personal data in reports and will share personal information only where it is essential and lawful to do so.
- If new information becomes available after a report is submitted, FEAST will update the Charity Commission using the reporting service and retain the reference number with the incident record.

Internal Records and Review

FEAST will keep a confidential incident record for every critical incident, including the initial report, risk assessment, decisions, trustee notifications, external reports, reference numbers, actions taken, learning points and follow-up responsibilities.

After each critical incident, the incident lead and trustees will review what happened, what worked well, what should change, and whether policies, training, supervision, risk assessments or controls need to be updated.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a serious incident, a material change in FEAST's activities, or updated legal or regulatory guidance.

Reviewed and approved on 5 July 2026 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

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