

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Owner	Head of Specialist Services
Policy Lead	Safeguarding Manager
Audience	Trussell (internal)
Formally endorsed by	Co-Chief Executive
Last update	February 2026
Next review	February 2027

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Introduction

Trussell is committed to safeguarding best practice and to upholding the rights of all people to live a life free from harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect. Safeguarding means protecting people's right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's or child's wellbeing is promoted including, wherever possible, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

This requires an organisational culture that fosters openness, transparency and accountability for safeguarding best practice at all levels of the organisation and extends to recognising and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community or voluntary activities, in the Foodbank Network, local communities, and in the person's own home.

Equalities Statement

Trussell is committed to practices that protect from harm regardless of a person's age, sex, disability, racial heritage, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic as covered by the Equality Act 2010.

Aims of the Policy

This policy, taken together with the relevant local statutory multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, represents commitment in working together to safeguard adults and Children from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

It clarifies the roles and responsibilities of staff members, trustees and volunteers in relation to developing their own awareness and skills as well as the policies and procedures that must be followed.

The policy outlines:

- The practice and procedure for all representatives within Trussell to contribute to the prevention of the abuse and neglect, and;
- A clear framework for action including information sharing when abuse is suspected

Scope of the Policy

Legislation establishes that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Trussell recognises that we all play a key role in preventing, detecting, reporting and responding to abuse, neglect or exploitation. The responsibility for safeguarding sits with all those associated with Trussell's activity collectively and is

not limited to one person. All Trussell employees, volunteers and contractors will ensure that the principle of “safeguarding is everybody’s business” underpins everything we do.

The Charity Commission’s guidance is clear within “Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees” (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees/>), that safeguarding and protection from harm applies to all who come into contact with the charity. This includes children (and young people), adults at risk of harm, and includes the protection of staff and volunteers.

The policy applies to activities delivered by Trussell. The following is a brief description of our organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake including with children and adults who have additional care and support needs:

- We work alongside people with lived experience of poverty and food insecurity to advocate for systemic change to end the need for food banks in the UK.
- We work alongside food banks in Trussell Network who provide support and emergency food to people in crisis.
- Develop and deliver other services and programmes designed to alleviate poverty, directly and via a UK-wide network food banks, partner organisations, referral agencies and volunteers.

The policy applies in respect of this organisation’s responsibility towards the following groups of people

- An ‘adult at risk of abuse or neglect with care and support needs’ however for the purpose of this policy we will use the term adults at risk to refer to this group.
- A child is defined as up to the age of 18. For the purposes of this policy all references to Children (including young people) refer to those under the age of 18.
- Staff members, trustees and volunteers who come into contact with children or adults at risk during the course of their work or volunteering responsibilities.
- Contractors when carrying out work on behalf of the organisation.

We expect our partner organisations, including for example, food banks within Trussell Network, suppliers and corporate sponsors to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice as set out in this Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures.

Safeguarding legislation varies between the home nations and regions of the UK both for safeguarding children and adults. A detailed summary of the key legislation and the definitions is included at [Appendix 10](#) for adults and [Appendix 11](#) for children.

Implementation

Trussell is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy and procedures. In order to do so the following will be in place:

- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for the safety and welfare of all children and adults.
- Access to relevant legal and professional advice.
- Regular and appropriate training for staff and volunteers
- Regular management reports to the Board detailing how safeguarding risks to are being addressed and how any disclosures or concerns have been addressed.
- Safeguarding procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- A Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers setting out responsibilities and acceptable behaviour
- A named person appointed as Designated Safeguarding Officer
- A named person appointed as Deputy Safeguarding Officer (collectively the DSOs)
- Arrangements to work effectively with other relevant organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults, including arrangements for sharing information.
- Risk assessments that specifically include safeguarding considerations.
- Policies and procedures that address the following areas and which are consistent with this Safeguarding policy.

Related policies and procedures include:

- Bullying and harassment
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Site and activity risk assessments
- Discipline and grievance
- Complaints procedure
- Protected Disclosures
- (Whistleblowing) Policy
- Safe recruitment and selection (staff and volunteers)
- Procurement
- Information Security policy,
- Data protection policy
- Privacy policy
- Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Positions of Trust

Trussell recognises that all adults working with children, young people and adults at risk are operating

in a position of trust. Any individual associated with Trussell operating in a position of trust must understand the potential power they may hold over these groups through a work and/or volunteering dynamic. It is essential that all those operating in a position of trust do not, knowingly or unknowingly, use this position inappropriately. Professional boundaries should always be maintained and all behaviour that could be misinterpreted should be avoided.

Reporting Procedure

- I. Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- II. The following are our reporting procedures:
Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form ([Appendix 2](#)) will be completed by the staff member/volunteer or by the Safeguarding Officer using information relayed by the person reporting the concern. Information recorded on the form must:
 - Be accurate
 - Wherever possible include the actual words said by the adult at risk rather than an interpretation of what was said.
 - Specific facts relating to the named people dates, places etc. should be recorded accurately along with any details of the injuries or consequences i.e. where they are and what they looked like.

Detailed guidance for responding to disclosures or allegations of abuse for Trussell employees/volunteers/contractors are available in [Appendix 3](#).
- III. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:
 - a. the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Mark Ward tel. no: 07419 989 025, or
 - b. the Deputy Safeguarding Officer, Connor Grant tel. no: 0748 3944 867
- IV. The Co-CEOs nominate the Designated Safeguarding Officers to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- V. In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Officers the Deputy or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Officers, then the report should be made to:
 - a. the Co-Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Matthew Van Duyvenbode
- VI. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Officers and the Co-Chief Executive, then the report should be made in the first instance to Bev Thomas, Trustee Safeguarding Lead, whose contact details are held by the Head of People Experience. Alternatively

contact local Social Services or the police. Additional advice can be sought from Thirtyone:eight in this scenario by calling 0303 003 1111 (option 2) and explaining the concerns.

VII. Where there is any child protection concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Officer should contact the relevant Adult or Children's Social Services.

VIII. Where there is an allegation made, or a concern involving an employee or volunteer working with a child (i.e. someone under the age of 18) the Designated Safeguarding Officer should contact the appropriate statutory body who function it is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. The terminology for these bodies differs across the UK. Details for each respective UK Home Nation are shown below:

England and Wales - "LADO" or Local Authority Designated Officer

Northern Ireland - Gateway Team

Scotland - Child's Named Person (School)

IX. The Safeguarding Officer may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern.

X. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those named roles as set out in this policy.

XI. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

XII. In the case of severe concerns where delay in contacting the Designated Safeguarding Officer could result in further harm the person at risk, the staff member, volunteer or contractor should contact the relevant statutory authorities immediately and inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible afterwards.

If the individual reporting a concern feels that the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) have not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope that by making this statement the trustees demonstrate their commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable and at risk of harm.

Detailed procedural guidance for reporting concerns of abuse, harm or neglect in different circumstances and/or with different perpetrators(s) can be found in [Appendix 3](#) of this document.

Information sharing and consent

Trussell is committed to complying with UK General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people, is fundamental to good practice in safeguarding.

Wherever possible we will always seek the informed consent of the person(s) concerned before sharing their personal information. Consent should be freely given - It must be obvious that the individual has consented, and what they have consented to.

UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions (referred to as 'mental capacity'), unless it has been proved that they can't. It gives a person the right to make their own decisions, and gives a person the right to make decisions, even where others consider a decision to be unwise. Further information and guidance about mental capacity is available from [Appendix 9](#).

The Law says that to make a decision a person must:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate their decision

Obtaining informed consent to share information is best practice and is often key to ensuring any further support or action is successfully maintained, based on trust and transparency. GDPR emphasises the importance of asking for consent before sharing personal information.

There are exceptions where seeking consent is not required. Exceptions - when seeking consent is not appropriate:

- Where gaining consent would put the person at risk, or the organisation's volunteers or staff at further risk of significant harm.
- If a child can understand and make an informed choice, you should give them the opportunity to decide whether they agree to their confidential information being shared. If a child doesn't have the capacity to make their own decisions and understand the consequences of those decision, you should ask their parent or carer (unless this would put the child at risk).
- **If you have a child protection concern, you must share information with the relevant statutory agencies, even if you haven't been given consent. GDPR does not affect this principle.**

When making the decision whether to share information without consent, consideration will therefore be given to the seriousness and pervasiveness of the abuse; the ability of the individual to make decisions; the effect of the abuse on the individual in question and on others; whether a criminal offence has occurred; and whether there is a need for others to know (e.g., child protection concerns, or to protect others who may not be involved in the immediate situation).

If the decision is made not to share information because consent has been withheld and the exceptions given above do not apply, then the person making the disclosure will be advised of any actions they can take or other support they can access. They will also be made aware of the fact that they can change their mind at any point.

If you have a child protection concern, you must share information with the relevant statutory agencies.

The decision to share safeguarding information with other agencies should be made in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (see “Record keeping” below).

Decisions about sharing information (or not) will be clearly recorded within the template safeguarding reporting form in [Appendix 2](#) with reasons clearly stated.

Trussell will share safeguarding information with the right people at the right time to:

- Prevent death or serious harm
- Coordinate effective and efficient responses
- Enable early interventions to prevent the escalation of risk
- Help families, children and adults at risk access the right kind of support to reduce risk and promote wellbeing
- Maintain and improve good practice in safeguarding
- Reveal patterns of abuse that were previously undetected and that could identify others at risk of abuse
- Identify low-level concerns that may reveal children or adults at risk of abuse
- Help identify people who may pose a risk to others and, where possible, work to reduce offending behaviour
- Reduce organisational risk and protect reputation

Recording keeping and confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all parties concerned both when an allegation is made and whilst it is being investigated.

Confidentiality can only be broken and a concern shared when it is in the best interest of the person at risk, or in the public interest to do so – the circumstances for this are outlined in section “Information sharing and consent” above.

All records will be written, stored and destroyed with due regard for confidentiality and in line with Trussell’s Personal Data Retention Schedule and in adherence with the Data Protection legislation. Staff and volunteers will be trained and supported to maintain and store accurate records. Certain information may also need to be reported under the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.

Where necessary the Safeguarding Officer will report the concern to statutory Social Care services, providing a copy of the Safeguarding Concern Form ([Appendix 2](#)), and where appropriate a chronology of events.

The appropriate local authority Social Care services may then take the lead on any investigation and inform other agencies, where appropriate.

If a criminal offence has been committed the Designated Safeguarding Officer will call the police as deemed necessary.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will provide any further information to statutory Services as required.

Completed safeguarding concern reporting forms are strictly confidential with access on a ‘need-to-know’ basis. Records will also be kept centrally by the Designated Safeguarding Officer, stored with restricted access, away from other personal files. Where completed safeguarding concern reporting forms are stored electronically, they will be kept on a dedicated SharePoint site with access restricted to the Safeguarding Officers and Co-CEO in line with this policy and the Data Protection Policy.

Where incidents that have resulted in (or risk) significant harm to beneficiaries, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will communicate with the Co-CEO to notify the Finance, Audit, Risk and Governance Subcommittee which includes representation from the Board of Trustees who may be required to be report the incident to the charities regulator as a Serious Incident Report, or a Notifiable Incident in Scotland.

The details of the regulator for each respective UK home nation are as follows:

- England/Wales - Charity Commission for England and Wales - or often referred to as Charity Commission
- Northern Ireland - Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
- Scotland - Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

Monitoring and Evaluation

The role of the DSOs (the Designated Safeguarding Officer and their Deputy) is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies, who have a legal duty to investigate. The Designated Safeguarding Officers are also responsible for ensuring the organisation keeps appropriate records of any concerns, disclosures and investigations as part of ensuring the policy and procedure is fit for purpose and kept under continual review. The trustees and Senior Leadership Group will support the DSOs in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

Information about safeguarding cases and how they were dealt with will be reviewed and reported on regularly to the Senior Leadership Group. Areas of focus will include:

- How quickly a disclosure was reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Whether a disclosure was referred to statutory agencies
- Where relevant, following a disclosure, how quickly the referral was made to statutory services.
- The quality of the input into the safeguarding process (feedback from police/ Adults Services)
- Outcomes of the safeguarding process
- Whether incidents highlight any concerning trend or patterns, any training needs or failure in procedures that require review
- Whether the incident should be notified to the charity regulator under Serious Incident Reporting procedures

Reports to the Senior Leadership Group focus on the issues and the organisation's response to an incident, not the specific details of an individual case. Safeguarding incidents and investigations will be captured in a Safeguarding Incident Register maintained by the Designated Safeguarding Officer. This is to enable the organisation to reflect on and improve its practice in developing an effective safeguarding culture.

An independent scrutineer will be appointed by the trustees to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and other safeguarding duties for trustees as outlined by the Charity Commission

The policy and procedure will be reviewed annually or if legislation changes.

Practice Guidance

As an organisation providing services to, and working with, children and young people and adults with care and support needs, Trussell is committed to upholding good safeguarding and working practices.

Doing so enables Trussell to safely and compliantly deliver all food bank and associated activities, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of unfounded accusation, and harm or abuse to stakeholders.

For some activities you will need specific forms to be completed, such as activity risk assessments, individual support plans etc. Examples of these can be found in [Appendices 4-8](#).

Safer Recruitment of staff and volunteers

Safe recruitment means taking steps to ensure only individuals who are suitable for working with children or adults at risk, whilst keeping them safe from harm and risks, are appointed. Safe recruitment procedures will be consistently applied when appointing a staff member, volunteer, or contractor. Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Where a role is deemed to be exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, staff members, volunteers or contractors will be required undergo an enhanced criminal records check (Information on eligibility guidelines for undertaking criminal records check can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check/>).

All staff, contractors and volunteers have a duty to disclose any unspent convictions at the point of a conditional offer and at any point during their role duties with the organisation. Failing to do so may be regarded as gross misconduct, a breach of contract or, of the volunteering agreement. This self-declaration process is a standardised part of the Trussell application process.

Staff, volunteers and contractors without a criminal records check will not be permitted unsupervised access to adults at risk or children.

Criminal records checks will be renewed every three years.

All Trussell roles are appropriately advertised with a written job description/person specification provided.

All references will be taken up before the start of volunteering or employment and should be provided in writing or transcribed where received verbally.

Trussell will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that references are bona-fide and will seek alternatives where in doubt.

Qualifications where relevant have will be verified

A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant

All successful applicants will be required to complete a probationary period

Mandatory safeguarding training must be completed before probation can be signed off (see below for further information regarding training provision).

Successful applicants will be given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy, confirm they understand their personal responsibilities for safeguarding, and know how to report any concerns.

Working with Ex-offenders

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a person from working or volunteering with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of any offences.

Where it becomes known that a person working with organisation is a potential risk to others, we will take all reasonable measures to ensure appropriate supervision of the individual concerned. Any failure on the part of any individual staff member, contractor, trustee, or volunteer to declare unspent convictions may be regarded as gross misconduct, a breach contract or, of the volunteering agreement.

In our duty to protect people from risk of harm and abuse, we will undertake individual risk assessments and set boundaries for that person as part of an Individual Risk Assessment / Support Plan ([Appendix 7](#)). IRMPs will be subject to bi-monthly review by the DSO with the person who is subject to the plan and their manager.

Management of workers

Trussell is committed to supporting all workers (employees, volunteers and contractors) and ensuring they receive appropriate support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a Code of Conduct ([Appendix 5](#)) towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their role and out. Additional training will be provided by Trussell as necessary.

Training

All staff and volunteers will familiarise themselves with all this policy and procedure, as part of their induction.

All staff and volunteers will complete basic safeguarding training and other relevant safeguarding training as relevant to their role as part of their induction.

Basic training will ensure all trustees, volunteers and staff are made aware of:

- The possibilities of abuse and neglect of children and adults at risk
- Internal procedures for reporting a concern
- Safeguarding code of conduct
- Awareness of safeguarding procedures of the relevant local authority and national professionals and organisations where advice and information can be sought (see [Appendix 1](#) for further guidance).

In addition, all staff and volunteers, including trustees will be required to undertake refresher safeguarding training at least biennially (every two years).

Safeguarding training will be developed by the Designated Safeguarding Officer in consultation with the Learning and Development. Additional training required for roles with specific additional roles and responsibilities for safeguarding will be commissioned by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The DSOs are required to complete appropriate, role-specific training at least every 2 years, or where legislation / best practice guidance dictates further additional training is undertaken

