Safeguarding Policy – Friends for Families (Sevenoaks)

Friends for Families (F4F) is a small local charity who has as its core aim to relieve the poverty of families with children who are living within the Sevenoaks district and Dartford, and to provide assistance to the greatest number of needy families within the constraints of F4F’s resources.

In order to provide assistance to such families in F4F’s jurisdiction and to make the most efficient use of the charity’s limited resources, F4F works solely through Kent Children’s Services and its Early Years teams. Therefore, F4F has no direct contact with children or vulnerable adults who may be the beneficiaries of its activities.

Purpose - Protecting Children and/or Vulnerable Adults

Despite F4F not dealing directly with children or vulnerable adults who may be beneficiaries of the charity’s activities, F4F takes its responsibilities to all its stakeholders very seriously.

In particular, the trustees are aware that certain activities including the limited number of fundraising events that F4F undertakes may mean that the charity engages with vulnerable members of the public.

The trustees have therefore adopted this policy the purpose of which is to protect children and vulnerable adults and provide stakeholders and the public with the overarching principles that guide our approach in doing so.

Safeguarding Principles

We believe that:

* Nobody who is involved in our work should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect, or exploitation.
* We all have a responsibility to consider and promote the welfare of all of our beneficiaries and volunteers, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
* We all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which our people not only feel safe, but also able to speak up, if they have any concerns.

Safeguarding Policy Applicability

This safeguarding policy applies to anyone working on our behalf, including our charity trustees and other volunteers.

Types of Abuse

The trustees are aware that abuse can take many forms, such as physical, psychological, or emotional, financial sexual or institutional abuse, including neglect and exploitation. Signs that may indicate the different types of abuse are very wide ranging and can include:

* No explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened
* Injuries are inconsistent with the person’s lifestyle
* Bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps
* Frequent injuries
* Unexplained falls
* Subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person
* Signs of malnutrition
* Fear of outside intervention
* Damage to home or property
* Isolation – not seeing friends and family
* Limited access to money
* Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
* Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
* The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
* The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
* Rent arrears and eviction notices
* A lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service
* Failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person
* Disparity between the person’s living conditions and their financial resources, e.g., insufficient food in the house
* Unnecessary property repairs

Given the activities undertaken by the charity and the manner in which such activities are carried out (via social workers) the trustees would not necessarily be aware of signs of abuse with regards to the charity’s beneficiaries.

However, as the trustees understand the importance of being aware of safeguarding issues and signs of abuse, they have made themselves aware of key signs of abuse to help identify any potential safeguarding concerns that may arise while carrying out F4F activities.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If a crime is in progress, or an individual in immediate danger, call the police, as you would in any other circumstances.

If you are a beneficiary, or member of the public, make your concerns known to one of the trustees, who are clearly identified as such at any of our fundraising or promotion activities.

If you are a trustee, please make your concerns known to your fellow trustees as soon as possible. If you are a volunteer of the charity, please make your concerns known to a trustee that you feel comfortable with.

The trustees are mindful of their reporting obligations to the Charity Commission in respect of [Serious Incident Reporting](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity#what-to-report).  They are also aware of the [guidance on handling safeguarding allegations.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-reporting-safeguarding-concerns-in-a-charity)

Trustee Safeguarding Responsibilities

**Trustees**

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed and approved by the trustees annually.

Trustees are aware of and will comply with the Charity Commission guidance on [safeguarding and protecting people](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees) and also the [10 actions trustee boards need to take](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756636/10_safeguarding_actions_for_charity_trustees_infographic.pdf) to ensure good safeguarding governance.

Trustees appreciate that safeguarding is a key responsibility for the whole of the board of the trustees and undertake awareness and other training as part of their role as a trustee.

The trustees have considered and understand that they are responsible for the oversight of the following:

* Creating a culture of respect within the organisation and leading the organisation in a manner in which everyone feels safe and able to speak up.
* Listening and engaging, beneficiaries, volunteers and others and involving them as appropriate.
* Responding to any concerns sensitively and acting quickly to address these.
* Ensuring that any safeguarding issues are thoroughly investigated and dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively, and any reporting to the Police/statutory authorities is carried out.
* Providing oversight of any lapses in safeguarding.
* Ensuring safeguarding risk assessments are carried out when needed and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks, as part of our risk management processes. For example, when planning any fundraising or profile-raising events, to consider potential safeguarding risks, to ensure these are adequately mitigated.
* Receiving regular reports where necessary, to ensure this and related policies are being applied consistently.
* Ensuring that safeguarding requirements (e.g., DBS) and responsibilities are reflected in job descriptions, appraisal objectives and personal development plans, as appropriate.
* Ensuring that all relevant checks are carried out in recruiting trustees and volunteers.
* Ensuring that all appointments that require DBS clearance and safeguarding training are identified, including the level of DBS and any training required.
* Ensuring that a central register is maintained and subject to regular monitoring to ensure that DBS clearances and training are kept up to date.
* Ensuring that personal data is stored and managed in a safe way that is compliant with data protection regulations, including valid consent to use any imagery or video.
* Making volunteers and others aware of:
	+ Our safeguarding procedures and their specific safeguarding responsibilities on induction, with regular updates/reminders, as necessary.
	+ The signs of potential abuse and how to report these.

**Everyone**

To be aware of our procedures, undertake any necessary training, be aware of the risks and signs of potential abuse and, if you have concerns, to report these immediately (see above).

Safeguarding And Fundraising

We undertake occasional fundraising and profile-raising events where children and other vulnerable people may be present. We undertake risk assessments prior to planning any such events. We do not aim our events at children and would only expect them to be present if they were attending with a parent or other responsible carer. In addition:

* We comply with the [Code of Fundraising Practice](https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code/index),
* Trustees and volunteers are made aware of the Institute of Fundraising guidance on [keeping fundraising safe](https://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/managing-fundraising/safeguarding-and-whistleblowing/keeping-fundraising-safe/) and the NCVO Guidance on [vulnerable people and fundraising.](https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/checklists-training-and-other-support/specialist-guides/safeguarding-for-fundraising-managers/people-in-need-of-safeguarding-while-fundraising)
* Our fundraising material is accessible, clear, and ethical, including not placing any undue pressure on individuals to donate.
* We do not either solicit nor accept donations from anyone whom we know or think may not be competent to make their own decisions.
* We are sensitive to any particular needs that a donor may have.

Charity Commission Guidance - Online Safeguarding

We will identify and manage online risks by ensuring:

* Volunteers and trustees understand how to keep themselves safe online.
* We do not provide any online services to any of our beneficiaries.
* We have a data protection policy in place to protect people’s personal data and follow [GDPR legislation](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/).
* We have permission to display any images on our website or social media accounts, including consent from an individual. We do not include any photographs of beneficiaries on our website.

Approval and Review

The trustees hereby confirm that they have read and considered this policy and have decided to adopt this Safeguarding policy. It will be kept under regular review.