



Safeguarding Policy

Date policy last updated and confirmed by EKFH Board: 19th September 2023
Next policy review due: September 2024

Safeguarding Leads and Important Contacts

- Safeguarding Lead - Martin Clarke - martin.clarke@emptykitchens.co.uk
- Safeguarding Lead - Janet Jones - janet.jones@emptykitchens.co.uk
- Emergency Services - 999
- Social Care Direct - 0131 2002324

Our Policy Statement

At Empty Kitchens Full Hearts (EKFH), we believe everyone should be treated with respect and dignity, and has the right to live without fear of harm or abuse. We will not allow any form of harm to be committed towards, or by, an EKFH representative or service user.

We define safeguarding as the steps we take as an organisation to protect people, including children and protected adults¹, from any form of harm caused through contact with EKFH. Our Safeguarding Policy aims to reduce potential safeguarding risks, and respond appropriately and transparently to safeguarding concerns when they are raised.

Our understanding of harm is based on Section 53 of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. This defines harm as “all harmful conduct” which can include physical, sexual, emotional, financial harm, or a combination of these. You can learn more about types of harm in this resource from the Ann Craft Trust [here](#).

Our Safeguarding Policy applies to anyone working on behalf of or representing EKFH, in both paid or unpaid roles.

Our Commitments

As an organisation, EKFH is committed to:

- Acting on any safeguarding concerns, in line with our agreed procedures
- Appointing Safeguarding Leads and a Board Representative to appropriately respond to safeguarding concerns and have ownership of this policy
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers have read and agreed to this policy document
- Ensuring all service users have access to our Whistleblowing contact details, and are made aware of these at the onboarding stage

¹ “Child” or “young person” - Anyone under the age of 18.

“Protected adults” - As defined in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, protected adults are defined as any individuals “aged 16 or over who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care, support or welfare service”.

- Reducing potential safeguarding risks in the design and delivery of EKFH activities
- Protecting anyone who reports a safeguarding concern through our [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- Investigating complaints about any incident involving EKFH from external sources, such as members of the public, partners and official bodies
- Ensuring appropriate staff, trustees and volunteers receive ongoing training in safeguarding awareness and responses (with annual refresher training)
- Having safeguarding as a standing agenda item at EKFH Board meetings
- Implementing strong safeguarding procedures when recruiting new staff and volunteers, including:
 - Interviewing all prospective new staff members
 - Collecting two references for all prospective new staff members
 - Mandatory in-person or online inductions for new volunteers
 - Requesting self-disclosures for all new volunteers
 - Continued monitoring for requirements for Disclosure and PVG checks (see [here](#) for further information on disclosure checks at EKFH)

Individual Commitments

It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure their behaviour is consistent with our organisation's principles of treating others with dignity and respect.

As a representative of EKFH, you will not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Subject any individual to physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities, including child labour or trafficking
- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity
- Misuse or share any of the personal or sensitive information you have access to through your responsibilities at EKFH, including personal data belonging to service users

As a representative of EKFH, you will:

- Uphold the EKFH principles of respect, dignity and non-discrimination
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding concerns through the appropriate reporting procedure
- Read and sign this policy, as part of your Volunteer Agreement with EKFH

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

If you believe there has been a safeguarding incident, the correct procedure to follow is:

1. In an emergency situation, call 999 immediately.
2. In a non-emergency situation, report your concern to one of our Safeguarding Leads within 24 hours (or as soon as it is safe to do so). Contact details can be found [here](#).
3. Share all of the key facts that you have on the situation in your report.
4. Do not attempt to investigate the incident yourself. Although this may be with the best of intentions, doing so could cause more harm to yourself and to those involved.
5. Only share details of the case on a 'need to know' basis.

In the event that the incident relates to one of the designated Safeguarding Leads, or for whatever reason you feel you cannot report it to them, then your concern should be reported to one of the other Safeguarding Leads or the Chair of the Board.

If you report a safeguarding incident or concern you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint, even if the concern is not upheld after investigation. However, in the event that following a full and fair investigation, EKFH has grounds to believe that the complaint was brought with malicious intent, this could lead to further investigation and potentially [disciplinary action](#).

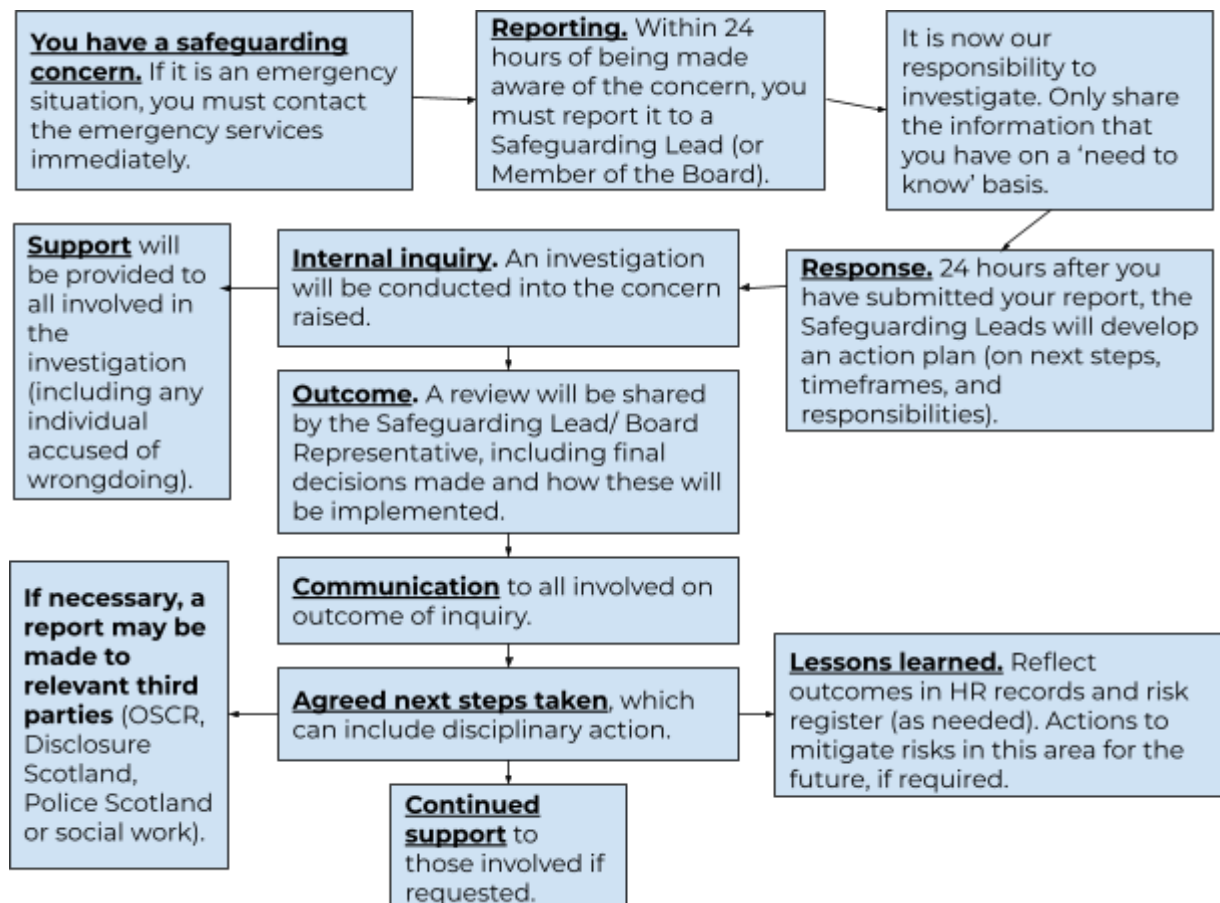
If after reporting an incident you are not satisfied that it has been appropriately addressed, you have the right to escalate this up the management line, to the Board, or to an external body.

See [Annex 2](#) of this Policy for support on what to do if someone discloses a safeguarding incident to you.

The Investigation Process

If we believe a criminal offence might have been committed, EKFH cannot handle this internally and will report the incident to the police for criminal investigation.

Below is a flowchart of our internal investigation procedure, outlining your own and our organisational responsibilities:



In the event that the concern is external (e.g. concerning a service user), it is highly unlikely that we would handle this internally, and would instead defer to Social Care Direct to investigate. After their investigation, we would internally identify lessons learned and how to mitigate similar safeguarding incidents in the future.

If the incident is likely to have - or does have - serious implications for EKFH, we will report this to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as a 'notifiable event'.

Legal and Policy Basis

Our Safeguarding Policy is grounded in international, UK and Scottish law. The below listed legislation and third sector best practice guidance informed our Safeguarding Policy:

- [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Part V of the Police Act 1997](#)
- [The Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#)
- [SCVO - Good Governance and Safeguarding Guidance for Trustees](#)
- [SIDA Safeguarding Policy Guidance](#)
- [OSCR Strategy and Guidance](#)
- [Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter](#)

Based on the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, and consultation with Disclosure Scotland and Volunteer Scotland in September 2023, we have confirmed that at this time, we are not legally entitled to register EKFH with Disclosure Scotland as our service does not meet the criteria defined as "regulated work". As such, we are legally prohibited from applying for PVG checks. Written confirmation can be found [here](#).

We will continue to review the need for PVG or further disclosure checks in line with any changes in legislation or sector best practice.

Associated Policies

This policy statement should be read alongside our other EKFH policies included in the [Volunteer Manual](#). Other relevant policies include:

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Stalking Policy
- Behavioural Concerns
- Disclosure of Malpractice (Whistleblowing)
- Health and Safety Policy

ANNEX 1: Tip-sheet - What to do if someone is disclosing a safeguarding concern to you

It can be difficult to know what to do if a person discloses a safeguarding concern to you. We are committed to supporting all of those involved in reporting a safeguarding concern, even if you are reporting on behalf of someone else. When sharing your report, the Safeguarding Lead will always discuss how we can best support you.

Below is some brief guidance on how to respond to someone disclosing a safeguarding concern. You must then follow the reporting procedure, as laid out in the policy above.

Pay attention

Ask for key facts, without adding your own opinions on what might have happened (Ask who, when, where, what, but not why).

Record the date, time, place, words used by the individual, and any notes on how they appeared to you. Repeat back their answers to ensure you have understood correctly.

Offer support

Disclosing an incident can be a very difficult, frightening thing to do. Often individuals are scared they will not be believed.

You should accept what is being said without judgement, and take it seriously. Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing coming forward.

Do NOT promise confidentiality

Be clear that you need to tell someone so that the concern can be dealt with, even if they ask you to keep it a secret. Explain that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis and support will be available to them.

Take notes

It is easy to forget important details when you are caught off guard or taking in a lot of new information. To help remember accurately later, you should take very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible. Keep your original notes safe and secure, in case they are required in the future.

For more information, below are some useful and accessible resources you can use:

- [How to respond to a disclosure of abuse](#) (5 minute video, Jill Webb training)
- [Understanding safeguarding: signs and indicators](#) (5 minute video, Haringey Council)
- [Types of Harm](#) (Ann Craft Trust)