

Safeguarding Policy

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Introduction

Lagos Food Bank Initiative (LFBI) is a nutrition-focused organization based in Nigeria. LFBI uses an integrated food banking system to support meaningful community nutrition while also building long-term health and sustainability through urban farming, maternal and child health, and improved school outcomes. LFBI serves as a frontline agency on malnutrition and hunger for both immediate and long-term food needs for 160 communities benefiting 2 million people in the city of Lagos and its neighboring states.

The organization was established in 2016 as a privately-funded humanitarian non-profit organization that works closely with government agencies, primary health care centers, and state emergency relief. LFBI partners with 180 national and international brands, 150 NGOs in Lagos and outside Lagos, the Lagos Ministry of Agriculture as well as the state emergency relief agency, and is supported by a network of 22,000 organized volunteers.

We strongly believe Food is essential to human existence and we are determined to create conditions that will allow people to thrive, systems that seek to alleviate hunger, and combat aspects of multi-dimensional poverty by delivering food and disaster relief items. We champion the food banking system in a front-line model through our various creative and innovative sustainable programs.

The programs of LFBI address the needs of vulnerable people across varying age groups and as such, there is the potential for abuse to take place in the context of these projects and programs.

Safeguarding is at the heart of what we do as it is fundamental to our existence as a charity. Our cause is very important and we go the extra mile to promote and ensure good practice by our staff, donors, volunteers, interns, and partners who work directly or indirectly with Vulnerable Persons.

Purpose

At LFBI we believe that everyone has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The policy lays out the commitments made by LFBI and informs staff and related personnel.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure the highest standards of behavior from representatives and minimizing the risk of abusers entering the organization
- To ensure that procedures are put in place to report and address any abuse of Vulnerable Persons that occurs in the context of LFBI's projects and programs

What is Safeguarding and what does it mean for LFBI?

LFBI embraces the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)'s working definition of safeguarding:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially children and vulnerable adults, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur or is at risk of occurring.

Safeguarding within the LFBI aligns with this and is specifically defined as:

- our medium of protecting all people, particularly the most vulnerable in our society (such as children and at-risk adults), from harm that may arise from contact with our staff and related personnel or at our activities and events.
- preventing and responding to harm caused by the abuse of power, position, and opportunity within LFBI. This includes sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, or bullying upon both the people the LFBI aims to support, and also those who engage with the LFBI in any capacity.
- reporting any safeguarding concerns about a child or adult within communities where we work to the appropriate authorities.
- addressing safeguarding risks by developing standards and mitigating measures to target and reduce residual risk.

Scope of Application

This policy applies to all LFBI Employees and Related-Personnel:

- LFBI Employees include staff and interns
- Related Personnel includes (but is not limited to): board members, volunteers, visitors, partners, and international and local consultants, in addition to individual and corporate contractors of these entities and their related personnel. This includes non-LFBI entities and their employees and individuals who have entered into partnership agreements with LFBI, as well as community volunteers and incentive workers.

The policy applies both during, and outside, normal work hours and every day of the year. In addition to complying with the policy, all employees and related personnel must sign and will be held accountable to LFBI's Safeguarding Policy. Actions taken by LFBI Employees and Related Personnel outside of working hours that are seen to contradict this policy will be seen as a violation of this policy.

Policy Statement

In LFBI, we recognize our responsibility to promote human dignity while reaching out to underserved communities and we identify the importance of organizational culture and accountability in creating a safe and supportive organization for our staff, our partners and the communities with whom we work. We believe that no one who comes in contact with LFBI should ever face harm because of our staff, representatives or operations.

At LFBI, we have zero tolerance towards any form of exploitation, abuse, inequality, exclusion, and discrimination towards Vulnerable Persons irrespective of race, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, dress, language, political affiliation, health status, class, caste, ethnicity, marital status, disability, location, pregnancy, and religion. We will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them (see Associated Policies).

LFBI commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the four pillars of awareness, prevention, report, and response.

Awareness

LFBI Responsibilities

LFBI will:

- ensure all staff and related personnel receive training on safeguarding at a level that is appropriate to their role with the organization.
- ensure that staff and related personnel are made aware of the high standards of behavior and conduct expected of them to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded and protected from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Prevention

LFBI Responsibilities

LFBI will:

- ensure through awareness and good practice that staff who work with LFBI minimize the risks of breaches of safeguarding and any form of sexual exploitation and abuse
- apply stringent safeguarding procedures such as relevant vetting and background checks when recruiting, managing, and deploying staff and related personnel

Responsibilities of Staff and Related Personnel

LFBI staff and related personnel will not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit any person
- Subject any person to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labor or trafficking
- Exchange (or offer/imply an offer of) money, employment, goods, or services for any form of sexual activity. This includes any exchange of LFBI's assistance that is due to beneficiaries
- Engage in any form of sexual activity with LFBI's beneficiaries of assistance (of any age), since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and pose a risk of conflicted interest.

Additionally, LFBI staff and related personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of LFBI's Safeguarding Policy
- Proactively report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an LFBI staff member or related personnel via LFBI's safeguarding reporting procedure. It is a disciplinary offence not to disclose knowledge of such an incident
- Ensure they meet all safeguarding responsibilities assigned to them

Enabling reports

LFBI will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by LFBI's Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy.

LFBI will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners, official bodies and stakeholders.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding Focal Point. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Focal Point (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate staff member. For example, this could be a senior manager or a member of the HR Team, who will be trained in the reporting response procedure.

Safeguarding Focal Point, Lagos Food Bank Initiative

Sophia Iyare, HR Manager

In person or in writing at: 40 Olu Aboderin Street, Idi Mangoro, Lagos

Via email to: sophia.iyare@lagosfoodbank.org

Via office phone on: +234 (1) 2918754 or via mobile phone on: (+234) 8025727443

Response

LFBI will:

- ensure that immediate action is taken to identify and address reports of breaches of safeguarding policy or sexual abuse and exploitation
- apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of this policy.
- Offer support and ensure the safety and well-being of the person being abused or exploited regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

Associated policies

Code of Conduct

Anti Bullying and Harassment policy

Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblower) policy

Child Safeguarding policy

Adult Safeguarding policy

PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by staff) policy

Complaints Policy

Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns

Procedures for safeguarding in staff recruitment

Other policies as appropriate

Glossary of terms

Word/Term	Meaning
Child	Any person below 18 years of age
Beneficiary/beneficiary of assistance	Someone who directly receives a benefit (goods or services) from LFBI's programmes. Note that the misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the NGO serves, and can also include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.
Harm	Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights
Psychological harm	Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation
Sexual abuse	The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions
Sexual exploitation	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including (but not limited to) profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.
Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)	The prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by the NGO's staff or associated personnel.

Survivor	The person who has been abused or exploited. The term “survivor” is often used in preference to “victim” as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual’s choice how they wish to identify themselves
The NGO	Lagos Food Bank Initiative (LFBI)
Staff	All staff contracted by LFBI
Related personnel	Any person engaged with work or visits relating to LFBI, including (but not limited to) non-executive directors/trustees; consultants; volunteers; contractors; agency workers; programme visitors including journalists/media, celebrities and politicians
LFBI Representatives	All staff contracted by LFBI related personnel while engaged with work or visits relating to LFBI, including (but not limited to) nonexecutive directors/trustees; consultants; volunteers; contractors; agency workers; programme visitors including journalists/media, celebrities and politicians.