



Lincoln Community Larder Policies & Procedures

Registered Charity Number 1175176

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Policy Review

These policies will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to legislation, best practice guidance, or organisational structure.

Approved by the Lincoln Community Larder Trustees

Date: 6 October 2025

Next Review: AGM 2026



Conflicts of Interest Policy

1. Introduction

This policy ensures transparency and integrity in the decision-making of Lincoln Community Larder by identifying, recording, and managing actual or potential conflicts of interest involving Trustees, associates, and volunteers.

2. Declaration of Interests

All Trustees, associates, and volunteers must declare any personal, financial, or other interests that might conflict with their role at LCL. This includes:

- Direct or indirect financial interests (e.g. payments, gifts, contracts)
- Relationships with suppliers, contractors, or beneficiaries
- Positions held in other organisations that may influence decisions at LCL

Declarations must be made at the earliest opportunity and updated annually or whenever circumstances change.

3. Identifying and Reporting a Conflict of Interest

If you have, or think you may have, a conflict of interest:

- Inform the LCL Secretary as soon as possible
- Declare the conflict before participating in any related decision-making

If in doubt, always err on the side of caution and seek confidential guidance from the LCL Secretary or the Chair. Declaring a conflict does not imply wrongdoing - failing to declare one may.

4. Handling a Declared Conflict of Interest

Once a conflict is declared:

- The LCL Secretary will assess its significance and recommend appropriate action
- The conflict will be recorded in the Register of Conflicts of Interest
- If necessary, the individual may be asked to provide additional information

If the conflict is deemed significant:

- The individual must withdraw from the discussion or decision-making process
- They will not count towards quorum or be allowed to vote on the matter

All discussions and decisions will be documented in meeting minutes, including:

- Who was involved
 - The nature and extent of the conflict
 - Actions taken to manage it
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5. Decision-Making Where a Conflict Exists

When the Board must decide on a matter where a conflict exists:

- The conflicted individual must not participate in that decision
- Decisions will be made by a majority vote of non-conflicted Trustees
- The meeting must be quorate without counting the conflicted individual

Where a Trustee may legitimately benefit from a decision:

- This must be clearly recorded
 - It must be disclosed in LCL's Annual Report and Accounts, per Charity SORP requirements
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6. Managing Contracts Involving Conflicts

If a Trustee has a conflict of interest related to a contract:

- They must not be involved in managing or monitoring the contract
 - Oversight must include provisions for:
 - Independent review of invoices and performance
 - Termination clauses for unsatisfactory relationships
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7. Register of Conflicts of Interest

LCL will maintain a confidential Register of Conflicts of Interest including:

- Date of initial and any subsequent declarations or changes
 - Name and role of the individual
 - Details of connected persons (if applicable)
 - Nature and type of the conflict (e.g. financial, familial, business)
 - Potential impact on LCL
 - Steps taken to manage or mitigate the conflict
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8. Data Protection

All conflict of interest declarations are managed in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Information is used solely to uphold the integrity of LCL's operations and will not be used for any other purpose.



Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

1. Introduction

The Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. While interaction between LCL volunteers and service users is generally limited and occurs primarily through serving hatches, the principles of safeguarding still apply. All individuals involved with LCL must treat others with dignity and respect and remain alert to signs of abuse or neglect.

2. Safeguarding Commitment

LCL recognises its responsibility to protect children and vulnerable adults both in the wider community and among those who visit the Larder. The LCL Trustees are responsible for ensuring that all volunteers understand and adhere to this policy.

Children and vulnerable adults have the right to proper care, protection, and to live free from abuse. Safeguarding procedures must be followed at all times.

3. Categories of Abuse

Abuse may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Discriminatory Abuse: Unfair treatment based on race, gender, age, sexuality, disability, culture, or religion.
 - Physical Abuse: The use of force resulting in injury or physical harm.
 - Sexual Abuse: Any form of sexual activity without consent.
 - Psychological Abuse: Verbal or non-verbal actions that cause emotional distress, such as bullying or intimidation.
 - Financial Abuse: Misuse or theft of a person's money or assets.
 - Neglect: Failure to provide essential care such as food, hygiene, or medical attention.
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4. Alerting Procedure

If a volunteer becomes aware of, or is informed about, possible abuse or neglect, they assume the role of the Alerter and must:

- Take all concerns seriously.
- Refrain from asking leading questions or making assumptions.
- Offer appropriate comfort and support.
- Ensure the immediate safety of the individual.
- Report the concern immediately to the LCL Secretary, who is the designated Referrer.

Confidentiality is critical. The concern must not be discussed with anyone else within the organisation.

5. Making a Referral

The LCL Secretary, acting as the Referrer, is responsible for handling safeguarding concerns reported by volunteers. A referral must be made within 24 hours of receiving the information.

The Referrer should:

- Consider the immediate health and safety of the individual.
- Determine if emergency services are needed.
- Assess whether a regulatory body (e.g., local authority safeguarding team) should be informed.
- Gather relevant information and clarify key facts.
- Support both the Alerter and the individual involved.
- Keep accurate, detailed records, clearly distinguishing between fact, opinion, and hearsay.
- Make an informed decision as to whether a referral is required.

If a referral is deemed necessary, the Secretary must contact the appropriate authority without delay.

Decision Not to Refer:

If the Secretary decides not to make a referral, this decision must be clearly documented, along with a rationale. Even if no referral is made, the situation should not be ignored. The Secretary must consider:

- Whether the incident should be addressed via LCL's complaints process.
 - Whether training needs have been identified.
 - Whether any internal disciplinary action is warranted.
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6. Role of Trustees

Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring volunteers are briefed and trained on safeguarding procedures.
 - Regularly reviewing and updating the policy.
 - Supporting the Secretary in managing safeguarding concerns appropriately.
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Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks Policy

1. Introduction

Following consultation with the relevant safeguarding authorities and in line with current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) eligibility guidance, the Trustees of Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) have determined that volunteers are not currently required to undergo DBS checks for the roles they perform. This decision is based on the nature and structure of volunteer duties and interactions with clients.

2. Rationale for Not Requiring DBS Checks

Volunteers at LCL are not considered to be in regulated activity or unsupervised positions involving vulnerable adults or children. The specific safeguards in place include:

- a. All interactions with clients occur through a serving hatch or similar controlled setting.
- b. Volunteers do not assess clients or their personal situations. All assessments are conducted by the referring agencies.
- c. Volunteers are instructed not to ask personal or intrusive questions.
- d. Permissible questions are limited to:
 - Offering choices (e.g., "tea or coffee?", "pasta or rice?")
 - Determining food needs (e.g., "Do you have any allergies?", "Are there children in the household?", "Do you have access to cooking or freezing facilities?")
- e. Any other questions or concerns are to be referred directly back to the referring organisation.

Volunteers are made aware of these boundaries during their induction and are supervised to ensure compliance.

3. Safeguarding Commitment

While DBS checks are not required under current arrangements, LCL remains fully committed to safeguarding all clients, especially those who may be vulnerable. Any concerns about a client's wellbeing will be promptly raised with the appropriate agencies.

All volunteers are expected to act respectfully, maintain confidentiality, and report any safeguarding concerns to a designated Trustee or coordinator.

4. Changes to Volunteer Roles

If any volunteer role changes to involve:

- Regular, unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults or children;
- Outreach or home deliveries involving entry into clients' homes;
- Or any other duties that fall under regulated activity as defined by the DBS;

LCL will conduct a role-specific risk assessment and require appropriate DBS checks in accordance with government guidance.



Data Protection Policy

1. Introduction

Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) is committed to protecting the privacy and personal data of its stakeholders, including Trustees, volunteers, and clients. Personal data is collected and used for the legitimate purposes of charity registration, service delivery, and administration. This includes the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and National Insurance (NI) numbers of clients, as provided via referral forms or vouchers.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines how personal data is collected, stored, used, and protected in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. It applies to all LCL staff, Trustees, volunteers, and anyone else who processes personal data on behalf of LCL.

3. Data Protection Principles

LCL will ensure personal data is:

- Processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently
 - Collected for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes
 - Adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary
 - Accurate and kept up to date
 - Stored no longer than necessary
 - Processed securely to prevent unauthorised access, loss, or damage
 - Handled with accountability, with appropriate records maintained
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4. Data Collection and Use

- LCL will only collect personal data necessary for its operational needs.
 - Personal data will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected.
 - Data may be shared with authorised third parties only when required by law or with the individual's consent.
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5. Data Storage and Access

Paper-Based Data

- Must be stored in locked cabinets or secure storage areas.
- Documents must not be left unattended or visible in public or shared spaces.
- Only authorised personnel should have access to paper records.

Electronic Data

- Stored securely on the LCL computer network.
- Access is restricted via password-protected accounts and folders.
- The LCL Coordinator manages access rights to sensitive data.

6. Use of Removable Drives and Portable Media

To minimise risk of data breach or loss:

- Data on removable media (e.g. USB drives) must be virus-scanned before use.
- Files must be password-protected and, where feasible, encrypted.
- Removable media must not be used as the primary or sole storage location.
- All important data must be saved on the secure LCL network.

7. Data Retention

- Personal data will be retained only as long as necessary to fulfil its original purpose or as required by law.
- Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure timely deletion or anonymisation of outdated information.

8. Data Backup and Disaster Recovery

- Weekly data backups are maintained.
- A secure, off-site backup is held by the LCL Coordinator.
- All backup media must be stored in a locked and secure environment.

9. Data Sharing and Third Parties

- No personal data shall be transferred outside of LCL unless legally required or under a data-sharing agreement with trusted partners (e.g. referring agencies).
- Any such sharing must comply with data protection laws and ensure adequate data security.

10. Responsibilities

- All Trustees, volunteers, and staff members must adhere to this policy.
 - The LCL Coordinator is responsible for overseeing data protection compliance and access control.
 - Breaches or suspected breaches of data security must be reported immediately to the LCL Coordinator.
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Social Media Policy and Procedures

1. Introduction

This policy provides guidelines for Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) trustees and volunteers regarding the appropriate use of social media. The goal is to protect our reputation, support our mission, and ensure responsible communication that respects our clients, partners, and community.

2. Definitions

- Social Media: Includes but is not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, blogs, forums, and other online communities or platforms.
 - Official Accounts: Social media profiles that represent LCL, operated by authorised personnel.
 - Personal Use: Social media activity on personal accounts that may mention or reflect upon LCL.
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3. Policy Guidelines

3.1 Authorised Use

- Only designated trustees or volunteers approved by the LCL Chair may post on official LCL social media accounts.
- Login credentials for official accounts must be stored securely and shared only with authorised users.

3.2 Tone and Content

- All posts should align with LCL's values: dignity, respect, compassion, and integrity.
- Avoid political, religious, or divisive commentary unless it directly affects food insecurity or nonprofit operations.
- Highlight positive stories, community partnerships, volunteer work, events, and donation drives.

3.3 Client Privacy and Dignity

- Do not share photos, names, or personal stories of clients without explicit written consent.

- Never portray clients in a way that could be interpreted as exploitative or demeaning.

3.4 Crisis Communication

- In case of emergencies, public relations issues, or media inquiries, only the LCL Chair or assigned spokesperson may communicate externally.
- Any potentially negative or sensitive content must be approved before posting.

3.5 Personal Accounts

- When identifying as a trustee or volunteer, users must include a disclaimer: “Views expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Lincoln Community Larder”
 - Do not share confidential or sensitive organizational information.
 - Refrain from posting anything that could damage the organization’s reputation or relationships.
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4. Procedures

4.1 Content Planning

- Consider creating a monthly content calendar for use by the Communications Officer or designated staff.
- Consider scheduling regular posts (e.g., donation appeals, impact stories, community partner highlights).

4.2 Review and Approval

- All content must be reviewed by the Communications Officer or designated approver before publishing.
- Graphic design and branding should follow LCL’s visual identity guidelines.

4.3 Monitoring and Engagement

- Regularly check platforms to respond to messages and comments in a timely and respectful manner.
 - Report any negative or inappropriate comments to the Communications Officer for follow-up.
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5. Enforcement

- Violations of this policy may result in revocation of social media privileges and termination of volunteer duties.
 - Serious breaches (e.g., confidentiality violations or harmful conduct) may be subject to legal consequences.
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Internal Risk Management Policy & Procedures

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) identifies, assesses, and manages risks that could affect our ability to operate safely and effectively.

Our goal is to protect:

- The safety of volunteers, service users, and visitors
 - Our food, equipment, and premises
 - Our charity's reputation, finances, and legal compliance
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2. Principles

- Proactive – We identify and address risks before they cause harm.
 - Proportionate – We focus on practical controls suitable for our size and resources.
 - Shared Responsibility – All trustees and volunteers play a part in risk management.
 - Continuous Review – Risks and controls are regularly checked and updated.
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3. Roles & Responsibilities

Trustees

- Overall responsibility for risk management.
- Approve the risk management policy and review risk register annually.
- Ensure major risks are reported to the Charity Commission if required.

Lead Trustee for Risk (appointed annually)

- Maintains the Risk Register.
- Coordinates risk assessments for each site.
- Reports to the board on risk issues and incidents.

Volunteers

- Follow safety instructions and training.
 - Report hazards, near misses, or incidents immediately to a trustee.
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4. Risk Categories

We consider risks in the following areas:

1. Health & Safety – e.g., slips, trips, lifting injuries, fire safety.
 2. Food Safety – e.g., expiry dates, storage temperatures, contamination.
 3. Safeguarding – e.g., concerns about vulnerable adults or children.
 4. Security – e.g., theft, vandalism, break-ins.
 5. Operational – e.g., loss of premises, supply chain disruptions.
 6. Financial – e.g., fraud, loss of funding.
 7. Reputational – e.g., negative media coverage, public complaints.
 8. Legal/Compliance – e.g., data protection breaches, licensing issues.
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5. Procedures

5.1 Risk Identification

- Trustees review risks at least annually and whenever there is a major change in operations.
- Volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns immediately.

5.2 Risk Assessment

For each risk:

- Identify potential harm
- Rate the likelihood (Low / Medium / High / Critical)
- Rate the potential impact (Low / Medium / High / Critical)
- Decide on control measures

5.3 Risk Control Measures

Examples include:

- Health & Safety: clear walkways, safe lifting training, fire extinguishers.
- Food Safety: regular temperature checks, food rotation system.
- Security: lockable storage, CCTV where possible, key control.
- Safeguarding: volunteer training, clear reporting process.

5.4 Recording

- All risks and controls are logged in the Risk Register.
- Incidents and near misses are recorded and reviewed to improve controls.

5.5 Monitoring & Review

- Risk register reviewed at least annually by trustees.
 - Site-specific risk checks done at least quarterly for each location.
 - Lessons learned from incidents are added to the register.
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6. Incident Response

If a risk incident occurs:

1. Ensure safety of people first.
 2. Contain and control the situation (e.g., isolate hazard, secure site).
 3. Notify the LCL Chair.
 4. Record incident in the Incident Log.
 5. Trustees review and decide on any changes to controls.
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7. Training & Awareness

- All volunteers receive a briefing on relevant risks during induction.
 - Additional training is given for specific roles (e.g., food safety, fire warden duties).
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Internal Financial Controls & Reimbursement Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the internal financial controls for Lincoln Community Larder (LCL), including procedures for reimbursing trustees and volunteers. It ensures that LCL's assets are safeguarded, funds are used only for charitable purposes, and accurate financial records are maintained in compliance with charity law and best practice.

2. Principles

- Transparency – All financial activity must be open to scrutiny.
 - Separation of Duties – No single person should be responsible for both authorising and recording transactions.
 - Authorisation – All spending must be approved in advance by designated trustees or budget-holders.
 - Documentation – Every transaction must be supported by original receipts or invoices.
 - Charity-only Use – Funds must be used solely for the purposes of LCL.
 - Accurate Reporting – Reimbursement and spending should reflect the true cost of LCL's activities.
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3. Roles & Responsibilities

Trustees

- Approve budgets, spending limits, and financial procedures.
- Review financial reports regularly.
- Ensure annual accounts are prepared and submitted on time.

Treasurer

- Maintains bank accounts and accounting records.
- Records income and expenditure promptly.
- Prepares and presents financial reports at trustee meetings.
- Authorises reimbursements and maintains audit trails.
- Ensures records are retained for at least 7 years.

Volunteers & Other Claimants

- Follow all procedures when receiving, recording, spending, or requesting funds.
 - Submit appropriate claim forms and supporting receipts.
 - Report any suspected misuse of funds.
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4. Reimbursement of Expenses & Purchases

4.1 Entitlement to Reimbursement

Trustees and volunteers are entitled to reimbursement for travel and other expenses that are:

- Actually incurred – The cost must have been genuinely paid.
- Necessary – The expense must be essential to completing a charity-related task.
- Reasonable – Costs must represent value-for-money and be appropriate in quality and price.
- Incidental – Expenses must be directly related to the charitable task, not personal convenience.

Note: Volunteers are expected to travel to their designated place of duty at their own cost unless asked to travel specifically to purchase/collect goods or transport them between hubs.

4.2 Authorisation

- Expenses must relate to agreed and budgeted activities.
- Volunteers' claims require Treasurer authorisation.
- Trustees' expenses must be authorised by the Treasurer or Chair.
- Claims must be submitted within 30 days using LCL's standard expense form with supporting receipts.
- Where receipts are unavailable, written explanation must be submitted for Treasurer approval.

4.3 Gifts in Kind / Waived Claims

- Volunteers/trustees may waive reimbursement; however, LCL encourages claiming followed by a back-donation to LCL to ensure:
 - Accurate reporting of charity expenditure.
 - Proper recognition of donor generosity.
 - Eligibility for Gift Aid.
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5. Types of Allowable Expenses

5.1 Travel

- Public Transport – To be used where practical.
- Private Vehicle Mileage – Reimbursed below HMRC rates. Vehicle must be legally roadworthy with valid insurance, MOT, and tax.
- Parking Costs – Reimbursed with receipt.
- Taxis – Permitted if public transport is unavailable or significantly impractical. Pre-booked minicabs preferred.
- Volunteer-Specific Travel – Travel to purchase/collect or transport goods between hubs is reimbursable.

5.2 Other Expenses

- Other costs directly related to LCL activity may be reimbursed with prior authorisation from the Treasurer.
 - Claims must be submitted using the official form, with receipts and trustee pre-check before Treasurer approval.
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6. Financial Procedures

6.1 Online Banking and Account Management

- All bank accounts shall be held in the name of Lincoln Community Larder.
- Online banking access will be restricted to authorised personnel, with at least two unrelated trustees designated as account administrators.
- For payments exceeding the threshold set by the trustees, dual authorisation is required via the bank's secure online approval system.
- Access credentials must be stored securely and updated regularly.
- All transactions will be reviewed monthly by the Treasurer and reported to the Board to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Any changes to authorised users or thresholds must be approved by the full Board of Trustees and recorded in meeting minutes.

6.2 Income Handling

- Cash donations must be counted by two unrelated individuals, both signing a record.
- Bank all cash promptly—never used for direct purchases.
- Electronic donations recorded by the Treasurer with source identified.

6.3 Expenditure & Purchasing

- Pre-approval is required for all spending.
- Purchases over £100 must be approved by the Board (meeting minutes or email).
- Receipts/invoices are mandatory for all purchases and reimbursements.
- Payments must be by bank transfer or cheque—never cash.

6.4 Delegated Authorities

General Expenditure

- Up to £150 – Authorised by budget-holder.
- £150–£250 – Requires Treasurer approval.
- £250–£1,000 – Requires joint approval from Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.
- Over £1,000 – Requires full Board resolution.

Food Purchases

- Coordinator may spend up to £2,500/week.
- Expected overspend must be pre-approved by Chair and Trustees.

Payment Instructions

- The payee must not authorise or approve their own payment.
- All online payments, including BACS and direct debits, require dual authorisation via the bank's secure online system for amounts above the threshold set by the trustees.
- Payments exceeding £1,000 must be approved by the Board of Trustees unless prior authorisation has been formally recorded.

- Authorisation records should be retained electronically and reviewed periodically to ensure compliance and transparency.
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7. Petty Cash

Petty cash is discouraged and should be limited to **£50** if required.

Procedures:

- Counted by two people on receipt.
- Stored securely in a locked box.
- Logged in the Petty Cash Book with:
 - Date
 - Amount
 - Source/purpose
- All expenditures must be supported by a signed voucher and receipt.
- Outreach centres must submit monthly petty cash reports to the Treasurer.

Treasurer may conduct random audits to ensure accuracy and compliance.

8. Financial Reporting

- Treasurer presents reports at each trustee meeting:
 - Income and expenditure since last report.
 - Current bank balance.
 - Any outstanding liabilities.
 - Trustees review and approve reports.
 - Annual accounts prepared and approved in line with Charity Commission rules.
 - Independent examination arranged as required by law.
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9. Fraud Prevention & Conflicts of Interest

- Suspected fraud must be reported to the LCL Chair.
 - Trustees will investigate and may escalate to Charity Commission or police.
 - All conflicts of interest must be declared.
 - Individuals with conflicts must not participate in related decisions or approvals.
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10. Authorised Signatories & Card Holders

A list of all cheque signatories, card holders, and online banking users shall be maintained and reviewed annually by the Treasurer.

11. Record-Keeping

- All financial records retained for at least 7 years.
 - Monthly bank reconciliations are prepared and presented to the Finance Sub-Committee for review.
 - All expenditure and income to be clearly documented and auditable.
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Financial Reserves Policy

1. Introduction

Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) acknowledges the critical role of financial reserves in safeguarding the charity's long-term sustainability and ensuring uninterrupted service delivery. While prioritising the responsible use of funds for their intended charitable purposes, LCL also seeks, where feasible, to maintain an investment reserve to support future initiatives and strategic growth.

2. Designated Funds

Designated funds are monies set aside for specific purposes within the charity, typically intended for future use. Under charity law, it is vital that money raised or donated for charitable purposes is spent in accordance with those purposes. It is recognised that when significant funds are donated to the charity that it is appropriate to invest those funds to ensure the continued viability of the charity. However, it is acknowledged that it would be imprudent for LCL to operate on a purely "hand-to-mouth" basis, without a safety net in place.

3. Adequate Reserves

LCL recognises the necessity of holding reserves to cover any unforeseen shortfall in income, ensuring that the charity can continue its work even during periods of financial uncertainty. The charity is committed to maintaining sufficient reserves to cover its core operational costs and protect against potential cash flow problems.

To that end, LCL aims to maintain reserves that are adequate to cover six months of normal expenditure. In addition to this reserve it is prudent where possible to maintain investment reserves, to ensure long-term viability. This will allow the charity to meet its obligations and ensure that it can continue to provide its services without disruption.

4. Investment Reserves

The Trustees of LCL acknowledge that the receipt of a significant donation represents a valuable opportunity to strengthen the charity's long-term viability. To ensure that such funds are responsibly managed and aligned with the charity's ongoing objectives, appropriate arrangements will be put in place.

In such circumstances, an Investment Reserve will be established and maintained in accordance with LCL's Investing Charity Funds Policy and Procedures. This reserve will serve to safeguard the strategic use of donated funds, ensuring transparency, sustainability, and continued support for the charity's mission.

5. Financial Responsibility and Solvency

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring the charity's solvency is maintained at all times. This includes overseeing the appropriate management of reserves and ensuring that LCL is in a position to meet both expected and unexpected financial commitments.

The Trustees will regularly review the reserves policy as part of the annual financial review process, ensuring that the reserves are sufficient and in line with the financial needs of the charity.

6. Spending of Reserves

In exceptional circumstances, if reserves are drawn upon to meet urgent needs or shortfalls, the Trustees will ensure that this is done in a way that aligns with the charity's financial sustainability goals. If reserves fall below the six-month level, the Trustees will implement a strategy to replenish the reserve over a defined period to ensure the charity's long-term viability.



Investing Charity Funds Policy and Procedures

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for investing funds held by the Lincoln Community Larder (LCL), ensuring that investments are made in a manner that is responsible, ethical, and aligned with the charity's mission of supporting the local community through food security initiatives. The overriding principle of the trustees in investment is that the capital should not be put at risk and a prudent risk free approach is required.

This policy applies to all funds held by LCL, including donations, grants, and other income. It is designed to guide how these funds can be invested to achieve the charity's goals without compromising its financial integrity or public trust.

2. Investment Objectives

The primary objective of investing charity funds is to grow the funds in a safe, secure, and ethical manner to support the ongoing activities of LCL. Investments should:

- Preserve capital while achieving reasonable returns.
 - Align with LCL's mission and values, avoiding investments that conflict with its charitable goals.
 - Ensure that the funds remain accessible to meet operational and emergency needs.
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3. Permissible Investments

The charity may invest in the following instruments, provided they meet the guidelines outlined in this policy:

- Low-Risk Bonds: Government and high-quality corporate bonds with a low risk of default.
 - Fixed Deposits & Savings Accounts: Secure accounts offering competitive interest rates and guaranteed returns.
 - Cash or Cash Equivalents: For short-term liquidity needs, funds may be placed in money market accounts or other highly liquid, low-risk investments.
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4. Prohibited Investments

LCL is committed to ensuring that its financial investments reflect the charity's ethical standards and mission. While recognising that complete control over all investment exposures may not always be feasible due to the nature of pooled funds or unforeseen

circumstances, the Trustees will use their best efforts to avoid investments in the following sectors:

- High-Risk Stocks or Derivatives: Speculative, high-risk investments, including stocks, options, and derivatives.
- Alcohol, Tobacco, or Gambling: Any investment in companies involved in alcohol production, tobacco, or gambling.
- Weapons Manufacturing: Investments in companies that manufacture or trade in arms, weapons, or military-related products.
- Fossil Fuels: Investments in fossil fuel-based industries, unless those companies have credible commitments to sustainable and clean energy transitions.

Where indirect exposure arises through pooled or third-party investment vehicles, the Trustees will seek to engage with fund managers to encourage alignment with LCL's ethical priorities

5. Investment Strategy

The investment strategy for the charity's funds should consider the following factors:

- Liquidity: The ability to quickly access funds when needed for operations or unforeseen expenses.
 - Time Horizon: Short-term investments should be made in instruments with a maturity date within 12 months, while longer-term investments can be made in bonds or ethical funds with a longer duration.
 - Diversification: A well-diversified portfolio will be maintained to reduce risk exposure. The charity shall avoid putting funds into a single asset class or company.
 - Risk Management: The charity will adopt a conservative risk approach and limit exposure to riskier investment opportunities.
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6. Approval and Oversight

- The Board of Trustees will oversee the charity's investment activities. It will be responsible for ensuring that investments comply with this policy, reviewing performance, and making recommendations for any changes in investment strategy.
 - Investment Advisor: If necessary, the charity may appoint an external investment advisor to guide decisions and ensure that investments are aligned with the charity's goals and this policy.
 - Review of Investments: The performance of investments will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure that they are performing as expected and aligned with the charity's mission.
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7. Risk and Reporting

- Risk Assessment: An annual risk assessment will be conducted to identify and mitigate any potential risks associated with the investments, such as interest rate fluctuations, credit risks, and liquidity concerns.
- Reporting: The Investment Committee will provide regular (quarterly) updates on the performance of investments to the Board of Trustees. An annual investment report will also be presented at the annual general meeting, highlighting returns, risks, and compliance with this policy.
- Transparency: The charity will ensure transparency in its investment practices and disclose relevant details in its annual financial reports.

8. Ethical Considerations

LCL aims to ensure that its investments reflect the charity's core values, with a strong emphasis on social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and ethical conduct. The Trustees will use their best endeavours to ensure that investment practices remain in harmony with the following principles:

- Promoting positive social and environmental impact
- Avoiding sectors or activities that conflict with the charity's mission
- Supporting transparency, accountability, and long-term stewardship

While recognising that indirect exposure may occasionally arise through pooled or third-party investment vehicles, the Trustees will take reasonable steps to identify, monitor, and mitigate such risks wherever practicable.

9. Fund Withdrawals and Expenditure

Any withdrawal of funds for operating expenses or charitable activities must follow these procedures:

- Cash Flow Management: Prior to withdrawing from investments, LCL must ensure that sufficient liquidity is available to meet operational expenses.
- Approval Process: Withdrawals for specific purposes, including for operational costs, must be approved by the Board of Trustees or a designated sub-committee (the Finance Working Group).
- Emergency Withdrawals: In the event of an emergency, the Board may authorise an immediate withdrawal of funds from investments to meet urgent needs, such as food supply shortages or other crises.

10. Compliance and Legal Considerations

- LCL will comply with all local laws and regulations regarding the management of charitable funds, including tax regulations and financial reporting requirements.
 - LCL will regularly review the legal landscape for any changes that might affect investment strategy or tax treatment.
-



Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Introduction

The Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive environment that is free from discrimination. As a volunteer-run charity, we strive to ensure that all volunteers and service users are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

2. Volunteers

LCL welcomes volunteers from all walks of life, including individuals from diverse backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. We are dedicated to fostering a supportive, inclusive environment where discrimination based on marital status, gender, sexuality, disability, age, race, colour, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or any other characteristic will not be tolerated.

However, individuals who are recipients of LCL services (i.e., those listed on the referral system) are not eligible to serve as active volunteers or trustees while they are clients of the service.

3. Service Provision

LCL provides its services to all residents of the Lincoln area who meet the agreed criteria of need. Our services are open to everyone, and we will ensure that no barriers, whether they relate to referral processes, operating hours, or the accessibility of our premises, prevent any person from accessing the support they need. We actively encourage a diverse range of people to access our services.

4. Volunteer and Trustee Equality

LCL is committed to providing equal opportunities to all its volunteers and trustees. We will ensure that all new volunteers and trustees receive equal opportunities training as part of their induction. This training will raise awareness of equality, inclusion, and anti-discrimination principles, ensuring a positive and respectful experience for all involved.

5. Complaint Resolution

If any individual feels that they have experienced discrimination or have concerns regarding LCL's equal opportunities practices, they are encouraged to contact the Chairman directly. The details for submitting a complaint are as follows:

Contact Details:

YMCA Annexe, Rosemary Lane, Lincoln LN2 5AR

Email: lincolncommunitylarder@hotmail.co.uk

LCL is committed to addressing any concerns fairly and promptly, and we will take appropriate action to resolve any issues in line with our values of fairness and equality.



Volunteer Management Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out how Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) recruits, supports, and manages volunteers. Our volunteers are essential to our work providing food and support to those in need. The policy ensures a safe, fair, and respectful environment for all.

2. Principles

- Respect & Inclusion – All volunteers are treated fairly, equally, and with dignity.
 - Safety First – The wellbeing of volunteers and those we support is paramount.
 - Clarity – Roles, expectations, and responsibilities are clearly explained.
 - Support & Communication – Volunteers are given the information and guidance they need to carry out their role.
 - No Payment – Volunteers give their time freely and are not paid, but reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
-

3. Recruitment & Selection

- Volunteers are welcome from all backgrounds, subject to role requirements and safeguarding checks.
 - Interested volunteers will have an informal discussion with a trustee to understand the role and the volunteer's interests and availability.
 - Some roles (e.g., working directly with vulnerable adults or children) may require reference checks or a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
 - Volunteers must be aged 16 or over, unless accompanied by an adult and specifically approved by trustees.
-

4. Induction & Training

- New volunteers will receive:
 - An introduction to LCL's mission and values.
 - A briefing on health & safety, safeguarding, and confidentiality.
 - Clear instructions for their role.
 - Role-specific training will be provided as needed (e.g., safe food handling, data protection awareness).
-

5. Roles & Responsibilities

Volunteers

- Carry out their role to the best of their ability.
- Follow all policies, including safeguarding, confidentiality, and health & safety.
- Treat others with kindness, respect, and without discrimination.
- Report any concerns to a trustee promptly.

Trustees

- Provide guidance, supervision, and support to volunteers.
 - Ensure volunteers have the resources, information, and training needed.
 - Maintain up-to-date volunteer records (contact details, role assignments, training).
 - Deal promptly and fairly with any complaints or concerns.
-

6. Supervision & Support

- Each volunteer will have a named trustee contact for questions or concerns.
 - Volunteers are encouraged to share feedback or ideas for improvement.
 - Trustees will check in with volunteers informally during shifts and periodically review roles.
-

7. Health & Safety

- Volunteers must follow all safety instructions and report hazards or incidents immediately.
 - Appropriate protective equipment (e.g., gloves, high-visibility vests) will be provided when needed.
 - Food safety and hygiene standards must be maintained at all times.
-

8. Safeguarding & Confidentiality

- Volunteers must not share personal details of service users outside of the foodbank.
 - Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the designated Safeguarding Trustee.
 - All volunteers must respect the dignity and privacy of those we support.
-

9. Expenses

- Volunteers may claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (e.g., travel, parking) in accordance with LCL's Reimbursement Policy.
-

10. Problem-Solving & Conduct

- Minor issues will be discussed informally between the volunteer and a trustee.
 - Serious or repeated breaches of policy may result in a volunteer being asked to step down.
 - Volunteers have the right to be heard and to respond to concerns raised.
-

11. Ending a Volunteer Role

- Volunteers may stop volunteering at any time but are asked to give as much notice as possible.
 - Trustees may end a volunteer arrangement where necessary, for example due to safety, safeguarding, or conduct concerns.
-



Quick Guide for All Volunteers

Our Mission

We provide food and support to people in crisis with dignity, respect, and kindness.

Your Role

- Help with sorting, packing, and distributing food.
- Welcome visitors warmly and respectfully.
- Follow all food safety, health & safety, and safeguarding rules.

Shift Guidelines

When you arrive:

- Sign in with your name and time.
- Wash your hands and put on any protective gear provided.

During your shift:

- Treat everyone with kindness.
- Keep areas tidy and safe.
- Handle food carefully (check use-by dates, keep chilled food cold).

When you leave:

- Let the shift lead or trustee know you are going.
- Sign out with your time.

Health & Safety

- Report any spills, hazards, or accidents immediately.
- Use correct lifting techniques (ask for help with heavy loads).
- Wear gloves when handling certain foods or cleaning.

Safeguarding

- Keep personal details of service users private.
- If you have concerns about someone's safety, tell the Volunteer Co-ordinator immediately.

Code of Conduct

- Be respectful to all people at all times.
- No discrimination, harassment, or offensive language.
- Follow instructions from trustees or shift leads.
- Represent Lincoln Community Larder positively.

Expenses

- You can claim reasonable travel or parking costs that have been pre-approved in accordance with the LCL Reimbursement Policy.
- Speak to a trustee before making purchases for the foodbank.

Problems or Questions?

- Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator

If You Need to Step Down

- Please give as much notice as you can so we can arrange cover.

Thank you for being part of our foodbank family — you make a real difference.



Health and Safety Policy

1. Introduction

The Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) is an independent local charity run entirely by volunteers. The safety, health, and wellbeing of all volunteers, clients, and visitors are of paramount importance. This policy outlines how LCL aims to meet its health and safety responsibilities and ensure a safe working environment for all.

2. Responsibilities

a. Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring all LCL premises are safe, clean, and compliant with current health and safety and food safety legislation.
- Approving and supporting the implementation of this policy.

b. Volunteer Organiser

The Volunteer Organiser (or their delegate) is responsible for:

- Ensuring volunteers are trained and supervised appropriately.
 - Managing accident reporting and follow-up.
 - Ensuring at least two volunteers are on duty whenever LCL is open to clients.
 - Acting as the main point of contact for health and safety issues.
-

3. General Safety Measures

The Trustees will ensure that:

- Premises are kept clean, tidy, and hygienic at all times.
- Food and non-food items are stored safely and securely in line with food safety regulations.
- Perishable foods are not distributed after their "use by" date.
- Tinned and shelf-stable items may be distributed up to 6 months past their "best before" date, if undamaged and deemed safe.

- Items past this date may be made available on a clearly marked “take at your own risk” table.
 - All volunteers receive induction and role-specific training before starting regular duties.
 - Volunteers are given adequate information, instruction, and supervision to identify and manage hazards.
 - An Accident Book is available and maintained on the premises.
 - All accidents, near misses, or safety concerns are reported and documented promptly.
 - Risk assessments are conducted regularly and updated as needed.
-

4. Fire Safety

- Fire exits and escape routes must be kept clear and unobstructed at all times.
 - Fire extinguishers must be clearly marked and checked annually.
 - A basic fire evacuation procedure must be displayed in a visible area.
 - All volunteers must be made aware of evacuation routes and assembly points during induction.
 - In the event of a fire, volunteers must evacuate immediately and call 999.
-

5. First Aid

- A fully stocked First Aid Kit is available on site and checked regularly.
 - The location of the First Aid Kit should be clearly signed and known to all volunteers.
 - All injuries, however minor, must be reported and recorded in the Accident Book.
 - Volunteers are encouraged to attend basic First Aid training, if available.
-

6. Infection Control (Including COVID-19 and other illnesses)

- Volunteers must not attend LCL if they are unwell or have symptoms of contagious illness.
 - Good hand hygiene is expected—handwashing facilities and/or sanitiser should be available.
 - Surfaces and equipment should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
 - If necessary due to public health guidance, LCL may reintroduce face masks, distancing, or limited entry to protect vulnerable clients.
 - LCL will follow government or local authority guidance on infectious disease management.
-

7. Reporting and Escalation

- All breaches of this policy should be reported to the Volunteer Organiser in the first instance.
 - If the matter is not resolved or is serious, it should be escalated to the Chair of Trustees.
-

8. Volunteer Responsibilities

All volunteers are expected to:

- Follow this policy and any safety instructions provided.
 - Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others.
 - Report any hazards, accidents, or unsafe conditions.
 - Act respectfully and responsibly while representing LCL.
-



Serious Incident Reporting Policy & Procedures

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the approach and procedures for identifying, reporting, and responding to serious incidents that occur within Lincoln Community Larder (LCL). The aim is to protect our service users, volunteers, staff, and reputation, and to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, and safeguarding obligations.

2. Definition of a Serious Incident

A “serious incident” is any actual or alleged event which results in, or risks:

- Harm to a service user, volunteer, or member of the public
 - Significant safeguarding concerns (adult or child)
 - Criminal activity, including theft, fraud, or assault
 - Significant loss or damage to property or assets
 - Major disruption to operations (e.g., due to fire, flood, IT breach)
 - Reputational damage to LCL
 - Data protection breach involving personal or sensitive information
 - Any matter that is reportable to the Charity Commission or other regulator
-

3. Principles

- Prompt reporting – All serious incidents must be reported without delay.
 - Transparency – Incidents will be documented and, where required, disclosed to relevant authorities.
 - Confidentiality – Information will be shared only with those who need to know.
 - Accountability – LCL’s trustees have ultimate responsibility for serious incident management.
 - Learning – Every incident will be reviewed to identify improvements.
-

4. Responsibilities

- All trustees and volunteers – Must immediately report any suspected or actual serious incident to the Chair or Vice Chair.
 - Chair / Vice Chair – Oversee incident reporting and management.
 - Trustees – Ensure appropriate reporting to the Charity Commission and other bodies, and that follow-up actions are taken.
-

5. Reporting Procedure

Step 1 – Immediate Action

- Ensure safety of individuals involved.
- Contact emergency services if needed (999 for urgent threats).
- Preserve evidence if relevant (e.g., CCTV footage, damaged property, witness accounts).

Step 2 – Internal Notification

- Notify the Chair / Vice Chair as soon as possible (within 2 hours for urgent matters, 24 hours for all others).

Step 3 – Completion of Incident Report Form

- Complete the Serious Incident Report Form (Appendix A) within 24 hours.
- Provide factual details: who, what, where, when, how, and initial actions taken.

Step 4 – Initial Review

- Chair / Vice Chair assesses the situation, determines severity, and recommends next steps.
- Escalate to board of trustees immediately if the incident is serious enough to require regulatory reporting.

Step 5 – External Reporting

- Charity Commission – Report if the incident meets the Commission's serious incident criteria.
- Police – If criminal activity suspected.
- Local Safeguarding Authority – For safeguarding concerns.
- ICO – For serious personal data breaches.
- Funders/partners – If required under agreements.

Step 6 – Follow-Up & Investigation

- Chair / Vice Chair to gather facts.
- Ensure impartiality and fairness in the process.
- Keep all records secure and confidential.

Step 7 – Conclusion & Learning

- Produce a written incident report with findings, actions taken, and recommendations.
- Implement corrective measures to reduce recurrence risk.
- Provide updates to the board of trustees and regulators where required.

6. Record-Keeping

All serious incident records will be stored securely for a minimum of 7 years in compliance with data protection legislation.



Serious Incident Report Form

Confidential

1. Date/Time of Incident:

2. Location:

3. Name(s) of Persons Involved:

4. Description of Incident (facts only):

5. Immediate Actions Taken:

6. Witnesses (names & contact details):

7. Reported By (name & role):

8. Date/Time Report Submitted:

9. Signature:



Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures

1. Introduction

Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for everyone involved in our organisation - including trustees, volunteers, clients, and partners. This policy outlines our stance against bullying and harassment and establishes procedures for preventing, reporting, and resolving such behavior.

2. Definitions

2.1 Bullying

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behavior directed at an individual (or group) that creates a risk to health and safety. Examples include:

- Verbal abuse or threats
- Humiliating or belittling comments
- Spreading rumors or malicious gossip
- Excluding someone from activities

2.2 Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that offends, humiliates, or intimidates a person, and is based on personal characteristics such as:

- Race, ethnicity, or nationality
- Gender or gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Age, disability, or medical condition
- Any other protected characteristic under applicable law

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

3. Policy Statement

- LCL will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment.
- All concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly, confidentially, and fairly.
- Individuals who engage in bullying or harassment may face termination of their trustee or volunteer status.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Trustees

- Promote a culture of respect and inclusiveness.
- Act promptly on any signs or reports of bullying or harassment.
- Provide support and refer individuals to the appropriate resources.

4.2 Volunteers

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Report any concerns or incidents.
- Participate in training related to workplace conduct and diversity.

4.3 Clients and Visitors

- Are expected to behave respectfully while engaging with LCL.
- May be denied services or access if found in breach of conduct expectations.

5. Reporting Procedures

5.1 Informal Resolution

If appropriate and safe, the person affected may:

- Speak directly to the person involved
- Express how the behaviour has affected them and ask for it to stop

5.2 Formal Complaint

If the issue is unresolved or serious in nature:

1. Report in Writing to the LCL Chair or LCL Vice Chair.
2. Investigation: A prompt, impartial investigation will be conducted.
3. Outcome: Findings will be shared with relevant parties. If the complaint is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will follow.
4. Appeal Process: If unsatisfied with the outcome, the complainant may appeal in writing to the Board of trustees.

6. Confidentiality

All reports and investigations will be handled with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

7. Protection from Retaliation

Anyone who raises a concern in good faith will be protected from retaliation or adverse consequences. Retaliatory behavior is a serious violation of this policy and will be treated accordingly.

8. Disciplinary Action

Depending on the severity of the incident, actions may include:

- Verbal or written warning
 - Mandatory training
 - Suspension or termination of trustees' / volunteers' positions
 - Barring clients or visitors from services
-



Disciplinary and Grievance Policy

1. Introduction

The Lincoln Community Larder (LCL) is an independent, volunteer-run local charity. The Trustees of LCL are responsible for the recruitment, selection, training, and supervision of all volunteers.

LCL currently does not employ any paid staff. Should this change in the future, this policy will be reviewed and revised prior to any employment contracts being issued.

2. Volunteer Responsibilities

LCL depends entirely on volunteers - including Trustees - to manage and deliver its food parcel service. All volunteers will receive an appropriate induction and training from the Volunteer Organiser or a delegated representative before beginning regular duties at LCL premises.

Training will include a review of relevant LCL policies and procedures, including safeguarding, health and safety, and the Equal Opportunities Policy.

3. Breaches of Policy and Complaints Procedure

If a volunteer is suspected of breaching LCL policies or procedures, or if a complaint is made against them, the following steps will be taken:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Minor breaches or concerns should be addressed at the time they occur, by either a Trustee or the senior volunteer on duty.
- The incident must be reported to the Secretary as soon as possible for record-keeping.
- The Secretary will inform the Chair and other Trustees of the matter.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation

- If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if a formal complaint is received:
 - The Chair will lead an investigation into the matter.
 - If the Chair is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint, the Secretary (or another nominated Trustee) will lead the investigation.
 - A written record of the complaint and investigation process will be maintained.
 - Possible outcomes include:
 - No further action
 - A formal warning
 - A request for the volunteer to cease volunteering with LCL

Stage 3: Trustee Review

- The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Board of Trustees.
 - Trustees will determine whether any further action is necessary.
 - Trustees will also assess whether any policies, procedures, or training processes need to be updated in light of the incident.
-

4. Volunteer Rights

Volunteers have the right to:

- Be treated fairly, with dignity and respect
 - Receive a clear explanation of any concerns raised
 - Respond to any complaints or allegations made against them before decisions are taken
-

5. Grievances Raised by Volunteers

If a volunteer wishes to raise a concern or grievance related to their experience at LCL, they should:

- Initially raise the matter with the Volunteer Organiser or a Trustee informally.
 - If unresolved, the concern should be put in writing and submitted to the Secretary, who will inform the Chair and Trustees.
 - The matter will be investigated following a similar process as outlined in the complaints procedure.
-

6. Confidentiality

All disciplinary and grievance matters will be treated confidentially and handled with due sensitivity and discretion.



Complaints Handling Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and fair process for managing complaints made to or about the Lincoln Community Larder. We are committed to learning from feedback and resolving concerns in a respectful, transparent, and timely manner.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Clients receiving food parcels or related services
- Trustees, volunteers, or members of the public
- Donors, partners, and other stakeholders

This policy covers all types of complaints, including concerns about service quality, trustee or volunteer behaviour, fairness, discrimination, or health and safety.

3. Policy Statement

Lincoln Community Larder welcomes feedback and takes all complaints seriously. We aim to:

- Make it easy for people to raise concerns
- Handle complaints promptly, fairly, and sensitively
- Investigate the facts and respond appropriately
- Learn from complaints to improve our services

We will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises a complaint in good faith.

4. Definitions

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction - whether justified or not - about any aspect of the Lincoln Community Larder's operations, services, or conduct.

5. Principles of Complaint Handling

We will ensure that our complaints process is:

- Accessible: Simple and easy to understand
 - Timely: Acknowledged and resolved promptly
 - Fair: Free from bias and conflicts of interest
 - Confidential: Personal information is protected
 - Respectful: All parties treated with dignity and without prejudice
-

6. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can be made:

- In person: to a volunteer on duty
- By phone: 07914655460
- By email: lincolncommunitylarder@hotmail.co.uk
- In writing: to Lincoln Community Larder, YMCA Annexe, Rosemary Lane, Lincoln LN2 5AR

If the complaint is made verbally, a written record will be created by the volunteer receiving it.

7. Complaints Procedure

Step 1: Acknowledgement

- The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days
- The person making the complaint will be informed of who is handling it

Step 2: Investigation

- An appropriate volunteer or trustee will investigate the complaint
- This may involve reviewing documentation, speaking to those involved, and gathering evidence
- The investigation will be completed within 15 working days, where possible

Step 3: Response

- A written response outlining the findings, any actions taken, and options for escalation will be provided
- If the issue is resolved informally, this will still be documented

Step 4: Escalation

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, they may:

- Request a review by the Chair of trustees

- The outcome of the review will be communicated within 15 further working days
-

8. Record Keeping

- All complaints and their outcomes will be recorded in a secure Complaints Log
 - Records will be retained for at least 3 years
 - Confidentiality will be maintained at all times
-

9. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and considered if sufficient information is provided. However, full investigation may be limited if the complainant cannot be contacted.

10. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

Complaints made in bad faith, with the intent to harass or cause harm, may not be investigated. Any decision to dismiss such a complaint will be made by a senior manager or trustee.

11. Learning from Complaints

- Regular reviews of complaints will be conducted to identify patterns
 - Findings may lead to changes in policies, training, or operational practices
 - The board of trustees will receive periodic reports on complaint trends
-

12. Contact

For complaints, concerns, or more information about this policy, please contact:

The Lincoln Community Larder Secretary

By phone: 07914655460

By email: lincolncommunitylarder@hotmail.co.uk

In writing: to Lincoln Community Larder, YMCA Annexe, Rosemary Lane, Lincoln LN2 5AR
