

BIG FUTURES FOUNDATION POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

(Reviewed June 2021)

This document outlines the role of Big Futures Foundation (BFF) in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children it seeks to benefit. BFF recognises that the children we help are especially vulnerable. In accordance with The Protection of Children Act 1999 and The Children Act 1989 & 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the Trustees recognise that they have a duty of care towards the children with whom the charity has contact and will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised, and that where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, appropriate action would be taken to address those concerns. This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers and third-party providers who act on behalf of BFF. Children and parents will be informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate. BFF uses the term 'child' to refer to anyone under the age of 18 as defined by The Children Act 2004.

Big Futures Foundation believes:

1. Primary emphasis should be placed on the needs and development of children and families and not on organisational or professional requirements.
2. The quality of services to children depends on the skill and commitment of those who deliver them, whether paid or unpaid.
3. Children and young people have a right to be listened to and heard. Their views should always be respected and taken seriously.
4. Children have a right to develop a personal identity, self-respect, and awareness of their own worth and a sense of responsibility.
5. Children need both a committed adult to stand alongside them and procedures through which they can challenge decisions or actions with which they are unhappy.
6. Children and young people have a right to protection from neglect, abuse and exploitation, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.
7. Children, young people and their families should have access to a full range of high-quality services, which offer choice and diversity.
8. Disadvantages such as poverty, racism and discrimination hinder children's development.
9. Services provided must be determined by the needs of the children and families.

General Safeguarding Procedures:

Big Futures Foundation is committed to following best practice in working to prevent abuse and protect children. We believe that children have the right to be safe and happy in their activities and that their parents have the right to be confident that the organisations to which they entrust their children will look after them. All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately.

BFF aims to benefit children by funding therapeutic counselling sessions and life skills development programmes. The sessions and programmes are provided by professional therapists, third party providers or DBS checked BFF staff and volunteers at properly controlled venues. The therapists and third-party providers are not employees of BFF, but are either self-employed or employees of other organisations. In either situation, they are responsible to the organisation by which the children have been referred for participation and would follow the designated child protection procedures of that organisation. BFF staff and volunteers adhere to this BFF Safeguarding Policy. When BFF staff and volunteers are delivering services in a school setting, they follow the Safeguarding Policy of that school. In this situation the school's Safeguarding Policy is pre-eminent to BFF's policy.

We recognise that the therapists, workshop leaders, BFF staff and volunteers are well-placed to observe young people and note any symptoms and/or indicators which may suggest a safeguarding concern. We recognise that the relationship between them and the children is one which fosters respect, confidence and trust, and can lead to the disclosure of abuse.

We recognise that abuse of children can take several forms:

- Physical abuse, where physical injury is inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- Sexual abuse, where a child is involved in sexual activity to which he/she was unable to give informed consent.
- Emotional abuse, including humiliation, bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Neglect, where severe or persistent neglect causes serious impairment of the child's health or development.

We take the following precautions to prevent abuse:

- No untrained representative of BFF has direct or unsupervised contact with children.
- All trustees of BFF will be DBS checked to an appropriate level according to their role.

- We only appoint counsellors who are professionally trained and qualified to work with children in a therapeutic setting. They are fully trained in all aspects of child protection.
- All counsellors associated with BFF are required to be members of a professional body, and are required to abide by the ethical and professional framework set out by the professional body.
- BFF only works with third party providers who are highly trained and experienced at working with children and are fully trained in all aspects of child protection.
- All BFF staff delivering programmes to children will be trained to at least an intermediate level, as defined by the current City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership training programme.
- Therapy programmes funded by BFF only take place in designated centres for the care of children, such as children's centres or schools where the parent or carer can have access at any time.
- All counsellors and programme leaders funded by BFF to work with children have been police-checked, which involves an enhanced DBS check.
- BFF communicates regularly with the counselling providers and schools within its programme network providing regular opportunity for the discussion of child protection issues.
- BFF collaborates with a child's school to jointly agree the referral of an individual child to a counselling therapist or life skill programme.
- BFF requires that service providers carry out Safer Recruitment Procedures for all their staff working on BFF programmes. This process includes interviews, full chronological Curriculum Vitae, references and police checks.
- Service providers must hold public liability insurance cover.
- BFF holds public liability and professional indemnity insurance.
- BFF provides information for children and parents, where appropriate, on its children protection policy.
- BFF always requests that organisations benefiting from our funding provide an evaluation of the work.

Policy on Recruitment and Induction of Staff, Volunteers and Freelance Therapists

Big Futures Foundation is committed to following Safer Recruitment Procedures for appointment of all staff and volunteers.

BFF recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and will take reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with

children. The following applies to all representatives of the Charity who in some way work with children or vulnerable adults.

Permanent Staff

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- Permanent staff applicants should complete an application form or submit a full chronological Curriculum Vitae. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service if appropriate.
- Two confidential references should be requested, including one regarding previous work with children where applicable. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of qualifications and identity should be provided (e.g. passport or driving licence with photo).

Freelance Therapists or Service Providers

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- Consent should be obtained from applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (online update service)
- If the freelance therapist or service provider is working with BFF for the first time and is not known to the Charity, a confidential reference should be requested, regarding previous work with children. This reference must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact
- If the freelance therapist or service provider is working with BFF for the first time and is not known to the Charity evidence of qualifications and identity should be provided (e.g. passport or driving licence with photo)

Interview and induction

Permanent Staff

All permanent staff will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and in line with the Charity's Equal Opportunities Policy. All employees should receive a formal or informal induction, during which:

- A DBS check should be completed if appropriate

- Child protection procedures should be explained and training needs identified.
- Training will then be arranged through the Multi Agency Training offered by the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Freelance Therapists or Service Providers

Freelance Therapists or Service Providers should:

- Supply details to allow an online check to be carried out on the online DBS update service
- Register with the DBS online update service if they have not already done so
- have Child Protection procedures explained to them and training needs identified and undertake online training
- sign to show that they have read, understood and agreed to follow BFF's Code of Conduct and Child Protection procedures as part of their contract

Volunteer and trustee recruitment, interview and induction

Applicants for a voluntary and trustee post will be treated with the same child protection principles in mind as that of permanent or freelance staff. Volunteer staff and trustees may be asked to have direct and unsupervised contact with children. They will be required to:

- Complete an application form or provide a full chronological Curriculum Vitae
- Provide two references
- Attend an interview
- Undergo a DBS to the level appropriate to their role
- Attend an induction briefing on relevant policies

Procedure for reporting concerns:

- Any counselling therapist, third party service provider, BFF staff member or volunteer who is concerned about a child should follow the child protection procedure of the organisation (e.g. Counselling Service Provider, other service provider or school) in which they are working. This may require a referral to children's services and in emergencies, the Police. The practitioner should keep the designated contact for Big Futures Foundation closely informed of any such cases, subject to confidentiality restrictions, from the standpoint of a funder dedicated to keeping the services it provides to schools functioning smoothly.

- BFF will keep a record of any safeguarding concerns passed by a BFF employee to the organisation in which they are working. These records will be GDPR compliant, and will be kept until the child or young person ceases to be part of a BFF programme.
- In the event of an employee, trustee or volunteer of Big Futures Foundation (BFF) being subject to an allegation, the designated contact at BFF would immediately contact the person responsible for child protection at the appropriate organisation where the work had been taking place. The following steps would then be taken in conjunction with the other organisation's contact: i) receive information from those who have expressed concerns and record it in signed and dated written form; ii) seek advice from the statutory child protection agency, such as the local social services department, health board or NSPCC; iii) make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police.
- Should an allegation be made against the BFF Designated Contact another named BFF trustee will deal with and manage the allegation.

Designated contact at Big Futures Foundation for issues relating to safeguarding children:

Claire Douglas
 Chair of Trustees
 Big Future's Foundation
 19 Chestnut Avenue,
 York YO31 1BR
 Tel: 07841 514518
 Email: claire.douglas@bigfuturesfoundation.org.uk

Named BFF Trustee
 Mary Hodgson
 Trustee
 Tel: 07967 158867
 Email: maryhodgson12@aol.co.uk

A review of our Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures will take place every year and will be ratified at a meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Signed by Chair of Trustees

.....


Dated: 30th June 2021

Useful Numbers, Emails and Links

- Information for children, parents and professionals on all aspects of safeguarding in the City of York can be found on the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership website: <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk>. Essential for referral guidance, relevant forms, tools to identify neglect, child abuse and exploitation, policies and training courses.
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01904 551900. Email: mash@york.gov.uk. Hours 8.30-5.00
- MASH early help team to make an early help referral or access advice 01904 551900. Email: earlyhelp@york.gov.uk. Hours 8.30-5.00
- Social Care Emergency Duty Team (EDT): Out of hours: 01609 780780. Email: edt@northyorks.gov
- NSPCC National Child Protection Helpline - 0808 800 5000 give advice on child protection concerns and situations where there is concern about a child.
- City of York Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), co-ordinates the response to concerns or allegations made against an adult who works with children - 01904 551783.

BIG FUTURES FOUNDATION CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOOD PRACTICE

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important that Big Futures Foundation representatives understand these feelings and do not allow them to interfere with their judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the wider community. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A counselling therapist, teacher, trustee, volunteer or BFF staff member could have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

All people working for Big Futures Foundation should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how Big Futures Foundation can create a positive culture and climate. This policy and these guidelines apply to anyone who works for Big Futures Foundation as a trustee, volunteer, on a permanent, temporary, or freelance contract.

Big Futures Foundation should:

- undertake to assess risks at the outset of any project with young people or vulnerable adults and monitor risks throughout
- identify the people with designated protection responsibility at the outset
- engage in Safer Recruitment Procedures, including appropriate vetting of staff, trustees and volunteers through the Disclosure and Barring Service
- know how to get in touch with local authority services, in case there is a need to report a concern to them
- always ensure that someone from the school/educational establishment or care setting is present at projects where appropriate
- have agreed procedures for reporting suspicion or allegations of abuse
- have a policy and set of procedures for taking, using and storing photographs or images of children or young people
- offer training to staff whose jobs involve working closely with children

- make clear who is the Designated Person responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children, young people or vulnerable adults
- ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of employees, freelancers and volunteers and trustees, including safe handling, storage and disposal of any information provided on therapists or service providers as part of the recruitment process

Therapists, service providers, staff, volunteers and trustees should:

- treat all children and young people with respect
- be excellent role models for dealings with other people
- give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- put the welfare of each participant first, before achieving goals
- ensure that wherever possible there is more than one adult present during activities, or at least that a therapist or service provider working on their own is within sight or hearing of others i.e. the door is kept open (as appropriate)
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- remember that someone else might misinterpret their actions no matter how well intentioned
- be aware that physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted
- only touch participants when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the activity and seek agreement from them or a permanent member of staff before doing so
- recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- be aware of Big Futures Foundation's safeguarding principles, guidance and procedures and operate within those procedures
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse

Therapists, service providers, staff, volunteers and trustees should not:

- have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- show favouritism to any individual
- believe 'it could never happen to me'

- take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests a more prudent approach

If a child tells me about the abuse they have suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm
- Do not transmit shock, anger or embarrassment
- Reassure the child. Tell her/him that you are glad that they are speaking to you.
- Actively listen to what the child is saying, and do not express disbelief. Children very rarely lie about their abuse, and they may have tried to tell others about their abuse and not have been heard or believed.
- Tell them that you know that it is not their fault.
- Never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure him/her that you will try to help, but let them know that you have to tell other people in order to do this.
- Encourage the child to talk, but do not ask “leading questions” or press for information. Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Praise the child for telling you.
- Do not tell the child what happened to them is dirty or naughty.
- Do not comment on the offender or their morality – it may be someone the child loves.
- Be aware the child may try to retract all they have told you.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child’s own language. Include any questions you have asked, but do not add comments or opinion.
- Take your concerns to the relevant contacts in the organisation where the work is taking place and inform the designated contact at Big Futures Foundation.
- Disclosure by a child can have a strong emotional impact on the worker. It is important that they seek supervision (in the case of a counsellor) or pastoral support (in the case of member of BFF staff or volunteer or school staff). BFF can offer further debrief or supervision if this is requested.

BIG FUTURES FOUNDATION PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

Big Futures Foundation recognises that taking images of children should be handled with care and that images should only be taken and used in a responsible way. In using the term “images” we are referring to both photographs and video footage. We acknowledge the need to respect young people’s privacy and the rights of privacy of parents and carers. Photographs and video images of children are classed as personal data under the terms of the GDPR 2018. Therefore, using such images requires consent. We undertake:

- Only to take images of children with the prior permission of parents/carers/staff.
- Never to reproduce an image of a child without the prior permission of the child’s parents or carers.
- Only to use images of children to illustrate and promote the work of Big Futures Foundation.
- Never to pass on images of children to other organisations other than for the purpose of illustrating the work of Big Futures Foundation.
- To store images of children securely.
- If a child’s photograph is used in a publication or on a display, not to use the child’s full name in connection with the photograph, unless it is directly relevant and express permission has been given.
- To be clear about the purpose of taking any images (including possible use on a website) and make clear whether or not the images will be retained for further future use.

We feel that the most practical method of requesting consent from parents and carers is to ask them to read and sign a consent form which makes it clear:

- how and where the images will be used
- the types of images to be taken and used
- the period of consent
- the storage and deletion/destroying of photographs or other images

June 2021