



2.1. Safeguarding Policy

updated | 6 November 2023

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The following document outlines the policy of Big Leaf Foundation in regards to the safeguarding and protection of young people. The policy and the associated procedures offer guidance for trustees and volunteers working with young people across all the events and activities provided by Big Leaf Foundation.

This policy is in line with government guidance that sets out the responsibilities of organisations to work together and safeguard and protect children, including *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* and *The Children's Act (2004)*.

Big Leaf Foundation acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and young refugees and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and The Charity Commission requirements.

THIS POLICY

applies to all adults including the Board of Trustees, volunteers, paid staff, agency staff and anyone working on behalf of Big Leaf Foundation

- recognises that the welfare and interests of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (hereafter UASC) and young refugees are paramount in all circumstances;
- aims to ensure that all UASC and young people have a positive and enjoyable experience of Big Leaf Foundation's work, in a safe and young person-centred environment and are protected from abuse whilst participating in Big Leaf Foundation events, activities and otherwise.

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BIG LEAF FOUNDATION RECOGNISES

- the welfare of UASC and young refugees is paramount and that they have equal rights of protection;
- all people, regardless of age, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all forms of abuse or harm;
- UASC and young refugees can be particularly vulnerable to abuse, radicalisation and difficulties in both physical and mental wellbeing, and accepts the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

- to provide protection for UASC, young refugees, trustees, volunteers, community organisations and external activity providers organised by the Big Leaf Foundation;
- to provide trustees and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the case that they might suspect a UASC or young refugee may be experiencing harm, or be at risk thereof.

INTRODUCTION

Big Leaf Foundation makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.

Big Leaf Foundation comes into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults through the following activities, in person and online:

- one-to-one casework
- educational activities (ESOL, maths)
- creative arts (art, music, photography and story-telling)
- sport (teams sports, active challenges and individual training opportunities)
- outdoor activities (equine-assisted learning, gardening and farm visits)
- cookery / food related activities

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- residential trips
- community action and volunteering
- discussion groups
- mentoring.

The types of contact with children and / or vulnerable adults will be:

Regulated

- (i) 'frequent contact' with a vulnerable person (once a month or more)
- (ii) 'intensive contact' (3 days or more within a 30-day period).

Controlled

- (i) including e.g. ancillary roles such as chefs and drivers, where there may be contact with vulnerable groups;
- (ii) including administrators or trustees who can access data on vulnerable people.

This policy seeks to ensure that Big Leaf Foundation undertakes its responsibilities with regard to the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

**LEGAL
FRAMEWORK**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect all children, namely:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2015](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2015](#)
- [The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)

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UK Registered Charity Number: 1181180

- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [The Children Act 2004](#)
- [Care Standards Act 2000](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#)
- [The Police Act – CRB 1997](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [Mental Health Act 1983](#)
- [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation 2020](#)

DEFINITION

SAFEGUARDING is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults wherever possible. In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

ABUSE is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- psychological or emotional abuse
- neglect or omission to act
- financial or material abuse
- criminal exploitation (e.g. County Lines)
- child sexual exploitation

- modern slavery
- self-neglect
- domestic abuse
- institutional abuse
- discriminatory abuse
- harassment
- radicalisation.

DEFINITION OF A CHILD

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child).

DEFINITION OF A VULNERABLE ADULT

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

An adult at risk is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support. Where someone is over 18 but still receiving children's services and a safeguarding issue is raised, the matter should be dealt with as a matter of course by the adult safeguarding team www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/adult-pocket-guide.pdf, p2

RESPONSIBILITIES

ALL STAFF MEMBERS (paid or unpaid) have the responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

We expect all staff (paid or unpaid) to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Trustees have the responsibility to ensure:

- (i) the policy is in place and appropriate
- (ii) the policy is accessible
- (iii) the policy is implemented
- (iv) there is good liaison with and monitoring the DSL's work
- (v) sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented.

THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Big Leaf Foundation's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:

- **Kayte Cable** (Designated Safeguarding Officer Level 3; Safe CIC Combined Adult & Child Safeguarding for Designated Leads & Deputies).
m: 07464 386874

The Deputies are:

- **Ro Carter** (Designated Safeguarding Officer Level 3; Safe CIC Combined Adult & Child Safeguarding for Designated Leads & Deputies)
m: 07762 348710
- **Abby Auty** (Designated Safeguarding Officer Level 3; Safe CIC Combined Adult & Child Safeguarding for Designated Leads & Deputies)
m: 07563 319209

The Trustee with the safeguarding portfolio for Big Leaf Foundation is:

- **Vicki Felgate** (NCVO Safeguarding for Trustees delivered by SAFE CIC; Safe CIC Safeguarding Trustees' Legal Responsibilities)
m: 07928 835458

The DSLs have responsibility to ensure:

- (i) the policy is monitored and reviewed
- (ii) the promotion of the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- (iii) that staff (paid and unpaid) have access to appropriate training/information
- (iv) staff concerns about safeguarding are received and responded to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately
- (v) that they keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS
- (vi) that effective links are developed and maintained with relevant agencies.
- (vii) that the trustees receive necessary reports on safeguarding issues; the DSL may call a special meeting of the Steering Group where a safeguarding matter requires the Group's urgent attention.

IMPLEMENTATION The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include:

SAFE RECRUITMENT

Big Leaf Foundation ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:

- providing the following safeguarding statement in recruitment adverts or application details 'recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices';
- job or role descriptions for all roles involving contact with children and / or vulnerable adults will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities;
- there are person specifications for roles which contain a statement on core competency with regard to child/ vulnerable adult protection/ safeguarding;
- shortlisting is based on formal application processes/forms and not on provision of CVs;

- interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification;
- at least two references will be required for every applicant.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) GAP MANAGEMENT

The organisation commits resources to providing DBS records checks on staff (paid or unpaid) whose roles involve contact with children and /or vulnerable adults.

In order to avoid DBS gaps, the organisation will:

- ensure DBS checks are conducted for all staff (paid or unpaid) working with children and vulnerable adults;
- DBS checks are performed by Big Leaf Foundation with support and supervision by Central Surrey Voluntary Action;
- ensure all trustees/staff involved in recruitment fully understand that it is a criminal offence for individuals barred by the Independent Safeguarding Authority to work or apply to work with children or vulnerable adults in a wide range of posts;
- only make formal job offers after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and 2 references);
- maintain and review a list of roles across the organisation which involve contact with children/vulnerable adults.

In addition to checks on recruitment for roles involving contact with children/vulnerable adults, for established staff the following processes are in place:

- three-year rolling programme of re-checking DBS is in place for holders of all identified posts;
- existing staff (paid or unpaid) who transfer from a role which does not require a DBS check to one which involves contact with children/vulnerable adults will be subject to a DBS check.

Safeguarding is embedded within Big Leaf Foundation and therefore this policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

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UK Registered Charity Number: 1181180

- [Equal Opportunities](#)
- [Safe Recruitment](#)
- Induction and training (internal document)
- [Behaviour code of conduct for staff and volunteers](#)
- [Confidentiality and data protection](#)
- [Whistleblowing](#)
- [Disciplinary Procedure](#)
- Prevent (in progress)

**DIRECT
ENGAGEMENT
VIA LIVE ONLINE
CONNECTION**

ONLINE INTERACTIONS whether in real time or as recorded sessions, should be considered normal engagement practice and the video environment should be considered a ‘project classroom’.

Big Leaf Foundation team members will have the same expected professional behaviours and safeguarding roles as set out in this Safeguarding Policy and Big Leaf Foundation’s Behaviour Code for Staff and Volunteers.

There are additional responsibilities and considerations as laid out below.

- any live online engagement should use the Zoom platform, though it is possible other resources may be used as well subject to approval by the DSL / DDSL;
- all zoom meetings must include contact@bigleaffoundation.org.uk as a guest;
- all sessions will be accessible for Big Leaf Foundation line managers to ‘drop in’ and oversee at any time;
- staff, carers, key workers and participants will all have Big Leaf Foundation contact (phone number, email) so that they can report any issues (both safeguarding and technical issues);
- as per our standard Safeguarding Policy a member of our Safeguarding team (the DSL Kayte Cable or Deputy DSLs Abby Auty or Ro Carter) will be on call at all times when sessions are taking place to provide support regarding safeguarding concerns;

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UK Registered Charity Number: 1181180

- should a participant ask a question about their own personal situation this should be referred to the Big Leaf Foundation Caseworker, Daud Afzal West Surrey (07921 385227) or Ro Carter East Surrey (07762 348710);
- all personal data relating to lessons will be confidential;
- sessions will be scheduled in advance by Big Leaf Foundation with lesson hyperlinks sent to both team members and participants;
- Big Leaf Foundation team members will only send out lesson invitations via WhatsApp groups (including a minimum of two Big Leaf Foundation team members) using Big Leaf Foundation phones;
- the “Waiting Room” function on Zoom is enabled so that the meeting host can check participant names before admitting them;
- participants are asked to turn their cameras on when entering the meeting so that a ‘face check’ can be performed on entry to the meeting even if the participant’s camera then needs to be switched off due to poor Wi-Fi.

GROUP ZOOMS

- group zooms can be set up as appropriate and may include the whole group, or two or more students who might work well together;
- group zooms must be conducted predominantly in English and must have some input from the Big Leaf Foundation team member who will ensure there is no prolonged chatting by participants in their own language.

COMPUTERS AND EQUIPMENT

- when using own desktop or laptop, Big Leaf Foundation team members should set up a dedicated user account with a clear desktop and only related programmes in order to prevent accidental sharing of unrelated or inappropriate material;
- Big Leaf Foundation team members are permitted to use the ‘share screen’ function taking special care to choose specific resources and not their entire desktop – they should not enable participants’ use of this function.

SESSION LOCATION

- Sessions should ideally take place in front of a neutral plain background (this applies to both Big Leaf Foundation team member and participant) and where possible participants and staff should use Zoom Virtual Background setting to hide the background image.
- Anything visible should be appropriate (e.g. posters, images, materials playing on screens.)
- Care should be taken to minimise visibility of any personal items. (e.g. family photos)
- Sessions ideally should take place in suitable quiet space, without intrusions from others. In the case of young people living in hostels, advice will be sought beforehand as to whether communal space can be encouraged for online sessions, rather than bedrooms. If bedrooms are to be used, key workers should encourage young people in advance to take the session at a table/chair and not on a bed.

DRESS CODE

Big Leaf Foundation team members (including external tutors and volunteers) and participants should be dressed appropriately, in clothes suitable for being seen in public. Participants should be made aware of this in advance of the session.

DIRECT ENGAGEMENT VIA PHONE, WHATSAPP or SOCIAL MEDIA

For young people under 18, consent is sought from a parent/guardian before adding a young person to a WhatsApp group; for young people over 18, consent is sought directly from the young person before adding them to a WhatsApp group. In all cases there are additional responsibilities and considerations as laid out below.

- Contacting participants should only be undertaken ONLY via Big Leaf Foundation phones – personal mobiles should never be used and participants should NEVER be contacted via personal social media accounts.

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UK Registered Charity Number: 1181180

- WhatsApp groups must contain a minimum of two Big Leaf Foundation staff members (except for Casework where conversations might have an additional confidentiality considerations) and with all staff set as admins.
- Contact after 9pm should be avoided unless there is an emergency/safeguarding concern.
- All content in WhatsApp chats should remain on topic with inappropriate/off-topic messages deleted and young people reminded of WhatsApp group rules.
- Screenshots of conversations should be made available if requested by a manager and/or the Safeguarding team.
- In the case of any disclosure, the conversation should be stored as a screenshot and the DSL or DDSL made aware of the disclosure (our standard Safeguarding Procedure will then be followed).

**COMMUNICATION,
TRAINING &
SUPPORT FOR
STAFF**

Big Leaf Foundation commits resources for induction, training of staff (paid and unpaid), effective communications and support mechanisms in relation to Safeguarding.

INDUCTION will include

- discussion of the Safeguarding Policy (and confirmation of understanding)
- discussion of other relevant policies
- ensuring familiarity with reporting processes, the roles of line manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (and who acts in their absence).

TRAINING

All staff who, through their role, are in contact with children and /or vulnerable adults will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level provided by [Safe CIC](#). Sources and types of training will include:

- safe working practices
- safe recruitment
- understanding child protection and the alerter guide for adult safeguarding.

COMMUNICATIONS AND DISCUSSION OF SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

- team meetings
- trustee meetings
- one-to-one meetings (formal or informal)
- participation in multi-agency safeguarding procedures and meetings in order to be involved in child/ adult protection procedures
- participation in joint client visits
- provision of a clear and effective reporting procedure which encourages reporting of concerns
- encouraging open discussion (e.g. during supervision and team meetings) to identify any barriers to reporting so that they can be addressed
- inclusion of safeguarding as a discussion prompt during supervision meetings/appraisals to encourage reflection.

SUPPORT

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned.

The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

- debriefing support for paid and unpaid staff so that they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with
- seeking further support as appropriate e.g. access to counselling supervision
- staff who have initiated protection concerns will be contacted by the line manager/DSL within a certain time-scale e.g. one week.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a support worker and a client. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

Big Leaf Foundation expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation. Employees and volunteers should undertake to observe or note any behaviour or use of language that might lead young people in our care to feel in any way marginalised.

The following professional boundaries must be adhered to:

Giving and receiving gifts from clients

- Big Leaf Foundation does not allow paid or unpaid staff to give gifts to or receive gifts from clients. However, gifts may be provided by the organisation as part of a planned activity.

Staff contact with user groups

- Personal relationships between a member of staff (paid or unpaid) and a client who is a current service user is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram.
- Big Leaf Foundation does however recognise that for staff/volunteers with dual roles (i.e. as foster carers in their own right) there may be some social contact as part of their other role with young people who are also beneficiaries of Big Leaf Foundation. Staff in this situation will be mindful of respecting professional boundaries and any concerns or challenges will be raised with their line manager.
- Young people who become Big Leaf Foundation volunteers will retain contacts with their peers who may also be beneficiaries. They will be supported to negotiate appropriate boundaries in this situation.

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached, this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures.

REPORTING

The process outlined below details the stages involved in **RAISING AND REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS**

1. Call 999 in an immediate emergency
2. Communicate concerns with immediate manager / DSL (and if not available the DDSL, or trustees)

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UK Registered Charity Number: 1181180

3. Seek medical attention for the vulnerable person if needed

(the following steps might be taken by the DSL / DDSL or by the team members themselves supported by the DSL/DDSL)

4. Discuss with parent / social worker / foster parents of child
5. or with vulnerable person
6. Obtain permission to make a referral, if safe and appropriate.
7. If needed, seek advice from the Children and Families helpdesk or Adults helpdesk. Details of which are [here](#)
Child Protection Consultation Line / Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) 0300 470 9100 (out of hours 01483 517 898)
8. Complete the [Local Authority Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Incident Report Form](#) if required and submit to the local authority within 24 hours of making a contact.
9. Ensure that feedback from the Local Authority CSPA is received and their response recorded.
10. In the case that escalation is required, concerns should be taken to the Partnership Support Manager at [Surrey Safeguarding Children Board](#).

FGM CONCERNS

Big Leaf Foundation understands that a mandatory duty requires all staff / volunteers to report any 'known' (disclosed) cases of FGM, identified in professional interaction, immediately to the police. This duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report, and it should not be transferred to the DSL, although the DSL should be informed.

The latest guidance is available [here](#).

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF MEMBERS

If the immediate manager is implicated, then it should be referred to their line manager or trustee.

In all instances the process for dealing with allegations against staff members should be handled within the contextual framework of Big Leaf Foundation's [Whistleblowing Policy](#) and [Disciplinary Policy](#)

1. Any member of staff (paid or unpaid) from Big Leaf Foundation is required to report any concerns in the first instance to their line manager/ safeguarding manager/ trustee
2. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted for advice.
3. The advice provided will be followed.

MONITORING

Big Leaf Foundation will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:

- safe recruitment practices
- DBS checks undertaken
- references applied for new staff
- records made and kept of supervision sessions
- training – register/record of staff training on child/vulnerable adult protection
- monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
- checking that policies are up to date and relevant
- reviewing the current reporting procedure in place
- presence and action of a Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for Safeguarding is in post.

MANAGING INFORMATION

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the [Data Protection Policy](#).

All Big Leaf Foundation staff and volunteers must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that they will keep secrets.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINTS

Big Leaf Foundation is aware of the SCC policy on resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children/escalation policy and if necessary this will be taken forward by the DSL.

The purpose of [The Surrey FaST Resolution Process](#) is:

- to create a transparent process setting out how disagreements should be dealt with between partner agencies with regards to professional practice when working with children and their families. Disagreements should be resolved quickly, at the earliest possible level, through child-centred discussion between agencies. The FaST policy outlines the process to be followed when professionals are unable to agree about what is in the best interests of the child.
- to ensure that where a resolution cannot be found, concerns can be escalated in a supportive, timely and inclusive manner to safeguard a child in need.

Conflicts in respect of the safety of vulnerable adults will be taken forward by DSL via the [SCC Community and Adult Care Directorate](#)

COMMUNICATING AND REVIEWING POLICY

Policies are available to stakeholders, partners and clients on request, and will be accessible through our website.

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the Safeguarding team once a year and/or when there are changes in legislation.