



**Future
Governance
Forum**

Safeguarding Policy

The Future Governance Forum

Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect against harm arising from:

- The conduct of Future Governance Forum employees or representatives
- The design, implementation, or publication of The Future Governance Forum's research, initiatives, or reports

Introduction

The Future Governance Forum will not regularly work with people under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults. But where we do, it is our priority to protect all people, particularly children, vulnerable adults, and other research participants from harm that may be caused due to their contact with The Future Governance Forum, its work or its staff.

General Obligations

The Future Governance Forum will ensure that everyone in the organisation understands and accepts their responsibility for safeguarding. This means following procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults and reporting any concerns about their welfare to the appropriate authorities.

Specifically, The Future Governance Forum and its staff must:

- Prevent, report, and respond to child and/or vulnerable adult abuse
- Provide training to Future Governance Forum employees to promote awareness of safeguarding obligations

This policy lays out The Future Governance Forum's commitments and informs Future Governance Forum employees and representatives of their safeguarding responsibilities. In addition to this general policy, we expect any work involving young people or vulnerable people to have a dedicated risk assessment, conducted and discussed at governance level before being undertaken.

Definitions

Abuse: Intentional injury or harm, including regular or repeated physical, emotional, or sexual harm, injury, or neglect. All sexual activity between an adult and a child is considered sexual abuse.

Child: A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

Exploitation: Abuse where compensation is involved or perpetrators benefit monetarily, socially, or politically. Exploitation is a form of coercion and violence.

Inappropriate behaviour: Inappropriate behaviour can be described as, but is not limited to, unwanted comments or advances of sexual or socially unacceptable nature, use of photographs, videos, or direct attribution of quotes or ideas without the consent of those depicted, harassment, touching, discrimination, sexual assault, stalking, contacting outside of professional capacity, etc.

Future Governance Forum representatives: Non-employees and other entities who are acting or could reasonably be understood by others to be acting as agents of Future Governance Forum. Future Governance Forum representatives can include Future Governance Forum's independent contractors or consultants, vendors, sub awardees, interns, volunteers, and Board members.

Research participants: People who participate in qualitative or quantitative research conducted or commissioned by Future Governance Forum.

Sexual assault: Sexual activity with another person who does not, or is not able to, explicitly consent to the activity. This includes rape and any sexual activity committed by force or violence. An individual may not be able to consent due to their age, incapacitation, the power dynamics present in the relationship, coercion, or the threat of force or violence.

Vulnerable adult: The foundation of our understanding of a vulnerable adult is the UK legal definition of a vulnerable adult as set out in the 1997 Police Act. In summary this means: A person aged 18 or over who is receiving care, health, or housing services and/or experiencing; a learning or physical disability; a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; a reduction in physical or mental capacity.

Decisions about an individual's vulnerability over and above the criteria in the act will be made on a case-by-case basis and must be made as part of project planning and reviewed as and when any relevant information comes to light.

Responsibilities

All Future Governance Forum employees and representatives are obliged to comply with this Safeguarding Policy and to contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents and addresses safeguarding violations.

Policy Statement and Code of Conduct

The Future Governance Forum recognizes that the welfare and interests of children and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. Therefore, it maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards abuse, exploitation or inappropriate behaviour with children or vulnerable adults. The Future Governance Forum commits to protecting the children and vulnerable adults with whom we work, including Future Governance Forum partners and those with whom we work indirectly.

A. Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding

Future Governance Forum staff and representatives must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Be alone with a child (within the context of The Future Governance Forum's research or program work) where possible
- Sexually abuse, assault, or exploit children or vulnerable adults
- Subject a child or vulnerable adult to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Break UK law as regards to sexual abuse or violence in any capacity outside of the context of children and vulnerable adults

B. Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Future Governance Forum staff and representatives must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual activity. This includes withholding of payments owed to research participants or partners
- Engage in sexual relationships with any research participants, since such relationships may be based on unequal power dynamics. This includes soliciting or sharing sexual content with participants

C. Research Participant Safeguarding

In addition to the above, Future Governance Forum staff and representatives should design and conduct research in accordance with broadly accepted ethical research guidelines.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Voluntary participation based on valid informed consent
- Assessing risks and benefits
- Enabling participation and representation
- Avoidance of personal and social harm to participants and researchers
- Participant confidentiality and data safety

All research must be designed in accordance with GDPR.

D. Safeguarding and Personnel

The Future Governance Forum's Senior Management Team will ensure that:

- Proper employment screening measures are in place to ensure that no one is recruited to the Future Governance Forum team to work with children or vulnerable adults if doing so would pose an unacceptable risk
- If Future Governance Forum work would involve people under the age of 18 or vulnerable people in any significant role, it is incumbent on the work's director to analyse whether DBS or other checks are necessary
- New employees and Future Governance Forum representatives are informed and trained on this Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding violations will result in immediate dismissal from a working relationship with The Future Governance Forum
- This policy and associated safeguarding measures are regularly reviewed and updated as needed
- A designated team member will serve as The Future Governance Forum's Safeguarding Officer. This person is responsible for receiving and investigating safeguarding concerns and complaints
- A board member is designated to advise, review and enforce the Safeguarding Policy

E. Reporting

Future Governance Forum staff and representatives are obliged to report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a Future Governance Forum employee or representative, as well as any other safeguarding concerns learned about in the course of employment to the Safeguarding Officer.

No form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal, or retaliation will be tolerated against any Future Governance Forum representative who in good faith reports any suspected form of abuse or exploitation.

Research participants will remain anonymous, unless otherwise stated and agreed upon in the research plan and as documented with informed consent.

Research participants must be aware of the process for reporting complaints or concerns as part of their informed consent paperwork.

All safeguarding concerns or complaints will be taken seriously and investigated by the Safeguarding Officer and designated Board director. Violations of law will be reported to the authorities.