Foundations website

Policies & Standards section in the website footer, containing:

1. Code of Ethics and Professional Practice
2. Safeguarding Policy
3. Complaints Policy

Foundations Child & Family Therapy
Code of Ethics and Professional Practice

Last reviewed: November 2026
Next review: November 2027

1. Our commitment

At Foundations Child & Family Therapy, we are committed to providing safe, respectful, inclusive and ethical therapeutic and assessment services to children, young people, adults and families.

We recognise that seeking support can be a significant step for individuals and families. We aim to create an environment where everyone feels listened to, valued and treated with dignity.

Our Code of Ethics outlines the professional standards and principles that guide our work and the behaviour expected of everyone working on behalf of Foundations.

2. Respect, dignity and equality

We are committed to:
- Treating every individual with kindness, dignity, fairness and respect.
- Recognising and celebrating individual differences, including neurodiversity.
- Providing an inclusive and non-judgemental environment.
- Respecting cultural, religious, personal and family differences.
- Challenging discrimination, bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviour.
- Making reasonable adjustments wherever possible to support individual needs.
- Listening to the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and adults.

We do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or any other protected characteristic.

3. Professional standards and competence

All practitioners working with Foundations are expected to:
- Work within the limits of their professional qualifications, training, experience and competence.
- Maintain appropriate professional registration or membership where applicable to their role.
- Undertake relevant continuing professional development.
- Participate in appropriate clinical supervision and reflective practice.
- Follow relevant professional codes of conduct and ethical frameworks.
- Maintain appropriate professional indemnity insurance.
- Recognise when a client's needs fall outside their area of expertise and provide appropriate signposting or referral.
- Maintain accurate, relevant and timely clinical records.

We expect all practitioners to take responsibility for maintaining their professional knowledge and ensuring their practice remains safe and appropriate.

4. Confidentiality and privacy

We respect the privacy of everyone who contacts or accesses our services.

Personal and clinical information will be handled sensitively and in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and our Privacy Notice.

Information will only be accessed or shared where there is an appropriate lawful basis.

There may be circumstances where confidentiality needs to be limited, particularly where:
- There is a concern that a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- An adult may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- There is a serious risk of harm to the individual or another person.
- Information is required by law or through a lawful request.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, we will explain when information may need to be shared and why.

5. Safeguarding and duty of care

The safety and welfare of children, young people and adults accessing our services are central to our work.

Everyone working with Foundations has a responsibility to recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

We will:
- Follow our Safeguarding Policy and relevant procedures.
- Take all concerns seriously.
- Respond promptly to disclosures or concerns about abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Report concerns through the appropriate safeguarding channels.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Never use physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse, intimidation or inappropriate disciplinary practices.
- Promote safe and appropriate working environments, including during online appointments.

Further information is available in our Safeguarding Policy.

6. Professional boundaries

We expect all practitioners and staff to maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries.

This includes:
- Maintaining professional relationships with clients and families.
- Avoiding inappropriate personal, financial or social relationships with clients.
- Not accepting gifts or benefits that could compromise professional judgement.
- Using professional communication channels.
- Respecting the privacy of clients and families outside appointments.
- Avoiding inappropriate contact through personal social media accounts.
- Ensuring that any contact outside agreed appointments is appropriate and professionally justified.

7. Informed consent and choice

We believe that individuals and families should understand the services being offered and be able to make informed decisions.

Before services commence, we aim to ensure that clients understand:
- The nature and purpose of the service.

- What an assessment or therapy appointment involves.
- Relevant fees and cancellation arrangements.
- Confidentiality and its limitations.
- How personal information is recorded and used.
- Their rights and responsibilities.

For children and young people, we consider age, understanding, capacity, parental responsibility and applicable consent requirements.

We aim to involve children and young people in decisions about their support in a way that is appropriate to their age and understanding.

8. Neuroaffirming and person-centred practice

We recognise that every individual has different strengths, needs, experiences and ways of communicating.

Our approach aims to be respectful of neurodivergent identity and individual differences.

We do not believe that people should be expected to hide or change who they are to meet other people's expectations.

We aim to:
- Understand the individual's experiences and perspective.
- Recognise strengths alongside areas where support may be helpful.
- Adapt our communication and working practices.
- Avoid judgemental or stigmatising language.
- Work collaboratively with individuals and families.

9. Accountability and raising concerns

We take professional accountability seriously.

If someone has a concern about the conduct of a member of our team or the service they have received, we encourage them to raise it with us.

All concerns will be treated respectfully and considered fairly.

We will not discriminate against anyone for raising a genuine concern or complaint.

Further information is available in our Complaints Policy.

10. Our responsibility

Everyone working with Foundations is expected to uphold this Code of Ethics.

Any concerns that a member of the team has not met these standards will be considered appropriately and may result in further action.

Where a practitioner belongs to a professional or regulatory body, concerns may also be referred to that organisation in accordance with its procedures.

Foundations Child & Family Therapy is committed to maintaining high standards of professional conduct, ethical practice and care.

2. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This is particularly important for Foundations because you provide therapy and assessments for children, young people and adults. It should make clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not just the responsibility of the clinical team.

Foundations Child & Family Therapy
Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

Last reviewed: November 2026
Next review: November 2027

1. Our safeguarding commitment

At Foundations Child & Family Therapy, the safety and welfare of the children, young people and adults who access our services are of the highest importance.

We are committed to providing a safe, supportive and respectful environment in which everyone is protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All members of our team, including practitioners, administrative staff, associates and anyone working on behalf of Foundations, have a duty to recognise concerns and respond appropriately.

We take all safeguarding concerns seriously and will act promptly where there is a

concern about someone's safety or wellbeing.

2. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to:
- Children and young people under the age of 18.
- Adults who may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Parents, carers and families accessing our services.
- All employees, practitioners, associates, contractors and individuals working on behalf of Foundations.

It applies to appointments taking place at our premises, in schools, in other agreed locations and through online services.

3. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting individuals from harm and promoting their welfare, safety and wellbeing.

For children and young people, this includes protecting them from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their health or development, ensuring they grow up in safe and effective care, and taking action to enable them to have the best possible outcomes.

For adults, safeguarding includes protecting their right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect, while promoting their independence, choice and control.

4. Types of abuse and neglect

Abuse can take many forms and may occur within families, relationships, institutions, communities or online.

Examples include:

Physical abuse
- Hitting, shaking, pushing or deliberately causing physical injury.
- Inappropriate physical punishment.
- Deliberately causing or fabricating illness.

Emotional or psychological abuse
- Threats, intimidation or humiliation.

- Bullying, coercion or controlling behaviour.
- Rejection, isolation or persistent criticism.
- Making someone feel frightened, worthless or unsafe.

Sexual abuse
- Sexual assault or inappropriate sexual contact.
- Exploitation or grooming.
- Involving a child in sexual activity or sexual images.
- Online sexual abuse or coercion.

Neglect
- Failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter.
- Failure to provide appropriate medical care.
- Lack of supervision or protection from danger.
- Failure to meet a child's emotional or developmental needs.

Financial abuse
- Theft or misuse of money or property.
- Coercion regarding financial decisions.
- Fraud or exploitation.

Domestic abuse
- Exposure to domestic violence or controlling behaviour.
- Physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse within relationships.
- Children experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse.

Exploitation
- Child sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Grooming, trafficking or modern slavery.
- Radicalisation or coercion into harmful activities.

Online abuse
- Cyberbullying.
- Online grooming.
- Sexual exploitation or inappropriate contact.
- Threats, harassment or the sharing of inappropriate images.

This list is not exhaustive. Abuse may take place in different forms and more than one type of abuse may occur at the same time.

5. Recognising safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding concerns may be identified through:
- A direct disclosure from a child, young person or adult.
- Observations of injuries, behaviour or emotional distress.
- Information shared by parents, carers or family members.
- Concerns raised by schools or other professionals.
- Changes in behaviour, presentation or circumstances.
- Information received during therapy or assessment appointments.

We recognise that individuals may find it difficult to disclose abuse or may communicate concerns indirectly.

All concerns must be taken seriously, even where there is no clear evidence.

6. Responding to a disclosure or concern

If a child, young person or adult discloses abuse or a safeguarding concern, our team will:

1. Listen calmly and take the disclosure seriously.
2. Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
3. Avoid asking leading or unnecessary questions.
4. Never promise to keep information secret.
5. Explain, in an age-appropriate way, that information may need to be shared to keep them or someone else safe.
6. Record the information as accurately as possible, using the individual's own words wherever possible.
7. Report the concern promptly to the designated safeguarding lead or appropriate deputy.
8. Ensure that appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

Staff and practitioners must not attempt to investigate allegations themselves or confront an alleged perpetrator.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, emergency services must be contacted by calling 999.

7. Reporting safeguarding concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be reported promptly to the Foundations Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Dr Diana Goldsmith
** Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Dr Cara James

The DSL is responsible for considering the concern, ensuring that it is recorded and deciding what further safeguarding action is required.

This may include contacting:
- The relevant local authority Children's Social Care team.
- The local authority Adult Safeguarding team.
- The police.
- Other relevant safeguarding professionals or agencies.

If the DSL is unavailable, or the concern relates to the DSL, the concern should be escalated to the deputy or another appropriate senior person. Staff must not delay action where someone may be at risk.

8. Confidentiality and information sharing

We respect the confidentiality of our clients. However, confidentiality is not absolute.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, information may need to be shared without consent if there is an appropriate lawful basis to protect an individual or prevent harm.

We will:
- Share information only with appropriate individuals or agencies.
- Share information that is relevant and proportionate.
- Record the reasons for sharing information.
- Handle safeguarding records securely.
- Explain information-sharing decisions where appropriate and safe to do so.

The safety and welfare of an individual will take priority where there is a serious safeguarding concern.

9. Consent and parental responsibility

Where we work with children and young people, we recognise the importance of appropriate consent and parental responsibility.

We will consider:
- Who holds parental responsibility.

- Whether the necessary consent has been obtained.
- The child's age, understanding and wishes.
- Whether the child is able to make relevant decisions for themselves.
- Any safeguarding concerns that may affect how information is shared.

Where there are concerns about parental involvement or contact, decisions will be considered in the context of the child's safety and applicable legal requirements.

10. Safer working practices

Foundations is committed to maintaining safe professional boundaries and working practices.

These include:
- Appropriate recruitment and pre-engagement checks.
- Relevant DBS checks where legally eligible and appropriate to the role.
- Safeguarding training appropriate to responsibilities.
- Appropriate professional supervision.
- Clear professional boundaries.
- Safe use of therapy and assessment rooms.
- Appropriate arrangements for children attending appointments.
- Appropriate management of online appointments.
- Secure storage of client records.
- Clear procedures for reporting incidents and concerns.

Parents and carers will be informed of relevant arrangements for their child's attendance and any expectations regarding remaining on the premises.

11. Online safeguarding

Where appointments take place online, we take reasonable steps to maintain a safe and confidential environment.

This includes:
- Using appropriate professional platforms.
- Confirming the identity and location of participants where appropriate.
- Establishing suitable arrangements for privacy.
- Considering whether online appointments are appropriate for the individual's needs.
- Agreeing what action will be taken if a safeguarding concern arises during an online appointment.
- Ensuring there is an appropriate emergency contact and response arrangement.

Online appointments will not be used where they cannot be delivered safely or appropriately.

12. Allegations or concerns about a member of staff or practitioner

Any allegation or concern involving a member of the Foundations team will be taken seriously.

The concern will be referred to an appropriate senior person and managed in accordance with relevant safeguarding procedures.

Where required, we will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), local authority safeguarding services, the police or relevant professional or regulatory bodies.

Where an allegation concerns the DSL, it must be escalated to another appropriate senior person.

13. Safeguarding adults at risk

We recognise that adults may experience abuse, neglect or exploitation and may require additional safeguarding support.

We will respect an adult's rights, wishes, independence and decision-making wherever possible.

Where there is a concern about an adult's safety, we will consider their circumstances, capacity where relevant, immediate risks and whether referral to Adult Social Care or another appropriate agency is necessary.

14. Recording and reviewing concerns

All safeguarding concerns and actions taken must be recorded accurately and securely.

Records should include:
- Date and time of the concern.
- The individual involved.
- Details of the concern or disclosure.
- Any immediate action taken.
- Who the concern was reported to.
- Decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.

- Any referrals or information shared.
- Follow-up actions.

Safeguarding records will be managed in accordance with our data protection and record retention procedures.

15. Training and responsibilities

All team members are expected to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and complete appropriate safeguarding training for their role.

The DSL and deputy will maintain appropriate knowledge and training to undertake their responsibilities.

Safeguarding procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated where necessary.

16. Further help and emergency support

If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

For non-emergency police assistance, call **101**.

Where there are concerns about a child, contact the Children's Social Care team at the relevant local authority.

Where there are concerns about an adult at risk, contact the relevant local authority Adult Social Care safeguarding team.

If you have a safeguarding concern about someone accessing Foundations services, please contact us using our safeguarding contact details above.

17. Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or our working practices.

Foundations Child & Family Therapy is committed to protecting the welfare, dignity and safety of everyone who accesses our services.
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3. Complaints Policy and Procedure

This should be particularly clear for parents and clients. It needs to reassure people that raising a complaint will not affect their access to services or the way they are treated.

Foundations Child & Family Therapy
Complaints Policy and Procedure

Last reviewed: November 2026
Next review: November 2027

1. Our commitment to listening

At Foundations Child & Family Therapy, we aim to provide a professional, supportive and respectful service to everyone who contacts or accesses our services.

We recognise that, on occasion, things may not go as expected. If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, we want to hear from you.

We take all complaints seriously and view feedback as an opportunity to understand concerns, improve our services and maintain high standards of care.

We will ensure that all complaints are treated fairly, sensitively and without discrimination.

Making a complaint will not affect your right to access our services or the way you are treated by Foundations.

2. What can you complain about?

You can raise a complaint about any aspect of the service you have received, including:
- The quality of care, therapy or assessment services.
- Communication with our administrative or clinical team.
- Delays, appointments or waiting times.
- The conduct or behaviour of a member of our team.
- The way your enquiry or referral has been handled.
- Confidentiality or the handling of personal information.
- Fees, payments or cancellation arrangements.
- The way a previous concern has been managed.

This list is not exhaustive.

3. Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by:
- A current or former client.
- A parent or carer.
- Someone with appropriate authority to act on behalf of a client.
- A person raising a concern about the conduct of a member of our team.

Where a complaint concerns a child or young person, we will consider their wishes, feelings, age and understanding, alongside parental responsibility and confidentiality requirements.

We may need the client's consent or other appropriate authority before discussing confidential clinical information with someone acting on their behalf.

4. How to raise a complaint

We encourage you to raise your concerns as soon as possible so that we have the opportunity to understand what has happened and resolve the matter.

You can contact us in writing, by email or by telephone.

Email: info@foundationschildtherapy.com
Telephone: 01732 442885
Address: Foundations Child & Family Therapy, 162 High Street, Tonbridge.

Please include:
- Your name and contact details.
- The name of the person receiving the service, where applicable.
- A description of your concern.
- Relevant dates or appointments.
- What you would like us to do to resolve the matter.

You do not need to use a formal complaints form to make a complaint.

If you require help or an alternative way to communicate your concerns, please let us know.

5. Stage One – Informal resolution

Where appropriate, we may be able to resolve a concern informally.

This may involve:
- A discussion with the relevant member of the team.
- Clarification of information or a misunderstanding.
- An explanation or apology.
- An agreed action to resolve the concern.

We will aim to resolve straightforward concerns promptly.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or you would prefer a formal investigation, you can proceed directly to Stage Two.

6. Stage Two – Formal complaint

If you wish to make a formal complaint, please put your concerns in writing to Foundations using the contact details above.

Once received:

Acknowledgement

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days.

Investigation

An appropriate senior member of the team will review the complaint.

This may include:
- Reviewing relevant records and correspondence.
- Speaking with the individuals involved.
- Seeking clarification where necessary.
- Reviewing relevant policies and procedures.
- Considering whether any further action is required.

Where possible, the complaint will be investigated by someone who has not been directly involved in the matter.

Written response

We aim to provide a full written response within 20 working days of receiving the formal complaint.

Our response will explain:
- What we have investigated.
- The findings of the investigation.
- Whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.
- Any actions we intend to take.
- What you can do if you remain unhappy with the outcome.

If the investigation requires more time, we will contact you to explain the reason for the delay and provide an updated timescale.

7. Stage Three – Review of the outcome

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, you may request a review.

Please contact us within 20 working days of receiving our written response, explaining why you remain dissatisfied.

A senior person who was not responsible for the original investigation will review the decision wherever reasonably possible.

We will aim to provide a response to the review within 20 working days.

If further time is required, we will keep you informed.

The review will consider whether the original complaint was investigated fairly, whether relevant information was considered and whether the outcome was reasonable.

8. Complaints involving a practitioner

If your complaint relates to an individual practitioner, we will consider the nature of the concern and take appropriate steps.

Where relevant, this may include:
- Reviewing the practitioner's professional conduct.
- Seeking an explanation from the practitioner.
- Reviewing clinical or administrative records.
- Considering whether professional supervision or further training is required.
- Taking appropriate action in line with our contractual and professional responsibilities.

If the practitioner is registered with or belongs to a professional body, you may also be

able to raise your concern directly with that organisation.

We can provide relevant professional membership information where appropriate.

9. Confidentiality and data protection

All complaints will be handled confidentially and information will only be shared with those who need it to investigate and respond appropriately.

Complaint records will be stored securely and managed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and our Privacy Notice.

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, we may need to take immediate action under our Safeguarding Policy, regardless of whether the formal complaints process has concluded.

10. What happens after a complaint?

We aim to learn from complaints and use feedback to improve our services.

Where appropriate, this may include:
- Reviewing working practices.
- Updating policies or procedures.
- Providing additional staff training.
- Improving communication.
- Reviewing appointment or referral processes.
- Taking further action where professional standards have not been met.

We will consider whether any changes are needed to prevent similar concerns arising in the future.

11. External organisations and further escalation

If your complaint relates to a practitioner's professional conduct, you may be able to contact their relevant professional or regulatory body.

For example:
- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), where the practitioner is a BACP member.
- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), where the practitioner is registered with the HCPC.

- Other relevant professional or regulatory organisations, depending on the practitioner's registration.

If your complaint concerns how your personal information has been handled, you may also contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

If you believe a child or adult is at risk of harm, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy. Do not wait for a complaints investigation to raise an urgent safeguarding concern.

12. Our assurance

We understand that raising a complaint can feel difficult, particularly when you or your family are already experiencing challenging circumstances.

We will listen, treat your concerns with respect and make every reasonable effort to resolve matters fairly.

At Foundations, we believe that listening to feedback is an important part of providing a safe, supportive and continually improving service.
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