BrainWaves Research Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

BrainWaves Research is committed to promoting the wellbeing of adolescents and recognises its moral and legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people (defined as anyone under the age of 18) who may be affected by or come into contact with our work.

While BrainWaves Research may not always have direct contact with children and young people, we acknowledge that our research, advocacy, partnerships, and publications can influence environments and policies that impact their lives. We are dedicated to creating a safe and protective environment and will take all reasonable steps to prevent harm, abuse, or neglect, and to respond appropriately if concerns arise.

The welfare of the child is paramount in all considerations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals associated with BrainWaves Research, including:

- Trustees
- Paid staff (full-time, part-time, temporary)
- Volunteers
- Consultants and contractors
- Researchers
- Anyone working on behalf of BrainWaves Research

It covers all activities undertaken by BrainWaves Research, whether online or offline, and extends to our interactions with partner organisations, funders, and the wider public.

3. Definitions

- **Child/Young Person:** For the purpose of this policy, a child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years, in line with the Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- **Safeguarding:** This is a broader term than 'child protection' and refers to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. It includes:
    - Protecting children from maltreatment.
    - Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
    - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
    - Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.
- **Child Protection:** This refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- **Harm:** Includes ill treatment, impairment of physical or mental health, and impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development. This can be a result

of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect), exploitation, or witnessing domestic abuse.
- **Vulnerable Adult:** An adult aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. (While the primary focus is adolescents, research may involve adults who have safeguarding needs).

4. Guiding Principles

BrainWaves Research is committed to:

- **Child-Centred Approach:** Always acting in the best interests of the child.
- **Transparency:** Being open and transparent about our safeguarding practices.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring all individuals associated with BrainWaves Research understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- **Prevention:** Taking proactive steps to minimise risks of harm to children and young people.
- **Response:** Responding swiftly, appropriately, and consistently to all safeguarding concerns and allegations.
- **Collaboration:** Working in partnership with other agencies, including statutory bodies, where appropriate.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly reviewing and updating our safeguarding practices in line with legislation and best practice.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees holds overall responsibility for safeguarding within BrainWaves Research. Their duties include:

- Ensuring the charity complies with all relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance.
- Approving and regularly reviewing the Safeguarding Policy and related procedures.
- Ensuring adequate resources are allocated for safeguarding training and implementation.
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Trustee with specific oversight for safeguarding.

5.2. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns and has lead responsibility for managing and reporting these concerns.

- **Name:** Natalie Coles
- **Contact:** natalie.coles@brainwaveshub.org
- **Responsibilities:**
    - Acting as the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.
    - Providing advice and support to staff and volunteers on safeguarding issues.
    - Liaising with external agencies (e.g., local authority children's services, police) as required.
    - Maintaining accurate and confidential records of safeguarding concerns.

- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Keeping up-to-date with national and local safeguarding legislation and best practice.

5.3. All Staff, Volunteers, and Consultants

All individuals associated with BrainWaves Research have a responsibility to:

- Read, understand, and adhere to this Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures.
- Report any safeguarding concerns or allegations immediately to the DSL.
- Maintain a professional and appropriate demeanour in all interactions related to BrainWaves Research's work.
- Undergo relevant safeguarding training as required by their role.

6. Reporting Concerns and Allegations

Any individual associated with BrainWaves Research who has a safeguarding concern or receives an allegation of abuse or harm relating to a child or young person (or vulnerable adult) must:

1. **Report Immediately:** Report the concern or allegation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible, ideally within the same working day. If the DSL is unavailable, report to the Deputy DSL or a Trustee.
2. **Record Information:** Make a factual record of the concern, including:
    - Date and time of the concern/disclosure.
    - Name of the child/young person (if known).
    - Nature of the concern (what was seen, heard, or reported).
    - Any actions taken and by whom.
    - Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
3. **Confidentiality:** All safeguarding concerns will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, shared only on a "need to know" basis with relevant individuals and external agencies. No one working or involved with our organisation can promise absolute confidentiality if a child is at risk of harm.

The DSL will then follow established procedures for assessing the concern, potentially escalating it to the relevant statutory agencies (e.g., Local Authority Children's Services, Police) if there is a risk of significant harm.

7. Safer Recruitment

While BrainWaves Research may not engage in direct work with children, we are committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure that all individuals working with or for the organisation are suitable. This includes:

- Clear job descriptions outlining safeguarding responsibilities.
- Requesting references.
- Conducting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for roles that are eligible and where required (e.g., roles involving access to sensitive data about children, or roles that may involve occasional indirect contact).
- Ensuring all new staff and volunteers are aware of and sign up to this Safeguarding Policy and any relevant Code of Conduct.

8. Data Protection and Confidentiality

BrainWaves Research will handle all personal information, especially sensitive data related to safeguarding concerns, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Information will be stored securely, accessed only by authorised personnel, and shared only when necessary to protect a child or young person from harm, or as required by law.

9. Training and Awareness

BrainWaves Research is committed to ensuring that all relevant staff, volunteers, and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding training, proportionate to their role and level of responsibility. This will include:

- Induction training for all new personnel covering this policy.
- Regular refresher training for all relevant personnel.

10. Policy Review and Monitoring

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance, or the nature of BrainWaves Research's activities. The effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures will be monitored regularly to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

11. Code of Conduct

All individuals associated with BrainWaves Research are expected to adhere to a professional Code of Conduct, which complements this Safeguarding Policy by outlining expected behaviours and professional boundaries.

12. Key Contact Information

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**
    - Name: Natalie Coles
    - Email: natalie.coles@brainwaveshub.org
    - Phone: 07742 630728
- **Trustee with Safeguarding Oversight:**
    - Name: Princess Dora Loewenstein
    - Email: dora@loewenstein.me.uk

Date Approved: August 2025

Next Review Date: May 2026