



## **Vulnerable Supporters - Policy Statement**

Fundraising activities, public support and public trust are all essential to the British Psychotherapy Foundation. We believe that giving to your favourite causes should be a positive experience for all, whether an existing donor or potential new supporter.

Everyone should have the opportunity to donate if they are able to, but the British Psychotherapy Foundation recognises that it is inevitable that some of the many people that we engage with through our fundraising activities will not always have the capacity, at the point of the interaction, to fully understand the nature of the donation they are being asked to give to the British Psychotherapy Foundation, or the consequences of making that donation.

The British Psychotherapy Foundation also understands that people in vulnerable circumstances may need further support before deciding whether to donate. The British Psychotherapy Foundation recognises that it has an obligation to protect those in vulnerable circumstances. Whenever we suspect that someone we engage with doesn't have the ability to make an informed decision or are vulnerable in that moment in time, we will take steps to immediately end the engagement. This will always be done politely, and without making a request for a donation or any direct enquiries about the individual's capacity to make a decision or the existence of vulnerable circumstances.

This approach applies in all fundraising areas whether delivered by our direct employees and volunteers or through a third party or agency. The British Psychotherapy Foundation will provide alternative options for the individual to engage with us once the conversation has ended, thereby upholding the right that everybody has to donate if they wish to and are able to do so.

## **Sector Guidance**

The Institute of Fundraising's (IoF) Code of Fundraising practice states that:

Fundraisers must take all reasonable steps to treat a donor fairly, enabling them to make an informed decision about any donation. This must include considering the needs of any potential donor who may be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support to make an informed decision.

Fundraisers must not exploit the credulity, lack of knowledge, apparent need for care and support or vulnerable circumstance of any donor at any point in time.

The British Psychotherapy Foundation recognises that it may be difficult in some situations for fundraisers to make a clear-cut decision as to whether or not someone is in a vulnerable circumstance or lacks capacity. The person is likely to be a stranger to the fundraiser; the interaction can be short-lived and may not be in person. The British Psychotherapy Foundation provides guidelines for fundraisers, and our approach is always to be observant, respectful, and compassionate.

## **Definitions**

Vulnerable Supporter – an individual that finds it difficult to immediately make an informed decision about the choices offered to them. For example, a vulnerable supporter may experience all or none of the following:

- a diagnosed condition such as dementia
- times of stress or anxiety (e.g. bereavement, redundancy)
- an undiagnosed or temporary mental health condition such as severe anxiety
- learning difficulties
- difficulty understanding the language
- under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- financial vulnerability (where a gift from a donor may impact on their ability to sufficiently care for themselves or leave them in financial hardship)

## **What the policy involves**

The British Psychotherapy Foundation is compassionate towards its supporters and will never exploit vulnerability. We will always do everything we can to assist supporters to make informed decisions about the support they choose to give to the British Psychotherapy Foundation.

We fully comply with the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice and, when dealing with supporters via telephone, we follow the guidance provided.

The British Psychotherapy Foundation allows supporters or those acting on their behalf to declare vulnerability.

The British Psychotherapy Foundation will not contact supporters with the aim of asking for an increase in their giving where the supporter's records indicate a declaration of vulnerability.

Regardless of if a declaration has been made or not, the British Psychotherapy Foundation does not accept donations where it has reason to believe that a supporter may be experiencing vulnerable circumstances and accepting the donation would be ethically wrong and/or harmful to the donor.

Should a situation arise where the British Psychotherapy Foundation becomes aware that it has unknowingly accepted donations from an individual during a time that he or she was experiencing vulnerable circumstances, it will endeavour to return all donations accepted during this period.

Should the British Psychotherapy Foundation receive information regarding a supporter's vulnerability from a third party, it will not act on any request to alter the supporters' preferences unless the third party can provide evidence that he or she has authority to act on behalf of the supporter.

If the British Psychotherapy Foundation becomes aware of a situation where a third-party agency acting on its behalf has not acted in accordance with this policy, it may stop working with the agency or ask that individual fundraisers responsible for non-compliance with the policy be removed from any British Psychotherapy Foundation campaigns and/or activities.

The British Psychotherapy Foundation recognises that it may sometimes be difficult for fundraisers to assess the vulnerability of a supporter. In cases where a fundraiser is unsure, they must ask their manager for a second opinion and approval to accept any donation.

If employees or volunteers believe they have interacted with a vulnerable supporter and are concerned about their welfare, the British Psychotherapy Foundation Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If you have any concerns about the British Psychotherapy Foundation Fundraising practices, please contact us:

Telephone: 0207 561 9240

Email: [hello@bpc.org.uk](mailto:hello@bpc.org.uk)