

Research Integrity Policy

Introduction

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is committed to maintaining high standards of honesty, rigour, transparency, accountability, care and respect in the research it conducts, commissions, funds or publishes.

YEF generates and uses evidence to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. Trust in the quality and independence of that evidence is central to YEF's mission.

This policy sets out YEF's approach to promoting and protecting research integrity across its research, evaluation and evidence activity.

Purpose

This policy aims to:

- promote good research practice across YEF's research and evidence activity;
- ensure research is designed, commissioned, managed and reported responsibly;
- provide clear routes for raising concerns about research conduct;
- support compliance with funder expectations, including UKRI requirements where relevant;
- support confidence in YEF's evidence, publications and decision-making.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- research commissioned by YEF;
- evaluations funded or commissioned by YEF;
- research or evidence activity directly undertaken by YEF staff;
- data analysis undertaken for research or evidence purposes;
- research partnerships where YEF is a named party;
- consultants, contractors or partner organisations undertaking research on behalf of YEF.

This policy should be read alongside YEF's safeguarding, procurement, data protection, whistleblowing and conflicts of interest policies.

Principles

YEF expects all research activity associated with the organisation to reflect the following principles.

Honesty

Research aims, methods, findings, limitations and interests should be communicated truthfully.

Rigour

Research should use appropriate methods and maintain high professional standards.

Transparency

YEF should be open about funding, methods, assumptions, decisions and limitations where possible.

Accountability

There should be clear responsibility for research governance, quality and conduct.

Care and respect

Research should protect participants, researchers and communities, with particular care for children, young people and vulnerable groups.

Independence

Research findings should not be improperly influenced by funders, delivery partners or internal interests.

Roles and responsibilities

YEF Committee

The YEF Committee provides oversight of YEF's research integrity arrangements and receives assurance reporting as appropriate.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is ultimately accountable for organisational compliance with this policy.

Director of Evidence and Understanding

The Director of Evidence and Understanding is YEF's senior lead for research integrity and is responsible for:

- oversight of this policy;
- promoting good research practice;
- advising on research integrity concerns;
- maintaining proportionate records of formal concerns;
- preparing YEF's annual Research Integrity Statement where required.

Evidence and Evaluation staff and project leads

Evidence and Evaluation staff and project leads are responsible for ensuring research activity under their oversight complies with this policy.

All staff, contractors and commissioned partners

All staff, contractors and commissioned partners are responsible for acting honestly, following relevant procedures and raising concerns where appropriate.

Research commissioning and delivery

YEF will seek to ensure that research it commissions or undertakes:

- has clear objectives and appropriate methodology;
- uses suitably qualified researchers;
- has proportionate governance arrangements;
- meets relevant legal and ethical requirements;
- protects confidential and personal data;
- includes appropriate contractual terms;
- has arrangements for quality assurance;
- maintains proper records of key decisions and outputs.

Where research is externally commissioned, YEF will normally require providers to confirm compliance with recognised research standards and relevant ethics processes.

Publication and transparency

YEF is committed to open and accurate reporting of research. This includes, where appropriate:

- publishing findings regardless of result;
- declaring limitations;
- distinguishing evidence from opinion;
- correcting material errors when identified;
- declaring funding sources and relevant interests;
- publishing methods summaries where practical.

Publication may be subject to legitimate confidentiality, safeguarding, legal or data protection restrictions.

Conflicts of interest

Any person involved in commissioning, conducting, reviewing or approving research must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

Examples include financial interests, personal relationships, prior involvement with delivery organisations, or reputational interests that may affect impartiality.

Conflicts must be recorded and managed proportionately. This may include withdrawal from decision-making where required.

Declaration of conflicts of interest and the processes involved are covered in detail in YEF's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Reporting concerns and misconduct

YEF takes concerns about research conduct seriously. Concerns may include:

- fabrication or falsification of findings;
- misrepresentation of methods or results;
- plagiarism;
- failure to obtain required approvals;
- serious breaches of confidentiality or data protection;
- suppression or manipulation of findings;

- undeclared conflicts of interest.

Concerns should be raised with the Director of Evidence and Understanding or through YEF's Whistleblowing Policy.

YEF will assess concerns fairly, confidentially and proportionately. External specialists may be appointed where appropriate.

Outcomes may include no case to answer, corrective action, re-analysis or correction, contractual remedies, disciplinary action, or referral to funders, regulators or other relevant bodies.

Governance and annual reporting

YEF will maintain proportionate records relating to research integrity.

Annually, the Director of Evidence and Understanding will provide a report to the Directors Team (and escalating to the YEF Committee as appropriate) covering:

- formal concerns raised, where applicable;
- themes or lessons learned;
- improvements made;
- confirmation of ongoing compliance arrangements.

YEF will publish an annual Research Integrity Statement where required.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where required by changes in law, regulation, funder requirements, organisational activity or lessons learned from incidents.

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Reviewed by: Director of Evidence and Understanding

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Approved by: Matt van Poortvliet

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