

Bliss Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Purpose and Aim

Bliss' vision is that every baby born premature or sick in the UK has the best chance of survival and quality of life. We achieve this by working towards equity of care, equity of voice and equity of support for all neonatal babies.

We achieve this by supporting families to be involved in care, supporting healthcare professionals, influencing policy and practice, and enabling life-changing research.

As a result of this work Bliss representatives engage directly and indirectly with adults who may be at risk of harm, and with children. This could be through interactions with beneficiaries (premature and sick babies and children who were born premature or sick), service users such as parents and families, with healthcare professionals, Bliss staff, trustees and others.

Bliss' values of being ambitious, supportive and trusted underpin our responsibility to make sure our interactions are managed thoughtfully, with due attention to risk of harm and safeguarding best practice.

This policy aims to:

- Help protect the children and adults at risk of harm who we work with
- Set out Bliss' responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm
- Detail who holds those responsibilities
- Provide practical definitions of safeguarding, risk of harm, abuse and neglect
- Summarise the responsibilities of Bliss representatives, the Safeguarding Lead, SMT, Trustees and Bliss
- Summarise Bliss' approach to managing safeguarding concerns
- Summarise Bliss' approach to risk assessment and the principle safeguarding risks
- Identify other Bliss policies and procedures which are relevant to Safeguarding adults at risk of harm and children.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trustee Board.

2. Policy scope

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and this policy therefore applies to anyone who is representing Bliss. Bliss representatives include, but are not limited to:

- Bliss members of staff
- Freelancers and contractors working on behalf of Bliss
- Bliss Volunteers, including Bliss Champions, Bliss Volunteer Baby Charter Assessors, fundraising support volunteers and other volunteer ambassadors.
- Bliss Trustees

The policy covers interactions between Bliss representatives and others, including but not limited to:

- Beneficiaries (babies or children born premature or sick)
- Service users (families and carers of babies or children born premature or sick, and others)
- Healthcare professionals
- Bliss members of staff
- Freelancers and contractors working on behalf of Bliss
- Bliss Volunteers
- Bliss Trustees

This policy should be read alongside our other policies and guidance relating to:

- Data protection and confidentiality
- Recruitment of applicants with criminal records
- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Volunteering
- Service-user Involvement
- Complaints
- Staff management and expectations
- Whistleblowing

3. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Bliss Trustees

Trustees must take reasonable steps to protect from harm people who come into contact with Bliss.

The relevant authorities will hold Trustees to account if things go wrong and will check that Trustees followed appropriate guidance and the law. Trustees are expected to take responsibility for putting things right. Trustees should promote an open and positive culture and ensure all involved feel able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to.

Trustees should make sure that Bliss:

- Has an adequate Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures and guidance, which are updated regularly and kept fit for purpose
- Identifies safeguarding risks, to beneficiaries and anyone connected to the charity, including risks that may be emerging.

- Ensures everyone at the charity – including staff, volunteers and trustees – is appropriately trained and knows how to recognise, respond to, report and record a safeguarding concern.
- Ensures there is a culture of learning around Safeguarding at the charity, including the regular review of concerns
- Reviews the posts at the charity which can and must receive DBS clearance in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, or PVG clearance in Scotland

All Trustees should undertake safeguarding training every year.

The designated Safeguarding Trustee is Charlotte Witteridge, who provides support and guidance to the Safeguarding Lead, including to review more detailed procedures and documents.

2. Bliss' Responsibilities

The charity, led by the Senior Management Team, must ensure that Bliss is acting in accordance with best practice and appropriate guidance. This includes making sure that:

- This policy is reviewed annually, or when any major incident occurs, or significant potential changes are identified.
- All Bliss representatives are aware of the Bliss' Safeguarding Policy
- All Bliss employees, volunteers and Trustees complete essential Safeguarding training as part of an induction into their role, and on an annual basis thereafter.
- Additional safeguarding training and support is provided to Bliss representatives who have regular direct or indirect contact with children or with adults at risk of harm.
- Procedures relating to safeguarding are followed appropriately.
- The Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence (e.g. due to annual leave or working patterns) a member of the Senior Management Team acting as deputy, can be contacted during business hours (7am to 7pm from Monday to Friday), and at other times as necessary
- The Safeguarding Lead is supported in the completion of their responsibilities.

In order to allow for Safeguarding risks, concerns and incidents to be appropriately managed (e.g. in the absence of the Safeguarding Lead, or in order to support the Safeguarding Lead) all members of the Senior Management Team have access to un-redacted reports of recorded concerns and incidents, which can include personal and sensitive data and information.

3. Responsibilities of Safeguarding Lead

This person is responsible for the day-to-day oversight and implementation of the policy and procedures, supporting Bliss representatives, and ensuring continuous learning. Responsibilities include:

- To ensure this policy is reviewed annually, or when any major incident occurs, or potential changes are identified

- To provide the first point of contact for Bliss representatives to report safeguarding incidents or concerns
- To ensure there is an appropriate point of contact for Bliss representatives should they not be available (usually members of the SMT acting as Deputy Safeguarding Lead)
- To oversee the completion of the Bliss Safeguarding Procedures, supporting Bliss representatives as appropriate
- To assess the Safeguarding risk of Bliss activities, and ensure relevant members of staff and trustees are aware of any activities with elevated risks
- To take steps to ensure concerns and incidents are reviewed, and learning is taken forward appropriately.

The Safeguarding Lead is the Director of Services, Peter Bradley.

4. Responsibilities of members of the Senior Management Team

In addition to their leadership responsibilities detailed in 3.2, members of the Senior Management Team have responsibility to:

- Act as deputy to the Safeguarding Lead, deputising for all responsibilities of the Safeguarding Lead should they not be available.
- Provide support to the Safeguarding Lead in the completion of their duties.

5. Responsibilities of Bliss representatives

Bliss representatives are responsible for understanding and adhering to Bliss safeguarding policies and procedures, including:

- To be familiar with the Bliss Safeguarding Policy and procedures for recognising, reporting responding and recording Safeguarding concerns and incidents
- To undertake Safeguarding training annually when prompted by Bliss (employees, trustees and volunteers)
- To complete additional Safeguarding training as identified by Bliss' Safeguarding Lead
- To report any concerns they identify with the training, support, procedures or policy to the Safeguarding Lead, or to a member of SMT if the concern relates to the Safeguarding Lead
- To identify and make the Safeguarding Lead of any planned activities which may require specific safeguarding risk to be assessed in advance
- To complete the survey of Safeguarding practice and risk every 2 years.

4. Managing safeguarding concerns

At any time where they have come into any form of contact with an adult or child who they think could be at risk of harm, Bliss' representatives should work with the Safeguarding Lead to recognise, report, respond and record as outlined in the Bliss safeguarding procedures.

In the first instance, this means they should act to gather information, make appropriate notes, and without delay report their concerns to the Safeguarding Lead (or their deputy),

The Safeguarding Lead will support them to take appropriate actions. These actions may include asking further questions to gather further information and can also include the reporting or referral of concerns to appropriate authorities.

5. Definitions

1. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding duties are defined in two ways, according to whether the subject of the risk is over 18 (an adult) or under 18 (a child). Safeguarding children is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children, ensure they grow up with the provision of safe and effective care, and protect them from harm. Adult safeguarding is working with adults at risk of harm to keep them safe from abuse or neglect. Safeguarding includes taking action to enable children and adults at risk of harm to have the best outcomes.

2. Who is a child or young person?

Bliss uses the definition of a child commonly used in the UK. This is that a child is anyone who is yet to reach their 18th birthday.

The term 'young person' or 'young people' may also be used to denote older children who are able to make decisions for themselves, but who remain under 18.

Bliss' beneficiaries are babies born sick or premature, who are children. Some of Bliss service users will also be children, e.g. Parents under the age of 18, who can also be referred to as young people.

3. Who is an adult at risk of harm?

Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not a relevant authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and;
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

4. What are Safeguarding concerns and incidents?

A safeguarding concern is a feeling or worry that a child or adult may be at risk of harm, or may have been harmed. A concern can be recognised by any Bliss representative, including all staff and volunteers. Concerns may relate to something directly seen or heard or may relate to information which has come to the organisation through any means. A safeguarding incident is when something has happened which has intentionally or unintentionally caused harm, or risk of harm.

5. What is harm?

The term harm covers all harmful behaviour, for example:

- Physical harm
- Psychological harm causing fear, alarm or distress
- Behaviour which adversely affects property, rights or interests (for example, theft, fraud, embezzlement or extortion)
- Self-harm
- Neglect.

The NSPCC defines child abuse as any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention.

6. Risk Assessment

Bliss takes an active approach to assessing safeguarding risk, whereby the risks of standard activity and special activity are recorded, and mitigations considered.

In Bliss' organisational risk register, we have one overarching safeguarding risk described as below (updated with new wording for 24/25 risk register, with likelihood / impact ratings from May 2024):

Risk: risk drivers	Risk owner	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation and controls	Updates / Progress on Actions
Serious safeguarding incident: increasing reach and complexity of cases supported, risk of not handling sufficiently	Director of Services			<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Updated safeguarding policy and processes in place- Safeguarding Trustee working closely with Safeguarding Lead on all processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Process to discuss and review any safeguarding concerns working well

A more detailed risk register for Safeguarding at Bliss is kept separately. Specific activities which may involve additional or different risks are assessed using a risk assessment and are approved ahead of activity by the Safeguarding Lead.

Risks are reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team and the Trustee Board, alongside a review of learning from concerns and incidents with actions taken forward by the Safeguarding Lead and others.

Policy Owner: Peter Bradley, Director of Services

Date of next review: July 2026