Safeguarding children and adults at risk policy

The British Society for Immunology (BSI) is a registered charity and the leading UK membership organisation working with scientists and clinicians from academia and industry to forward immunology research and application. Our mission is to support our immunology community in driving scientific discovery and making a positive impact on health.

Purpose:

The British Society for Immunology (BSI) is committed to promoting the welfare and well-being of all individuals who come into contact with our activities, including events, outreach, partnerships and digital engagement. The BSI promotes a culture where concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal, and no individual will suffer detriment for raising a safeguarding concern in good faith.

We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe environment and to protect children, young people and adults at risk from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm.

This policy sets out the safeguarding commitment, responsibilities and procedures that apply to BSI employees, volunteers and third parties. This policy also underpins the principles by which the BSI undertakes its work and provides services.

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, termination of employment, withdrawal of volunteer status, referral to relevant regulatory bodies and/or referral to the police.

The policy is split into two sections:

- Policy and Principles
- Procedures and processes (separate document)

Policy and Principles

1. Scope:

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and temporary workers as well as anyone involved, or engaged in BSI work in unpaid, voluntary or clinical roles. This includes:

- Trustees and committee members
- Volunteers engaged in BSI work/projects
- Event delegates and speakers
- Patient and patient representatives
- Third-party suppliers
- Members undertaking activities on behalf of the BSI
- Individuals participating in BSI activities

The BSI undertakes activities in multiple forms, across multiple platforms and locations including the digital and online environment and includes:

- Face-to-face activities
- Conferences and events
- Public engagement activities
- School outreach
- Online events and webinars
- Digital communications
- Social media engagement
- Partnership activities undertaken on behalf of the BSI

2. Legal and regulatory framework:

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England / Northern Ireland / Scotland / Wales, including the UK safeguarding legislation and guidance including:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Care Act 2014.
- Data Use and Access Act 2025
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Charity Commission safeguarding guidance
- Charity Commission Serious Incident Reporting requirements

3. Related policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding children and adults at risk procedures and processes document as well as the following existing BSI policies and procedures:

- BSI Code of Conduct
- Staff handbook including:
  - Code of Conduct
  - Disciplinary policy
  - Data protection policy
  - Whistleblowing policy
- BSI Photography and filming policy

4. Policy statement

We believe that:

- children, young people and adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind
  we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare and interests of the people we interact with are paramount
- all children and adults at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse and some people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- all participants and visitors without exception have the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff, contractors and volunteers should be clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and responses and have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person

Guiding principles

We are committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk from harm.

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount.
- Everyone who participates in activities run by BSI staff and volunteers, is entitled to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.

- All children and adults at risk, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.
- No child or adult at risk must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access our services which meet their particular needs.
- Serious safeguarding incidents will be reported to the Charity Commission in line with regulatory requirements.

We will seek to keep children and adults at risk safe by:

- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children and adults at risk from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), a Leadership Team lead for safeguarding and a lead trustee for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies and procedures
- Ensuring a robust 'safe' recruitment procedure is in place and that all BSI employees and volunteers who work with children and adults at risk are appropriate for that role and are provided with training appropriate to their role, refreshed at least every 2–3 years
- Taking seriously all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse and responding swiftly and appropriately to them in accordance with current procedures
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Ensuring all activities have an up-to-date risk assessment and that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, adults at risk, staff and volunteers
- Ensuring all images or recordings of children or adults at risk taken on behalf of the BSI comply with the BSI Data Protection Policy and appropriate consents are obtained

5. Policy review:

This policy has been reviewed, approved and endorsed by the British Society for Immunology Board of Trustees. The Designated Safeguarding Officer and Senior Leadership Team Lead will undertake an annual review of safeguarding arrangements and report any material issues to the Board of Trustees.

The policy was last reviewed in: July 2026

The policy will be next reviewed in: July 2027

6. Contact details

Designated safeguarding officers (DSOs)

Name: Sophie Broster-James

Role: Director of External Affairs

Email: safeguarding@immunology.org

Leadership Team leads for safeguarding

Name: Graham Blair

Role: Chief Executive Officer

Lead Trustee for Safeguarding

Name: Professor Jessica Strid

Role: Safeguarding lead, British Society for Immunology Board of Trustees