

**Bliss Scotland, the premature and sick baby charity**  
**Trustee recruitment: Information pack**

**February 2021**

## Message from the Chair of Trustees

I am really delighted you are interested in joining Bliss Scotland as a Trustee.

Bliss was established in 1979 following an article in the Daily Telegraph highlighting a critical shortfall in care available for premature and sick babies, and since our foundation we have worked across all four nations of the UK to champion and develop services for the 100,000 babies born premature or sick and admitted to neonatal care each year, and their families.

In 2009, we formally registered as a separate charity in Scotland - Bliss Scotland - in recognition of the development of our work and profile in Scotland, which has continued to grow even further over the last decade. We are very proud of the difference we have made over those 10 years for babies born premature or sick in Scotland, but there is still so much more to do. Bliss Scotland is passionately committed to ensuring that every baby born premature or sick has the best chance of survival and quality of life.

As a new Trustee you will be joining the charity mid-way through our [2019-2022 strategy](#). Our strategy sets out ambitious objectives to improve survival and quality of life for babies born premature or sick. But we are implementing the strategy in an exceptionally challenging external and fundraising climate, and that will mean we will need to deliver some of our work differently in the future and will need to drive up value for money in everything that we do.

Bliss Scotland really values the diversity of background, ideas and skills that all our Trustees can bring, and we are particularly keen to hear from prospective Trustees from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences, to ensure our Board fully represents our beneficiaries. Previous board/trustee experience is not necessary and we welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds. We need people who are both creative and willing to learn; who have the time and commitment to help us deliver our mission; and who have experience and expertise that can help the organisation implement our plans.

Thank you for your interest.

Jason Parker  
Chair of Trustees



## About Bliss Scotland

**Our vision:** that every baby born premature or sick in Scotland has the best chance of survival and quality of life.

**Our mission:** Bliss Scotland champions the right for every baby born premature or sick to receive the best care. We achieve this by empowering families, influencing policy and practice, and enabling life-changing research.

### **Our values:**

#### Trusted

We are entrusted to give voice to all babies born premature or sick. We believe that trust is earned and our actions must always be based on what is best for babies.

#### Supportive

We believe that developing supportive relationships is at the heart of what we do, and only by supporting others are we able to achieve our goals.

#### Ambitious

We always go the extra mile to deliver excellence and seek improvement in all we do.

### **Our strategy**

Over the next three years (2019-2022) Bliss Scotland's ambition is to reach every single baby born needing neonatal care in Scotland and their family. We want every baby to benefit from our work, no matter how long they live or how long they spend on a neonatal unit.

Premature and sick babies deserve the best chance of survival and quality of life. We aim to make this a reality through focusing on the following objectives:

- For more babies born premature or sick to survive
- For babies born premature or sick to have well-supported parents playing an active role in their decision-making and care
- For babies born premature or sick to be cared for in neonatal environments that best support their development
- For babies born premature or sick to benefit from neonatal research that can lead to practical improvements in their care
- For babies born premature or sick to receive high-quality care within a neonatal health system which is appropriately funded, structured and staffed.

## Role Description

Bliss Scotland forms part of the overall Bliss UK group of charities, with annual accounts prepared on a consolidated basis as well as reported separately for Bliss Scotland.

The Bliss Scotland Board is responsible for:

1. Approving and owning the strategic direction for Bliss Scotland, ensuring it is within the framework of the Bliss UK Group's overall purpose and strategy and takes into account the needs of Scottish stakeholders.
2. Monitoring and evaluating the progress against strategic aims, objectives and financial targets.
3. Matters delegated by the Bliss UK Board relating to Scotland, and advising the Bliss UK Board of any exceptional matters relating to operations.

The Bliss UK Board - and its Finance, Risk & Fundraising Sub-Committee - holds overall responsibility for detailed financial scrutiny across the whole group of charities, including Bliss Scotland, as well as oversight and approval of all relevant corporate policies which apply across the whole group of charities; and decides what may be delegated for decision to the Bliss Scotland Board.

The Bliss Scotland Board currently consists of a Chairperson, Treasurer and two other Trustees. The Chief Executive has responsibility, with the Board, for developing a strategy for Bliss Scotland and has overall responsibility for day to day management of the charity's activities.

All Trustees of Bliss Scotland have three main responsibilities:

1. To hold the organisation in trust and ensure public confidence in all our activities
2. To determine the overall strategic direction of the organisation
3. As a critical friend – to provide both challenge and support to the Chief Executive and senior management team.

The Trustee Board has a number of legal duties under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 to ensure that the charity acts in a manner which is consistent with its purposes; all Trustees have a series of general duties as set out below:

1. You must act in the interests of the charity:
  - You must operate in a manner consistent with the charity's purpose
  - You must act with care and diligence
  - You must manage any conflict of interest between the charity and any person or organisation who appoints charity trustees
2. You must comply with the 2005 Act - the specific duties:
  - Charity details on the Scottish Charity Register
  - Reporting to OSCR: making changes to your charity
  - Financial records and reporting
  - Fundraising
  - Providing information to the public.<sup>1</sup>

Trustees are also directors of the company limited by guarantee.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see [https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2728/v10\\_guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees.pdf](https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2728/v10_guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees.pdf)

In addition to the above legal duties of all Trustees, each Trustee should use any specific knowledge or experience they have to help the Board reach sound decisions. This will involve reviewing papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues and providing advice and guidance requested by the Board or by the senior management team on new initiatives or other issues relevant to the area of the charity's work in which the Trustee has special expertise.

### **Who we are looking for**

As we continue to develop and expand our services and reach in Scotland, we are keen to strengthen our governance model to ensure we effectively represent our key stakeholders in Scotland, alongside maintaining strong links with our Bliss UK Trustee Board, currently represented on the Bliss Scotland Board through the Chair and Treasurer, who are the same for both charities.

**We are therefore recruiting at least one further Bliss Scotland-only Trustee, who must reside in Scotland.**

**In this round of Trustee recruitment, we are particularly interested in hearing from applicants with background, skills and experience in the following area:**

- **NHS Scotland / health experience, from any of frontline clinical, academic, or Health Board / management perspective.**

**We are also keen to hear from applicants with a diversity of experiences and backgrounds. Previous board/trustee experience is not necessary and we welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds.**

Generally, we expect every Bliss Scotland Trustee to have:

- A commitment to the aims of the charity
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their role as a Trustee
- An ability to think creatively
- The courage and willingness to speak their mind
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Sound, independent judgment
- An ability to see the bigger picture and help set our long term goals
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life advises the Government on ethical standards and conduct across the whole public sector. It believes that all those in public life should adhere to the following seven principles:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership.

We would therefore expect all applicants for the role of Trustee to provide evidence that no conflict of interest exists which would be hard to manage, or which may be misinterpreted internally or externally.

### **Commitment to the Charity**

Trustees are appointed for a term of four years after an initial probationary period. A second term of four years can be agreed.

Trustees are expected to commit to attend:

- Full Board Meetings three times each year
- A full-day away day for both the Bliss Scotland and Bliss UK Boards once every year

Trustees are unpaid, however travel costs and any approved costs that would leave a Trustee out of pocket will be reimbursed.

Main Board meetings can be attended in person, or via videoconferencing. Trustees who fail to attend meetings without reasonable cause on a regular basis will be asked to step down from the Board.

New Trustees are expected to attend a half-day induction session. Ongoing training and support for Trustees is also available.

Between Board Meetings there can occasionally be other charity business to attend to, but this will generally be dealt with by phone and email. Prompt consideration of necessary issues is expected.

Trustees will also be invited to attend a range of other events arranged by the charity, including fundraising events such as the Edinburgh Marathon Festival, parliamentary receptions or networking events. It is expected that every Trustee will attend some of these across the year.

In addition, Trustees are expected to work on an ad hoc basis with the Chief Executive and senior management team to support the development of the charity through professional advice, contacts or use of personal skills that can be of benefit.

Further information on the expectations of Trustees is contained in Appendix 1.

The Board of Trustees acts collectively and decisions and responsibilities are shared. Trustees can act by majority but all Trustees are collectively responsible unless they disagree with a particular decision but are overruled.

## Further information about our work

Over 6,000 babies a year in Scotland are born needing neonatal care. Often these babies have been born many weeks early, but some will have been born at term with low birth weight or one of a number of medical conditions that requires life-saving treatment.

Bliss Scotland is part of the Bliss UK group of charities, and is dedicated to ensuring that more babies not only survive but also go on to have the best possible quality of life. Our work focuses primarily on babies and their families while they are in a neonatal unit. However we also target the pre-birth period to support parents who are identified at high risk of a difficult birth, and continue elements of our work to support babies and families after discharge from neonatal care.

Bliss Scotland provides emotional and practical support for parents and families through what can be a traumatic time in their lives. Our website, social channels and range of multi-channel information help thousands of families every year, and we also train volunteers to provide emotional support directly in neonatal units. By supporting parents and families, we help them give the most effective care to their babies and enable them to make confident and informed decisions.

Our support for professionals focuses on working with neonatal units directly to improve their practice through the Bliss Baby Charter audit and accreditation process - in which most units across Scotland are currently participating, with an ambition for all 15 Scottish neonatal units to be registered and undertaking the Baby Charter by the end of the 21/22 financial year.

Services for premature and sick babies are under-staffed and under considerable strain. We are committed to raising awareness of the importance of these services and bringing about necessary changes in policy and funding. We undertake policy and campaigning work across Scotland to make sure that babies receive the best level of care regardless of where and when they are born. We are supportive of and closely involved in the implementation of the Scottish Government's *Best Start* programme, the five year plan to transform maternity and neonatal care in Scotland.

We also support research projects that aim to improve the care provided to all sick and premature babies, in particular through facilitating parental involvement in research projects to ensure they remain patient-centred.

Bliss Scotland's work has an impact in all corners of Scotland, and we play a major part in championing and developing the services for the 6,000 sick and premature babies admitted to neonatal care each year, and their families.

For further information on our work visit <https://www.bliss.org.uk/about-us/about-bliss/bliss-scotland>. For an informal conversation about the charity or the role of Trustee please contact Jason Parker, Chair of Trustees, at [jason.parker@kpmg.co.uk](mailto:jason.parker@kpmg.co.uk) or Verity Baldry, Vice-Chair, at [veritybaldry@gmail.com](mailto:veritybaldry@gmail.com).

## **How to apply**

Please email a CV and covering letter setting out your reasons for wanting to become a Trustee of Bliss Scotland and what you feel that you can bring to the role, to [recruitment@bliss.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@bliss.org.uk) with the subject 'Trustee Recruitment Bliss Scotland'; together with the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form that can be downloaded separately from our website.

**Deadline for applications: 9am, Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Interviews will be held over zoom in w/b 22<sup>nd</sup> March (dates TBC)**

Bliss Scotland is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications regardless of gender, age, ethnic background, disability, sexuality or religion.

## **Appendix 1: The role, purpose and value of Trustees at Bliss Scotland**

1. The trustees of a charity have over-arching responsibility for ensuring that their charity meets its charitable purpose (its aims or mission); and for safeguarding its assets<sup>2</sup>. This paper explains how trustees at Bliss Scotland ensure they meet their responsibilities; take effective decisions; and bring value to Bliss Scotland's mission to ensure every baby born premature or sick in Scotland has the best possible chance of survival and quality of life.

### **Board composition and tenure**

2. Bliss Scotland currently has 4 trustees, carefully drawn from diverse backgrounds in the charity, public and private sector, and selected following an open recruitment process. The Nominations Committee of the Bliss UK Board is responsible for ensuring that the Board has the right skills and experience to carry out its duties effectively.
3. Trustees at Bliss Scotland serve a term of four years, and can serve a maximum of 2 terms. We have an induction programme for new trustees which includes a half day introduction with senior members of staff, a visit to a neonatal unit and the support of an experienced trustee mentor.

### **Expectations of trustees**

4. Being a trustee at Bliss Scotland is about more than attending board meetings and meeting the letter of the law. Trustees add value in many different ways, helping to bring different perspectives and challenge, as well as their professional expertise and many years of experience. Our belief is that trustees who engage directly with the staff, volunteers, supporters and services users of Bliss Scotland outside of board meetings will have a deeper understanding of Bliss Scotland's business and the needs of our stakeholders, and will therefore be able to take more informed decisions and act as a more effective critical friend. We balance this with the recognition that trustees are volunteers and have other pressures on their time.
5. Our expectation at Bliss Scotland is that trustees will contribute in the following four ways:
  - By participating in board meetings and in other Bliss Scotland engagements
  - By providing professional expertise and access to their networks
  - By fundraising for Bliss Scotland and/or supporting or taking part in fundraising events
  - By taking on a specific role or providing advice on a particular project.

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<sup>2</sup> Further information on the duties of a Trustee are set out in [https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2728/v10\\_guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees.pdf](https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2728/v10_guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees.pdf)

6. Depending on their individual experience and availability we would expect trustees to be contributing differently against these four criteria – for example, one trustee might have the capacity to do lots of fundraising but not the time to take on a specific role or project. We recognise too that trustees' ability to contribute will vary over time as pressures in their personal or work life change; and also that they may want to reduce their time commitment as their tenure reaches its end (i.e. they have "done their time"). In return there needs to be a clear understanding between Bliss Scotland and the trustees about what this flexibility looks like i.e. what they are able to commit to and what they are not.

#### **Attendance at meetings and other engagements**

7. Trustees are expected to make every effort to attend board meetings. If they can't attend, then we ask that trustees provide notice and where possible offer written comments, in particular notifying the chair of their views where there are decisions to be taken.
8. In 2019/20 our trustee attendance rate at full board meetings across Bliss UK was 80% – this compares reasonably against other sector examples, and has been steady in recent years.
9. Bliss Scotland runs a number of events throughout the year and trustees can play an important role acting as an ambassador for Bliss Scotland, saying thank you to supporters and being visible to staff. We ask trustees to aim to attend at least one event a year. As part of our three year strategy (2019-2022) we are also aiming to reach into all neonatal units across the country to raise our profile, and we anticipate that trustees will have a role to play in helping with that where possible.

#### **Professional expertise and access to networks**

10. Our trustees have a wealth of experience and ideas to help Bliss Scotland meet its aims and objectives. As well as providing direct advice to the board and senior management team, they may also have a network of contacts and colleagues who may be able to offer pro bono advice and expertise on a range of subjects, including expertise that the trustees themselves do not have.

#### **Fundraising and supporting events**

11. We recognise that staff and volunteers put a huge amount of energy and effort into fundraising, and without them Bliss Scotland would not be able to carry out its work. It is important that the board is seen to be standing with them. Bliss Scotland organises a number of events and trustees are encouraged to get involved in the fundraising effort themselves, whether Baking for Bliss, doing a kiltwalk, putting together a team for a corporate event or organising their own event. Trustees can also help the fundraising effort by promoting events to their contacts, or by attending events to support and cheer on the participants.

### **Specific roles and project support**

12. Our policy at Bliss Scotland is to ensure that all trustees have the opportunity during their tenure to take on a specific role beyond their membership of the board. This can range from giving mentoring support to a member of staff; providing board sponsorship of a project; or sitting on an internal Working Group.

### **External challenge**

13. Drawing board members from a diverse range of backgrounds, and giving them opportunities to engage more deeply with Bliss Scotland's work, helps effective and informed decision making. But from time to time it is important to bring alternative voices into discussions to constructively challenge and help us to avoid "groupthink". At Bliss UK we do that in a number of ways:

- Inviting external speakers to board meetings – practitioners, parents or subject experts – and asking for honest feedback
- Regularly comparing our performance against other similar charities
- Regular "meet the trustee" sessions with the staff
- Annual away days which include sessions on horizon scanning and scenario testing.

### **Reviewing board performance**

14. The Bliss UK chair, with the support of the vice chair, is responsible for reviewing the performance of individual trustees. A performance review is conducted annually, and includes feedback from the Chief Executive and senior management team.
15. The board collectively reviews its performance regularly, and devotes time every year at its annual away day to discuss and agree how it can improve its added value.