Book Relief UK Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies. (2026)

Introduction.

This document details policies developed by the trustees of Book Relief UK to ensure that those volunteering for Book Relief UK are:

- Protected from physical harm.
- Treated with respect and data protection rights are upheld.
- Know how to raise concerns or incidents and report these.

These policies also inform our interactions with shop customers and others we come into contact with through our activities. These policies are reviewed on an annual basis.

The document describes:

1. Our Health and Safety Policy
2. Our Safeguarding Policy
3. Procedures to raise concerns about Book Relief UK

Trustees can be contacted via bookreliefuk@gmail.com

Health and Safety Policy.

Statement of Intent.
Book Relief UK is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all volunteers, beneficiaries, and shop and eBay customers. We aim to provide a safe and healthy environment in all our activities and operations to protect everyone from harm. We comply with all relevant UK safety legislation, including the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

Responsibility for health and safety.
The overall responsibility for health and safety resides with Book Relief UK trustees.
Day to day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice in the shop is overseen by the volunteer with overall responsibility for organizing the shop and also by designated lead volunteers on a given day. All volunteers should also take reasonable care of their own health and safety.
To ensure health and safety standards are maintained and improved, trustees review this policy annually and take on board comments from volunteers shared verbally, via our daily log book, and in our quarterly volunteer meetings. The chair of the trustees and the volunteer with overall responsibility for organizing the shop also undertake a regular physical review of the shop premises.

Arrangements for health and safety.
The chair of the trustees together with the volunteer with overall responsibility for organizing the shop undertake an annual review of health and safety arrangements including a risk assessment and identifying any consultation and training needs.

Volunteer and customer safety in the shop. Bookcases and other items should be secured and maintained in a way that minimizes injury to volunteers and customers.

First aid equipment. A first aid box is retained under the counter and stocks checked and replenished on a regular basis. Accidents should be logged in the accident report book to be kept with the first aid kit at all times and a trustee notified.

Fire safety. Fire extinguishers are kept in the shop, stockroom and kitchen and checked and maintained annually.

Portable electronic device testing. Testing of portable electronic devices that are the property of Book Relief UK is done regularly, at least every two years.

Securing the shop premises. The designated lead volunteer each day will make sure that the shop is secure when leaving the shop by checking and testing the kitchen door, door to the middle room and the main door of the shop.

Shop keys should not be passed to those who do not hold a key or copied without authorization from the chair or designated lead trustee in her absence.

Insurance. In the event of an incident, Book Relief UK holds insurance which covers personal injury for volunteers and customers.

Safeguarding Policy.

Statement of intent.
Book Relief UK is committed to ensuring that all volunteers and customers in the shop are treated with respect. Our policy aims to ensure that everyone is protected from harm or abuse, and we operate a zero-tolerance policy of bullying and harassment.

Responsibility for safeguarding.
Overall responsibility for safeguarding resides with the Book Relief trustees. Safeguarding concerns and incidents should be reported to trustees. If concerns or incidents are deemed serious enough to merit intervention by an external body, BRUK acknowledges the rights of individuals to report these to the Charity Commission following the procedure outlined in the section entitled *Raising Concerns about Book Relief UK* below.

Arrangements for safeguarding.
1. Volunteer recruitment procedure.

All new volunteers should complete a volunteer application form providing contact details, previous relevant experience and references vouching for their ability and personal qualities. They should be interviewed by the volunteer with overall responsibility for the shop and one of the trustees. Book Relief UK reserves the right to seek a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) when deemed necessary. Volunteers should clearly state physical challenges and illness or conditions on their application form and these should be discussed during the interview process, including how far and in what ways different needs can be met.

2. Volunteer induction and probationary period.

All new volunteers will receive an induction pack which will include our policies and some information on important practices adopted in the bookshop. Volunteers undergo a 1 month probationary period. Trustees reserve the right to dismiss a volunteer at any point during their employment.

3. Data Protection.

Contact details of volunteers are recorded and stored in a folder under the counter. The only contact details presented on the noticeboard above the phone are the numbers of the landlord, book collection services such as World of Books and trade people. All other contact information is kept in a labelled folder under the counter. Contact details of staff should never be given out to customers without first obtaining their permission. All volunteers should also provide details of next of kin in case of emergency.
In the event that a customer provides their name and phone number to reserve a book, customers should be reassured that their details have been expressly taken for this purpose and that details will be destroyed once no longer needed.

4. Harassment and Bullying.

Book Relief UK expects all volunteers to treat each other and customers with respect. In the event that a volunteer feels harassed or bullied by other volunteers, in the first instance this should be discussed with one of the trustees to see if this can be resolved informally. If disrespectful behaviour or perceived bullying and harassment cannot be

resolved by trustees, a volunteer has the right to report this to the Charity Commission and details of how to do this are available on their website.

5. Customer relations.

Book Relief UK is committed to ensuring customer well-being. In the event that volunteers experience bullying or harassment from a customer, in the first instance the customer should be asked to leave the shop. This sort of event should be recorded in the Day Log and reported to a trustee. If this persists, Book Relief UK will take this matter up with the police. Wherever possible two volunteers should always be on duty in the shop each day to minimize risk.

Customers who want to report disrespectful behaviour should leave their contact details so this can be followed up by the trustees or can email bookreliefuk@gmail.com

6. Arrangements for unaccompanied minors or adults with special needs or disabilities.

Unaccompanied minors and adults with special needs or disabilities should always be shown the same respect as other customers and not treated in a patronizing manner. Enough space should always be maintained to enable customers with mobility devices to be able to manoeuvre freely around the shop and both shop doors should be opened to facilitate entering and exiting the shop.

Raising concerns about Book Relief UK.

Concerns fall into two main categories.

1. Concerns about the way the charity is being run.
2. Concerns about the treatment of people working for the charity, such as bullying and harassment and/or the people for whom the charity was set up to support.

These are discussed in turn below and details of our complaints procedure provided at the end of this document.

1. Raising concerns about the way the charity is being run.

Concerns about the way the charity is being run include:

- The charity is not doing what it claims to do
- The charity is mishandling finances, such as using monies for personal gain or profit, or losing money.
- The charity is involved in an illegal activity.
- The charity is breaking the law (e.g. does not have the right insurance)

Charity Commission Procedure for raising a concern about the way a charity is being run.

STEP 1. Your concern must be raised with the trustees and/or the chair before proceeding to Step 2. *Please see our complaints procedure below.*

STEP 2. If a serious concern about the way the charity is being run cannot be successfully resolved within the charity you can report your concern to the Charity Commission. This is known as whistleblowing. As a whistleblower you are protected by law – you should not be treated unfairly because you blow the whistle.

If you decide to make a complaint, please follow the advice given on how to do this on the Charity Commission website (https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/). The Charity Commission considers and records all complaints and decides what steps to take but will not take action in every case.

2. Raising concerns about bullying and harassment.

Harassment, in general terms is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace, where actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. It may be related to age, gender, race, disability, religion, belief, sexuality, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.
Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

For further guidance see: www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment

Book Relief UK operates a zero-tolerance policy on Bullying and Harassment.

Book Relief UK complaint policy.

Complaints can be made in person or by letter, phone or email. We are committed to handling your complaint fairly and politely, as quickly as possible, and in thorough detail.

Our Complaints Procedure has two stages:

1**: First Informal Complaint**

You should, in the first instance, make your concerns known to one of the trustees within the organisation. A list of trustees and their contact details is attached to this document. S/he will try to resolve the matter immediately and informally, but if this is not possible, you will be asked if you wish to make a formal complaint. Please indicate if you want your complaint to be treated anonymously.

2: **Formal Complaint**

If you wish to proceed, you will need to put your complaint in writing addressed to the Chair of Book Relief UK (bookreliefuk@gmail.com). Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing or by phone within 3 working and we will aim to resolve the complaint within 10 working days. If this target of 10 days cannot be met, you will be informed of the delay, the reason for the delay, and the new target for responding. Your complaint will be treated anonymously at this stage.

If you are not satisfied, a meeting of the board of trustees will be convened to review your case and their response will be final.

In the case of unresolved concerns about the way the charity is being run, you will be able to pursue your concerns with the Charity Commission via https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/

Policy updated 30th September