



POTARY

AX. INTERNATIONAL
IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INFORMATION SHEET

RIB I Protection Policy - Club Members Summary

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"Everyone has the right to have fun, feel secure and be protected when participating in a Rotary event."

Introduction

Rotary is the 'number one' service organisation in Great Britain and Ireland. As such, it must take the lead in the important matter of protection. Rotary clubs have been providing service to children and the vulnerable in many settings for almost a century but the climate in society has changed considerably over that time. There is recognition of the moral and legal responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. There is a need to demonstrate that an organisation, such as Rotary, is doing everything possible to protect those with whom they work. It is also important that Rotarians plan and provide service to the community in a manner that cannot be misinterpreted so that the reputation of Rotary is brought into question.

This information sheet provides a brief summary of the RIBI Protection Policy. It aims to provide club members with an awareness of the main issues BUT a cautionary note must be sounded: every Rotary club or Rotarian must consult the full policy document when planning activities for children or the vulnerable. Your Club Protection Officer will have a copy.

Sometimes, a reaction to all this is that 'Rotary will have to stop giving all its wonderful service'. When the implications are worked through it will be found that Rotary can carry on even though we may need to be a little more vigilant

The RIBI policy is about children and vulnerable

The term 'child' applies to any person below 18 years of age.

A person may be considered 'vulnerable' if he or she receives some form of care, has a physical or mental disability, or is of such advanced age to be incapable of protecting himself or herself from assault or physical abuse. (It should be noted that whereas the methods of planning for the protection and safety of vulnerable adults is very similar to that of children, the legal framework is very different. This particularly applies to such matters as levels of responsibility and reporting abuse when the adult has a legal status quite different from that of a child.)

The RIBI policy requires criminal record checks when work with children or the vulnerable is regular.

'Regular'⁹ has been defined by the General Council of RIBI as meaning twice in any one month or four times in any six months'.

A quick summary

The full Policy document is a detailed document with a lot of information. This 'quick summary' gives an over view of the issues.

- Rotary has a duty and a responsibility to take action in the light of changes in the laws about the protection of children and vulnerable adults. It also has a duty to ensure the safety of those who give service and those whom we serve.
- Every organisation, including RIBI, every district and every club must have a written protection policy if they are working with children and vulnerable adults.
- As part of that policy, every district and every club must have a Protection Officer.
- Appropriate training has to be provided for the Protection Officers, Rotarians, volunteers, and paid staff working for and with Rotary.
- Careful planning involving risk assessments, advice and assistance from experts can do much to ensure protection: many potential problems can be 'planned out'. Good and careful planning is vital if children and the vulnerable are as safe as it is possible for them to be.
- Selecting the right people to work closely with children and the vulnerable is very important and there may be a need for criminal record checks.
- **RIBI, districts and clubs are working together to get these checks done at no charge.**
- The protection policy is not just about the dangers of abuse. Clubs must have arrangements in place to deal with allegations, concerns and whistle-blowing.
- Districts and clubs have to liaise closely with their local authority on protection matters.
- RIBI has an important role in providing information, advice and training for districts and for clubs.
- Everyone in Rotary will need to review, at least annually, the Protection policies and arrangements for protection.

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland

This declaration of policy applies to the whole of RIBI although the legislative framework may differ in its constituent parts.

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland has adopted this statement of policy in its work with children, the elderly, the vulnerable and those with disability.

- The needs and rights of the child, the elderly, the vulnerable and persons with disability take priority.
- It is the duty of every Rotarian to safeguard to the best of his or her ability, the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of all children, the elderly, persons with disability or otherwise vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact during their Rotarian duties.

RIBI will endeavour to ensure safeguarding by:

- Actively encouraging a climate through which protection issues are regarded as an essential part of Rotary activities and events.
- Appointing Rotarians with responsibility for protection issues in each Rotary district and in each Rotary club.
- Adopting protection guidelines that give clear procedures and a code of conduct for Rotary clubs, Rotarians, paid staff and other helpers and associated volunteers.
- Planning all events so that protection issues are properly addressed.
- Sharing information on protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, Rotarians, staff, helpers and associated volunteers.
- Issuing guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse and sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know.
- Providing appropriate training for Rotarians, staff, helpers and associated volunteers in the processes and procedures of child protection.
- Following carefully the procedures for the recruitment and selection of Rotarians, staff, helpers and associated volunteers to assist with projects and activities.
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy and the associated procedures on a regular basis, at least annually.

This policy was approved by the General Council of RIBI on 6 February 2003.

Your Club will have adopted a poBcv very similar to this.

Role and responsibilities of a Club Protection Officer

The post holder will have the main responsibility for managing Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection issues on behalf of The Club, and will:

- Implement and promote RIBI's Protection Policy and Procedures.
Regularly report to the Club Council.
- Ensure that there is a Role Description which must include the post holders' responsibilities for every position involving regular contact with children or vulnerable adults, whether voluntary or paid.
- Act as the main contact within the club for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- » Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Attend training on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Communicate regularly with the District Protection Officer.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Receive applications for Disclosures, check that they have been completed properly, and verify the applicants identity.
- Send the endorsed application to the District Protection Officer.
- Maintain a record of every application in a book retained specifically for that purpose.

- Report cases/concerns/action taken to the District Protection Officer.
- Establish and maintain contact with local statutory agencies, including the Social Services and Police.
- Monitor and regularly review the Protection Policy and Procedures within the club, at least annually.

Dealing with a complaint, accusation or whistle blowing

Whether it is from a child or an adult, the approach is the same.

- Stay calm and listen carefully to what is said.
- Reassure the person that to tell is the right thing to do.
- Find an appropriate and early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will be shared with others. Do not promise to keep secret even if the person threatens 'only to tell' if it is a secret.
- Allow the person to dictate the pace.
- Ask questions only to seek clarification and make sure they are not leading questions.
- Explain what will happen next, who will be told.
- As soon as possible record in writing what was said using the person's own words whenever possible. Include any dates, times, names, name of person making the record and make sure it is dated and signed.
- Also record the person or persons with whom the information will be shared.

It is not the responsibility of anyone in RIBI, a district or a club to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. It is, however, everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

The first point of reference is the Club Protection Officer who has responsibility for seeking the advice of, and liaising with, the appropriate agencies.

Contact for further information:

If there is anything in this brief summary that you would like to discuss then contact your Club Protection Officer, if this person is not available please contact your District Protection Officer, details of which are in the RIBI Directory.

Information on the RIBI Protection Policy is also available on the RIBI website: www.rotary-ribi.org.

An information sheet entitled 'Frequently asked Questions' is also available to download from the website or upon request to the RIBI Secretariat