



RGBI Protection Policy – Club Members Summary

Introduction

The Rotary Family – Rotary, Rotaract, Inner Wheel, Probus, Interact – is the ‘number one’ service organisation in Great Britain and Ireland. As such it must take the lead in the important matter of child and vulnerable adult protection. We recognise that there is a moral and legal responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, and that there is a need to demonstrate that an organisation such as Rotaract is doing everything possible to protect those with whom we work.

Where Rotaract clubs provide a service to children and vulnerable adults, it is important that Rotaractors plan and provide service to the community in such a manner that the reputation and interests of Rotaract or of individual Rotaractors cannot be brought into question.

This is the first time that RGBI has had a protection policy and we are following the lead of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland, and our sponsoring Rotary clubs who have been encouraged to adopt such a policy since August 2003. An aspect of any new arrangements for the protection of children and vulnerable adults is the establishment of a process to meet the requirement to carry out criminal record checks. This would apply to some Rotaract activities and projects providing service to children and vulnerable adults.

Everyone has the right to have fun, feel secure and be protected when participating in a Rotaract event. That is why these matters are important.

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

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

The RGBI policy is about children and vulnerable people.

The term ‘child’ applies to any person under the age of 18 years.

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, physical, sexual or emotional 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 RGBI policy requires criminal record checks when work with children or the vulnerable is regular. ‘Regular’ is defined in this policy as meaning ‘more than once a month’.

A Quick Summary

This is a detailed document with a lot of information. This ‘quick summary’ attempts to give the reader an overview of the issues.

- Rotaract 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.
- RGBI, every district and every club needs to have a child and vulnerable adult protection policy if Rotaractors work with children and/or vulnerable adults.
- As part of that policy, every club which provides a service to children and/or vulnerable adults must have a Protection Officer (this can be in addition to an existing role e.g. Community Officer) who will make links with the Rotaract District Protection Officer and work with their sponsoring Rotary Club’s Protection Officer.

- Rotaractors who work closely with children and vulnerable adults have to have a criminal record check at no cost.
- RIBI, RGBI, Rotaract districts and Rotaract clubs will work together to get the checks done.
- The checks deal with very sensitive information and there have to be very secure systems of seeking, using and disposing of the information.
- Training will have to be provided for the Club Protection Officers, Rotaractors, volunteers and paid staff working for and with Rotaract. It is suggested that training could be provided by Rotary District Protection Officers.
- The protection policy is not just about the dangers of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults. It must also make sure that they are as safe as it is possible for them to be. Clubs must have arrangements in place to deal with **allegations, concerns and whistle-blowing**.
- Rotaract districts and Rotaract clubs will have to liaise closely with their local authority on protection matters.
- RGBI has an important role in providing information, advice and training for districts and for clubs.
- Everyone in Rotaract will need to keep a check on the policies and arrangements for protection.

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy of Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland

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

Rotaract in Great Britain & 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 Rotaractor to safeguard to the best of his or her ability, the welfare of and prevent the assault, 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 Rotaract duties.

RGBI will endeavour to ensure safeguarding by:

- Actively encouraging a climate through which protection issues are regarded as an essential part of Rotaract activities and events.
- Actively encouraging the appointment of Rotaractors with responsibility for protection issues in each Rotaract club and for this person to liaise with the Rotaract District Protection Officer.
- Adopting protection guidelines that give clear procedures and a code of conduct for Rotaract clubs, Rotaractors, staff and other helpers and associated volunteers.
- Planning all events and activities so that protection issues are properly addressed.
- Sharing information on protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, Rotaractors, 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.

- Advising on appropriate training for Rotaractors, staff, helpers and associated volunteers in the processes and procedures of child and vulnerable adult protection.
- Following carefully the procedures for the recruitment and selection of Rotaractors, 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.

Dated: 10 August 2009

Your Club may have adopted a policy very similar to this.

The 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 the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Regularly report to the club.
- Ensure that there is a Role Description, which must include the post holder's responsibilities, for every position, whether voluntary or paid, involving regular contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- 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.
- Attend training on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Communicate regularly with the Rotaract District Protection Officer.
- 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.
- 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 applicant's identity.
- Send the endorsed application to the Rotary District Protection Officer.
- Maintain a record of every application in a book retained specifically for that purpose.
- Report cases/concerns/action taken to the Rotary District Protection Officer. Advise the Rotaract District Protection Officer that a case, concern or action has been reported.
- Monitor and regularly review the Child and Vulnerable Adult 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 secrets 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 Rotaract Club Protection Officer, if this person is not available please contact your Rotaract District Protection Officer, details of which are available from the RIBI Protection Officer.

Information on the RIBI Protection Policy is also available on the RIBI website: www.rotaract.org.uk

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