



## **Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

### **Guidance for NRA Affiliated Associations and Clubs**

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#### **NRA Policy**

The NRA believes that child protection is everyone's responsibility. We all have a moral and legal obligation to look after children with whom we may be working. The same consideration applies equally to shooters that may be 'vulnerable adults'.

High profile media reports of a number of distressing cases of abuse of children and vulnerable adults have meant that the laws in this area have developed since the Children's Act of 1989 and the Protection of Children Act 1999. Society's obligations, and those of all sporting communities, now stem from Section 9 of the Children Act 2004 which defines a child as '...a person who is under 18 years of age or a person aged 18,19 or 20 who has been looked after by a local authority at any time after the age of 16 or has a learning disability..'.

A vulnerable adult is defined by Section 59 of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as having '...attained the age of 18 and .....has particular needs because of age or have any form of disability...'. It is an altogether more complex definition.

However it is both children and vulnerable adults with whom sporting organisations must be concerned.

#### **Guidance**

To help affiliated Associations and Clubs the NRA has produced a guide containing practical advice, based on work done by British Shooting. In common with the National Smallbore Rifle Association and the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association we believe that it is essential for all our Associations and Clubs to review their own activities in order to protect children and vulnerable adults - as well as those that work with and coach them.

The NRA's full policy statement is to be found on its website in a downloadable .pdf format [link] and is printed at Appendix 16 of the annual Bisley Bible. The guide is also available from the website in downloadable .pdf format [link].

#### **Effective Implementation**

For the policy to be effective will depend upon a reporting system using Child Protection Officers (CPOs) at all levels. CPOs will be 100% reliable in terms of discretion and will understand the importance of confidentiality in the handling child protection issues. The NRA has appointed a national CPO: associations and clubs will need to consider their own appointments.

The guidance describes how a CPO is appointed, their role and how they may seek assistance from the NRA national CPO. It also describes the duties and responsibilities of a CPO in the event of a disclosure or suspicion or allegation of child abuse and examples of the pro-forma documentation that should be used.

#### **Good Practice**

The guide contains advice and gives examples of good practice for everyone involved in shooting. It deals with

- The types of abuse, bullying and harassment that may occur.
- Coaches or officials working with children in an open environment.
- The need for keeping physical contact to a minimum when coaching children, seeking agreement from the child before adjusting a shooting position or helping with shooting equipment, and making parents aware of these issues
- Consent issues if officials/coaches are required to transport young people in their cars.

- Avoiding children staying at a coach's home unsupervised.
- Coaches /club officials working in pairs and/or as mixed male/female teams if classes or groups of children have to be supervised in a changing room or overnight.
- Dealing with emergencies.
- The need to make a detailed note of what they have seen or heard if a child or any other person mentions concerns or suspicions
- To listen carefully if a child tells a coach that he or she is being abused, and take it seriously.
- Reassuring a child but without promising confidentiality.
- The need to make a detailed note of what the child has said and to pass on the information immediately.

### **Reporting and Disciplinary Issues**

The guide deals with reporting and disciplinary issues. It advises that all concerns and allegations of abuse must be reported immediately to a club official, ideally the Association or Club CPO. It may require referral to Social Services and to the Police.

It stresses that it is not the responsibility of club officials to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place but it is their responsibility to report the concerns or suspicions. It covers the priority actions when dealing with concerns about behaviour or the welfare of a child including dealing with any medical emergencies, reporting the incident to the Club CPO, completing the reporting forms, and report the incident to the Police or Social Services who will then investigate.

Thereafter the guide notes that the relevant shooting bodies will need to consider what action to take against any individual through their disciplinary procedures. This may involve one or more of the governing bodies depending on the coaching licences and / or memberships of the individual.

### **Photography**

Photographing children or vulnerable adults at sporting events, ranging from school sports' days to major events has given rise to much comment. The term "photograph" applies to any photographic image:

- whether it is recorded on film or digitally, or for immediate transmission /broadcast and
- consisting of still or moving/video images and
- taken with any sort of camera, webcam, mobile phone or even a satellite.

The guidance deals with this in detail, suggesting how organisers might set up an accreditation procedure where anyone wishes to take photographs at a shooting event. It considers registration for photographers (Annex 11 of the guide), parental and individual permission, identification of subjects and the use by coaches of photography.

### **Conclusion**

We all hope that we never have to become involved in any incident of the sort for which the law has been enacted or the NRA guide prepared. No sport wishes to lose members because of the unacceptable activities of a minority.

The guidance is both common-sense and a practical approach to our obligations. Use it and safeguard vulnerable groups and protect all those that participate.