

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND (RIBI)

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

applicable to all Clubs and Districts in RIBI

Policy Statement

The Clubs recognize that the services they provide are used by adults who are vulnerable or may be vulnerable at certain times. A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. For instance, this could include a person who is elderly and frail, has a mental or physical illness or learning disability.

The Clubs have a duty to ensure the welfare of vulnerable adults who may be at risk. This duty involves reporting the risk to an appropriate agency and RIBI, and by promoting a safe environment within the organisation. This policy applies to everyone involved in RIBI including all members, volunteers and employees.

The Clubs believe that vulnerable adults must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse. It recognises that it must at all times protect vulnerable adults from the risk of abuse and identify and deal with specific instances of abuse if they occur.

The Clubs will take every possible action to prevent abuse and to deal with it as promptly and effectively as possible if it occurs.

Aim of the Policy

The central aim of RIBI's safeguarding policy is to inform all Rotarians of:

- RIBI's approach to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults
- ways in which the Clubs do this
- the steps taken to avoid abuse taking place
- the actions that will be taken by the Clubs to deal with abuse if it occurs

Definition of Abuse

Abuse of vulnerable adults may take any of the following forms:

- physical abuse
- financial or material abuse
- psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect
- discriminatory abuse
- inhuman or degrading treatment
- inappropriate or excessive restraint

Responsibility

The Clubs have a duty to report serious concerns relating to abuse to appropriate agencies including the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)* as well as the RIBI Compliance Officer.

The Clubs have a duty to ensure that Rotarians or others who may be supporting Rotary activities that include working with vulnerable adults adopt safe practices.

The Clubs will undertake DBS* checks on all new and existing Rotarians as appropriate and will undertake regular education of its members to minimise any risks to vulnerable adults posed by Rotarians.

RIBI will:

- Set out and inform Rotarians of the procedures for responding to suspicions or evidence of abuse
- Incorporate material relevant to issues of abuse on the RIBI website
- Maintain vigilance concerning the possibility of abuse of vulnerable adults from whatever source
- Encourage a climate of openness which enables Rotarians to pass on concerns about behaviour that might be abusive
- Produce and regularly revise policies and procedures to minimise the risk of abuse
- Investigate any allegations of abuse quickly and thoroughly
- Implement improvements to procedures if an investigation reveals deficiencies in the way in which RIBI operates
- Collaborate with other relevant agencies in combating abuse and improving the protection of vulnerable adults
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely retained

Districts will:

Appoint a Rotarian as the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult(s) Protection Officer. This Officer will have suitable experience, training and expertise.

Ensure that all Club Protection Officers within their District receive regular education to minimise any risks to children posed by Rotarians in their District.

The Clubs expect its members to:

- Refrain from any abusive action in relation to vulnerable adults
- Report to the Club anything they witness which is or might be abusive
- Co-operate in any investigation into alleged abuse

Rotarians should be aware of who they may turn to for advice if they become aware or suspect that abuse is occurring.

Failure by Rotarians to report incidents or suspicions of abuse may lead to exclusion from the organisation, disciplinary action and/or legal action.

**** or relevant state authority***