

APPENDIX: BBS NATIONAL RIFLE & PISTOL CLUB CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The BBS Club is a National Club and as such its potential for membership is enormous. We may have young people in attendance at Club events and we have a Junior Membership Section (aged 14 to 18). The Club takes its lead in promulgating a Child Protection Policy in the wake of the adoption of such by the Great Britain Target Shooting Federation (now British Shooting) and the NRA.

For the definition of “child” the Children Act 1989 is taken as the standard. A person is a “child” within the terms of the Children Act if he or she is under the age of 18 or 19 in the case of a child registered disabled.

Every citizen has a general moral duty under the terms of the Children Act to act and report child abuse and maltreatment. The Act specifies that everyone who has the care of a child should “do what is reasonable in all the circumstances for the purposes of safeguarding or promoting the child’s welfare”. This has direct and inescapable implications for the Club and its members in terms of any children taking part, directly or indirectly, at any Club event.

The Children Act 1989 states that the child’s welfare is “Paramount” and will override all other legislation pertaining to adult welfare, including the Human Rights Act 1998.

Any member who feels at all “uneasy” about any other member(s) in their demeanour or interaction with young people at Club Events should contact the Club’s Child Protection Officer without delay and report the matter. Child Abuse is a crime and causes untold damage (especially psychologically) to children.

Why have a Child Protection Policy?

It is a myth that certain people are “alright” and there is “no chance” of them being abusers because they are “Shooters” or “Policemen” or Dentists or whatever. No bigger fantasy has ever been concocted. The vast majority of child abusers are never convicted – proving something “beyond reasonable doubt” is not easy in any event and is especially difficult where children are concerned.

Another fact to remember is that people who are “interested” in children tend to congregate where children can be found. You might be repelled by that idea but that is a fact, unfortunate though it may be.

We should all be on our guard where the protection of children is concerned. This is nothing to do with “political correctness” – rather it is to do with proper decency of behaviour toward people inherently more vulnerable than full grown adults.

Please bear in mind this fact: at least 45% of people who become seriously mentally ill (schizophrenia, bi-polar depression, schizo-affective disorder, serious depression etc) disclose as adults that they were abused as children. Most mental health professionals will tell you that a further 45% were unquestionably abused (the clues they give) but they carry the secret to the grave. It is no laughing matter.