



RIDING FOR THE DISABLED NI

SAFEGUARDING

POLICY & PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures outlined in this document apply to everyone within this RDA Region, whether in paid or voluntary capacity, including trustees and committee members.

Everyone should be aware of the child/vulnerable adult protection procedures and best practices and ensure they are implemented.

Each Member group will consider whether anyone who has a criminal conviction or caution for offences related to the abuse of children, young people or vulnerable adults should be excluded from working with children, or having access to children, while at events.

This exclusion of such individuals is a position reinforced by U.K. Legislation and Guidance.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

There has been an increasing awareness over recent years that some individuals who want to harm and abuse children will use charitable organisations, such as Riding for the Disabled, as a vehicle to gain access to children. For the purposes of this policy anyone under the age of 18 should be considered a child.

The Northern Ireland Region of Riding for the Disabled (RDA NI) fully accepts its legal and moral obligation to protect children in the course of its work and it is our policy to make every reasonable safeguard to protect those who are involved in any aspect of our work. Everyone should be aware of Safeguarding Procedures and Best Practices, ensuring that they are all implemented.

In pursuit of this Riding for the Disabled NI is committed to ensuring that:

- The welfare of children is paramount
- All children are able to participate in a fun and safe environment
- All children have the right to protection from physical, sexual and emotional harm and from neglect and bullying
- All reasonable and practical steps are taken to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment; respecting children's rights, wishes and feelings
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All Trustees, employees and volunteers have a responsibility to report any concerns with regards to child protection matters. **It is the responsibility of experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is *everyone's* responsibility to report any concerns.**
- A Group Safeguarding Officer is appointed – either a designated trustee or delegated volunteer
- Relevant volunteers and the Safeguarding Officer receive appropriate training and guidance on child protection
- All trustees, committee members and volunteers will sign that they will comply with these policies and procedures

RDA practices and procedures are based on the principles contained within the UK / NI and International legislation and Government Guidance and take the following into account:

Legal and Procedural Framework

The Criminal Law Act (1967)

Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)

Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995)

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Disclosure) Regulations

The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998

The Criminal Justice (Children) (NI) Order 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) & Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights; it can take many forms.

All the members of The Northern Ireland Region of Riding for the Disabled (RDA NI) are committed to practices which promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and safeguard them from harm.

We accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of issues that cause vulnerable adults harm, and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them. We will not tolerate any form of abuse wherever it occurs, or whoever is responsible. We are committed to promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, transparency and openness and are open to feedback from the people who use our services, carers, advocates, our staff and our volunteers with a view to how we may continuously improve our services/activities.

In pursuit of this the Group will endeavour to safeguard vulnerable adults by:

- Adhering to our safeguarding vulnerable adult policy and ensuring that it is supported by robust procedures;
- Implementing clear procedures for raising awareness of and responding to, abuse within the organization and for reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know, while involving carers and vulnerable adults appropriately;
- Ensuring general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to;
- Ensuring all trustees, employees and volunteers report any concerns with regards to the protection of vulnerable adults. **It is the responsibility of experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is *everyone's* responsibility to report any concerns.**
- Implementing a code of behaviour for all involved within the Group;
- Appointing designated trustees or delegated volunteers/employees to be the Group Safeguarding Officer;
- Ensuring appropriate training is attended by Safeguarding Officers and other relevant staff or volunteers.

As defined by the 1997 Consultation "Who Cares" a vulnerable adult is someone " who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or maybe unable to take care, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation". This definition of an adult covers all people over 18 years of age.

Everyone within the Group should be aware of Safeguarding Procedures and Best Practices, ensuring that they are all implemented.

RDA practices and procedures are based on the principles contained within the UK / NI and International legislation and Government Guidance and take the following into account:

Legal and Procedural Framework

Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Disclosure) Regulations

The Human Rights Act 2000

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) & Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

CHILD / VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION PROCEDURES

When made aware of an allegation of abuse, which has occurred at an event of the Group, the following steps should be followed:

1. Listen to what the child/vulnerable adult have to say. Remain calm and inform the child/ vulnerable adult that they have the right to tell someone.
2. Take what the child/vulnerable adult tells you seriously
3. Avoid questioning the child / vulnerable adult unnecessarily.
4. **Immediately** inform the Group Safeguarding Officer and/or Group Leader.

Please remember

Any information of this nature should remain confidential and handled on a 'need to know' basis. It is for this reason that the receiver of such information is directed to discuss it with the Group Safeguarding Officer.

Remember - Non-action is not an option in abuse.

Children/vulnerable adults very rarely make allegations which are untruthful.

APPENDICES

RDA – STATEMENT OF INTENT

RDA POLICY/PROCEDURE on the RECRUITMENT of EX-OFFENDERS. October 2015

NB. The following information papers should also be made available to all volunteers, these are on the RDA website.

RDA - CODE of CONDUCT - Good Practice Nov 2013 (2 page document)

RDA SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES Nov 2013 (1 page document)
(Reporting suspected abuse)

RDA WHAT IS ABUSE? 2 Page document

RDA E-SAFETY POLICY Nov 2013 (3 page document)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Trustee

N. B. The Policy & Procedures will be reviewed annually at the AGM.

Riding for the Disabled (NI)

Child Protection Policy Statement of Intent

General Principles: As an organization using Access NI to help assess the suitability of volunteers for our riding programme for children & young adults who are disabled, the above group complies fully with Access NI Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage retention and disposal of Disclosure Applications and Disclosure information. We also comply fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information.

Storage and Access: Disclosure information will be kept securely in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling: In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorized to receive it in the course of their duties. We will maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage: Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given. The applicant's signature on the Disclosure Certificate Application Form will be regarded as consent.

Retention: Once the decision has been taken by the Group Committee as to the volunteer's suitability, we will not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is necessary. Information will not be retained but destroyed once a decision has been made.

Disposal: Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any unsecured receptacle (e.g. waste-bin / confidential sack). We will not keep any photocopy/copy/representation or other image of the Disclosure nor any relevant non-conviction information supplied by police but not included on the Disclosure.

However, despite the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the Access NI unique reference number of the Disclosure Certificate and the details of the decision taken.

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Security Policy

Riding for the Disabled NI agrees to abide by the following conditions in relation to all disclosure information as described in the Code of Practice.

Riding for the Disabled NI will ensure that:-

- Disclosure information is not passed to persons who are not authorized to receive it under Section 124 of Part V of the Police Act;
- Disclosure information is available only to those in the Group who need to have access in the course of their duties
- It will not retain Disclosures or a Record of Disclosure information for longer than is required for the particular purpose. This will be no longer than six months after the date on which recruitment or other relevant decisions have been taken; or after the date on which any dispute about the accuracy of the Disclosure information has been resolved. This period will only be exceeded in very exceptional circumstances which justify retention for a longer period;
- All sensitive and personal Disclosure information is stored when not in use in a locked and non-portable container in a secure environment;
- It co-operates with Access N I to undertake assurance checks as to the proper use and safekeeping of Disclosure information; and
- It reports to Access N I any suspected malpractice in relation to this policy or any suspected offence concerning the handling or storage of Disclosure information.

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Trustee

N. B. This Policy will be reviewed annually at the AGM