

The Gainsborough and District Wildfowlers Association Child Protection Policy

Objectives

The Gainsborough and District Wildfowlers Association (GADWA) recognises that all children have the right to freedom from abuse.

This document sets out the policy (Child-Safe policy) and procedures to be adopted when dealing with children in any of its activities.

Application

This policy applies to all GADWA members who in any way deal with or manage activities involving children on behalf of the Association.

A member is any individual who holds membership of the Association by way of purchase or who holds honorary office or membership granted by the Association. For the purposes of this policy it will also cover non-members who volunteer their services in order to aid the GADWA. A volunteer is any person, not being a GADWA member, who has agreed to take part in, assist in, or direct any event for GADWA. A child is defined as any young person less than eighteen years of age.

This child protection policy applies at all times and is subject to annual review.

Implementation

This policy and guidance will be effective from 01/3/ 2009.

Responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy is that of the GADWA Standing Committee and the Child Welfare Officer. Specifically, review will be carried out over the following points:

- ✓ The relevancy of the policy to current circumstances.
- ✓ The effectiveness of the policy during the preceding year.

The need to extend the policy to meet anticipated changes in legislation or GADWA's activities. Any changes to the policy will be brought to the attention of the membership via the annual general meeting and newsletters. A copy of the policy will be circulated to all members. A copy of the policy will be supplied by request to relevant agencies.

Procedure

GADWA through its Committee will respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, by providing parents and/or children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.

GADWA will ensure access to all confidential information is restricted to the Child Welfare Officer, or the appropriate external authorities. This not only includes data normally required to be held under the Data Protection Act 1998, but also any information known about a case that is not elsewhere recorded. For example

the appropriate people in the proper circumstances will only question witnesses to incidents or enquire about the surrounding details. It is recommended that any child questioned is in the presence of an appropriate adult.

All allegations made by a child will be **taken seriously and acted upon** immediately. No individual is empowered to make a value judgment upon the veracity of a statement made by a child or other person reporting abuse. All cases must be reported to the Child Welfare Officer.

Child Welfare Officer

- The Association will have in place at all times a nominated person who is to act as Child Welfare Officer, appointed from its Standing Committee. The duties attached to this role are by no means full-time in nature, however, they are clearly defined as follows:
 - ✓ Acting as point of contact for other members of the GADWA, for parents and children and for other organisations such as social services, police, or a local authority should a problem relating to child abuse arise.
 - ✓ Informing the appropriate authorities if a child or an adult makes a complaint about possible child abuse.
 - ✓ Promoting the Association's Child-Safe policy by answering enquiries where appropriate and keeping abreast of developments in the scheme.
 - ✓ Record and update where necessary, the contact details for the nearest police Child Protection Unit, police station for general enquiries and social services department with child protection responsibilities.

It is important to note that the Child Welfare Officer is not expected to be an expert and does not have a mandate to sit in judgment on any person or case. The principle task is to ensure that a vulnerable child gets the support and protection he / she deserves and to act as a link to the professional caring agencies.

Members and Volunteers Engaged in Child Related Activities

GADWA Members and volunteers should be recruited to the following minimum standards to ensure all aspects of the Child-Safe Policy are adequately maintained:

- ✓ Staff and volunteers will be told that child protection procedures are to be used in the recruitment process. This includes, even for volunteers, that they declare any criminal convictions, allegations of abuse or pending cases relating to children.
- ✓ In the case of volunteers who have responsibility for an event the GADWA Standing Committee will ensure that they can vouch for any particular individual, taking whatever steps they deem necessary in order to establish *bona fides*.

For example: if a person's background is already well known to a member of the GADWA through a great deal of direct contact then that may do. If by reputation or minimal contact only is the volunteer known then one or more referees may be sought. It is always best practice to substantiate a written reference verbally. In the case of a wildfowler volunteer from another Association the committee of the home club will be contacted for a written reference.

✓ *In addition to the reference and checks*, as outlined at the previous bullet point, on receiving details of a volunteer, or member, who will have close contact

with a child, the GADWA Secretary will commence checks (through BASC) with the National Criminal Records Bureau (NCRB) to ascertain evidence of previous convictions of a child related nature or child related suspicion. Only persons with up to date NCRB checks will be considered for club activities that involve close supervision of children. Where necessary all volunteers should be handed a Volunteers contract outlining their role, duties, immediate support contact and Child Welfare Officer details.

✓ This includes a declaration that they understand the members / Volunteers contract. When in doubt, seek proof of a members or volunteer's identity.

General points

There is no necessity for a member or volunteer to repeatedly sign declarations especially if they reappear at subsequent events. Provided the initial check is satisfactory then that is enough unless there is a significant change in duties being performed, or a long lapse in contact with the member/ volunteer.

It should be borne in mind that carrying out a Criminal Records Bureau check on an individual is not a panacea for protecting children. Although enforced in this policy a check will only reveal the estimated 10% of abusers who actually get to court.

Where it is not obvious how this policy covers a specific situation, discretion and common sense should be exercised at all times when dealing with children. For instance, when found at game fairs by GADWA members or volunteers, it is better that two people should accompany children when they are taken to the "lost and found" point. The Child Welfare Officer should have a second person present if he / she needs to question a child about an incident, or 'gun fit', when physical contact might prove necessary, should be carried out in full view of other adults at a shooting line, etc. None of these statements obviates the occasional necessity for children to be left alone with trusted members and volunteers.

All details of volunteers will be forwarded to, and registered with the GADWA Secretary for reference and co-ordination purposes. Member references will also be lodged with the GADWA Secretary. Such records, along with full details of any children taking part in events organised by the Association (e.g. young shots courses, or junior wildfowling courses) will be retained by the Association for a minimum of ten years. Full details of all junior members of the Association will be retained for the same minimum of 10 years.