

Revised
November 2009



R.S.P.B.A. (NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH)
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child Protection Policy Statement

Volunteers in the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (NIB) are committed to practice, which promotes the welfare of children and protects them from harm.

We wish to ensure that all children participate in an enjoyable and safe environment in which they can have fun and feel valued.

Volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm, and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them.

We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

1. Adopting child protection through a code of behaviour for volunteers.
2. Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
3. Reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
4. Following carefully the procedures laid down for recruitment and selection of volunteers.
5. Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
6. Ensuring safety procedures are adhered to.

It is the intention of the RSPBA (NIB) to review the Child Protection Policy every 3 years, taking into account any new legislation and lessons learnt.

The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (N.I. Branch) Child Protection Policy

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Executive Forward

The protection of children is something that is rarely far from the news these days and it is an issue that affects us all. Children may be physically, emotionally or sexually abused regardless of their age, gender, religious belief, racial origin or culture. They are usually abused by people they know.

The NI Branch of the RSPBA deals with any children directly and indirectly in a range of settings, through the NI Piping and Drumming School, the bands and numerous classes in many locations throughout the province. This document is to cover the Branch as a whole i.e. the NI Piping and Drumming School, all Sections, Sub Committees, Bands and any group that falls under the auspices of the NI Branch of the RSPBA. Hereafter referred to as the RSPBA (NIB), our Officers, Pipe Majors, Tutors, Instructors and Leaders will be referred to as volunteers.

Volunteers may come across a situation where they are concerned about the welfare of a child or indeed are approached with information by a child or parent themselves. It is important that all our volunteers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to respond to child protection issues and know where to seek help. It is also imperative that all children and their parents are made aware of this policy.

This Child Protection Policy has been updated with expert advice. It applies to all volunteers irrespective of their function, remit or role and combined with the Designated Child Protection Person will ensure that the NI Branch of the RSPBA embraces best practice in this area.

I commend this policy to all our members and would ask that you take the time to familiarise yourself with the contents.

1 Scope of the Policy

The Child Protection Policy is intended to cover all functions of the RSPBA (NIB) where volunteers may work with children directly or have contact with children indirectly through the course of their duties.

Services, which may involve contact with children or young people include:

- NI Piping and Drumming School
- Instruction Classes – Drum Majors
- Band Halls
- Competitions
- Seminars
- Workshops

This policy applies to all volunteers of the RSPBA (NIB). It is designed to provide a basic foundation under which more specific guidance may be developed to meet the needs of particular functions or circumstances.

Children for the purpose of these guidelines are defined as those aged under 18.

Copies of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be distributed to all members of the RSPBA (NIB). It will be made available to the parents, children and all volunteers. If you require additional copies, please contact the Branch Office. This Child Protection Policy will also be available on the NI Branch Website.

www.rspbani.org

2 Background

In 1991, the UK Government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is an international convention signed by all but two countries in the world. The UN Convention sets the minimum standards for children and young peoples' civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights under interrelated categories of 'participation', 'protection' and 'provision'. For example:

Article 3 – In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration.

Article 19 – The State has a responsibility to protect children from violent and harmful treatment.

In 1996 the Children (NI) Order was implemented by the Government and was based to a large degree on the philosophy of the UN Convention. This legislation was the most important piece of children's legislation in the 29th Century and set out a number of key principles concerning the rights of children, their parents and the role of the State. It applies to all children under the age of 18 and the Order embodies five key principles:

Paramountcy of the child – in all childcare practice and law, the welfare of the child is the overriding consideration in any decisions about them.

Parental responsibility – parents have responsibility for their children rather than rights over them. Where parents have rights in respect of children, these only last so long as it is necessary given the child's age and understanding. In some circumstances, parents will share parental responsibility with others such as other carers of the State.

Prevention – the Children Order recognises the importance of preventing problems such as family breakdown and abuse through supportive measures.

Partnership – this recognises that the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met is through working in partnership with their parents, other professionals and disciplines.

Protection – children should be safe from abuse and should be protected by the State when they are in danger.

The Children Order sets out the framework for protecting children including legal powers and responsibilities of agencies like the police, social services and other bodies. It is complemented by other laws and guidance which taken together provides a comprehensive approach to protection of children.

These include specifically:

1. The Criminal Law Act 1967

Section 5 creates a duty to report arrestable offences and information in relation to the offence of the police.

2. Co-Operating to Safeguard the Child

The Department of Health & Social Services for Public Safety (DHSSPS) sets out the overall procedural framework for the management of child protection. In addition to setting out the roles and responsibilities of agencies, Co-operating to Safeguard Children details the process and steps to be followed on the detection, reporting and management of child abuse.

3. Protocol for joint investigation by social workers and police officers of alleged and suspected cases of child abuse.

This document sets out the steps and joint actions to be taken by each agency in investigating suspected or actual child abuse.

More recently, organisations have to comply with the requirements of the Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 in relation to vetting potential workers.

3 Aim of this Policy

The protection of children is something that must be a priority for all members of the RSPBA (NIB).

This overarching policy will set out the framework for this and ensure that the RSPBA (NIB) meets all its legal and moral responsibilities to children and families that it directly or indirectly provides a service to. BY having a clear written policy for RSPBA (NIB) members the RSPBA (NIB) will ensure that its members are provided with the tools and knowledge to know how to protect children and deal with situations that may cause concern. The ‘arena of safety’ diagram expresses this.

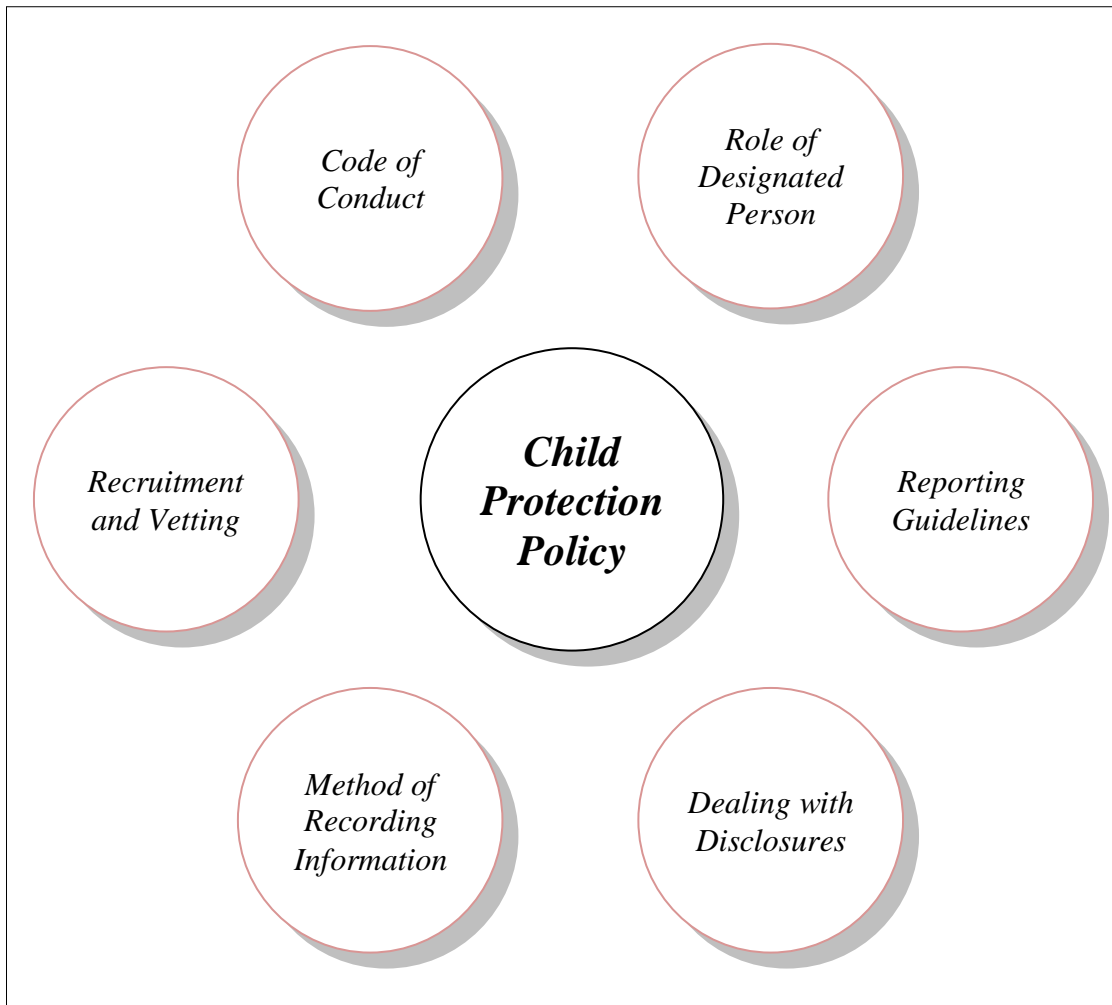


Diagram: The Arena of Safety

4 Awareness of abuse

The abuse and neglect of children is something that can occur within many situations including the home, school, communities and all forms of clubs and societies. Children are much more likely to be abused by someone known to them, or more rarely a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may be abused in more than one way. Types of abuse and their commonly accepted definitions include:

4.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

4.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Smothering a child's development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

4.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what's happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

4.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or

lack of supervision. It may also include neglect or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

4.5 Bullying

Although bullying is not defined as abuse, in its more extreme form, it would be regarded as a form of abuse. It can take many forms but Kidscape identifies the main types as:

- Emotional – excluding, being unfriendly
- Physical – hitting, kicking, theft
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm. Spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyberbullying – (e.g. text message, picture/video-clip and phone call bullying via mobile phones; email, website bullying)

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm. In these circumstances bullying should be considered as child abuse and treated as such.

5 The Role of the R.S.P.B.A. (NIB) Designated Person.

Key to the RSPBA (NIB) ability to protect children in its care and enable its volunteers to provide a safe environment, the RSPBA (NIB) has identified a Designated Child Protection Person. This is a very important role since the expertise and experience of child protection is focused on one person who in turn will act as a pivotal point for all child protection matters.

Specifically the role of the Designated Person will include:

- Advice on child protection training needs
- Monitoring the implementation of the RSPBA (NIB) Child Protection and procedures and specifically to inform Social Services/PSNI within the appropriate Trust area of any concerns about a child or children.
- Ensuring that any referral made by telephone is confirmed in writing and any documentation relating to concerns is passed to Social Services or the PSNI.
- Securing the safekeeping of any case material and keeping the Executive of the RSPBA (NIB) apprised of any developments.
- Acting as source of advice and assistance on child protection matters in the RSPBA (NIB)
- RSPBA (NIB) Designated Child Protection Officers:
 - **Mr Winston Pinkerton**
028 9446 6488
07979 366 389
 - **Lindsey Ellis**
32a Bachelors Walk,
Lisburn,
Co. Antrim,
BT28 1XN
Tel: +44 (0)28 9267 0445
E-mail: info@rspbani.org
- RSPBA (NI) suggest each band/group appoint a designated person who can relate to RSPBA(NI) designated person in matters relating to child protection

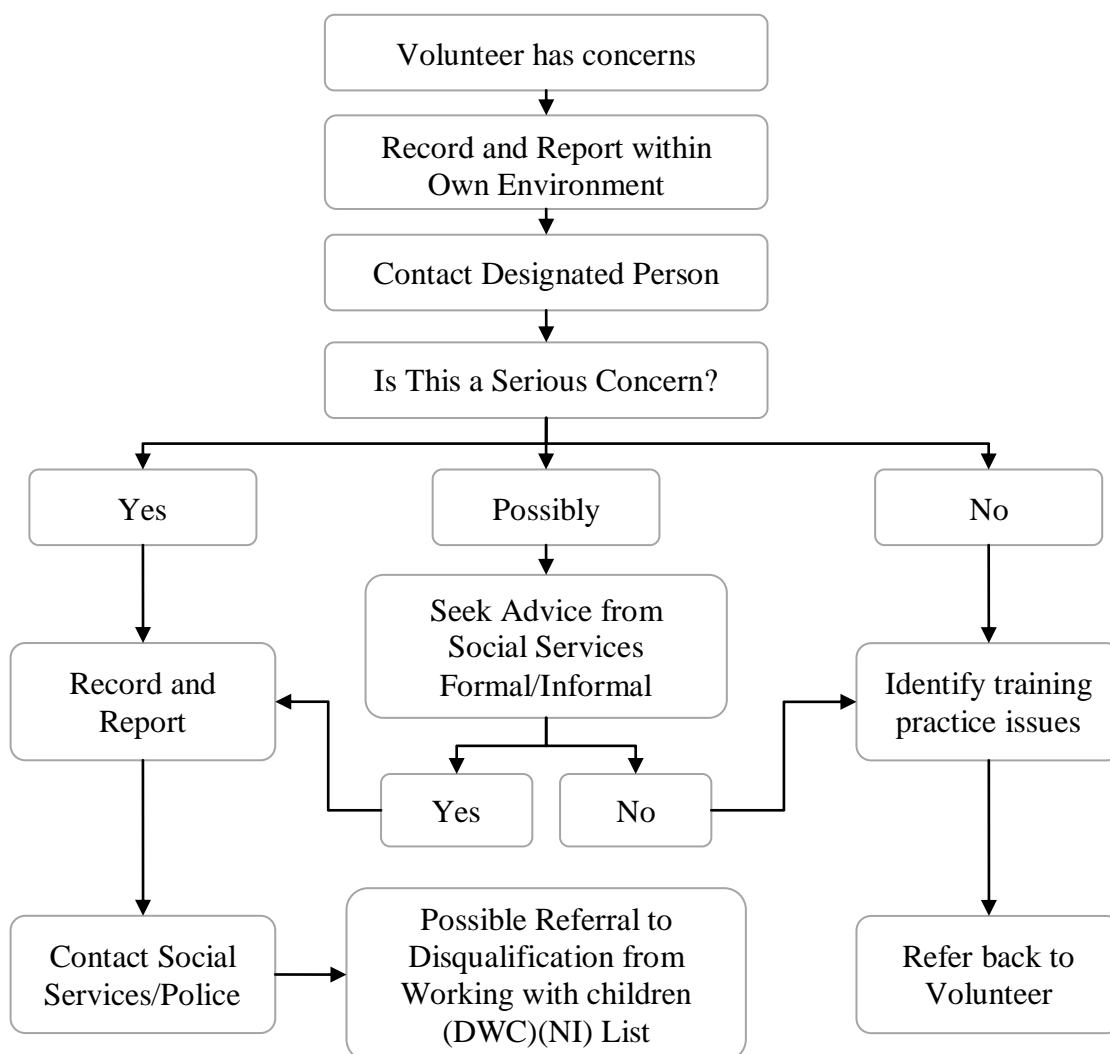
6 Reporting Procedures

It is fundamentally important that if any volunteers have concerns about a child that they seek to report these concerns to the Designated Person and follow the steps laid down in this policy and procedure. This will help protect officers and volunteers and the well being of any child concerned.

Investigating child abuse is a very complex and detailed process. Volunteers must remember that they are not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has taken place, rather they are responsible for reporting their concerns to the relevant person.

The flow chart outlined below sets out the procedure for the reporting of child protection issues. In the event of a Senior Officer and/or the Designated Person not being available the volunteer should proceed to the next stage of the reporting procedure. A Senior Officer and Designated Person should be advised of such actions as soon as practical.

6.1 Reporting Procedures Flow Diagram



6.2 Confidentiality

There is some information that should only ever be shared on a need to know basis. For example, if an adult or a child has confided personal and sensitive details about their lives or family situations, they will need to be assured that the information will not be discussed or passed on to others without consent.

Examples of other information that may need to remain confidential would include the contact details of the children and any information provided by parents that you might need, e.g. a child's medical details. This information should only be passed on with consent and on a need to know basis.

There is other information however, which **must** be passed on to the Designated Person. This includes information that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. The legal principle states that the "welfare of the child is paramount" and this means that considerations of confidentiality can never override the right of a child to be safe from harm.

In the RSPBA (NIB) we are aware of the limits of confidentiality and know that we can never promise to keep secrets.

7 Dealing with a disclosure of abuse or neglect.

Common Do's and Don'ts in dealing with a disclosure:

Do	Don't
Stay calm	Panic
Listen and hear what the child or adults are saying.	Ask leading questions (questions that influence a person to give a particular answer)
Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.	Promise to a child or adult that you can keep a secret.
Record in writing what was said as soon as is possible and keep this record safe and secure. These may be required by the police or social services.	Ask for details of the abuse this is not your job and will be undertaken by the Police and Social Services.
Report the matter to the designated Person.	It is not your responsibility to investigate whether abuse has taken place. This is a matter for the appropriate authorities. You have a supportive and not investigative role.
	Require the child to repeat the story unnecessarily.

If in doubt – report it

The one thing you must not do – is Nothing

8 Code of Conduct

It is important for all the volunteers of the RSPBA (NIB) to have a clear statement as to what is expected in any dealings with children.

8.1 Underlying principles and philosophy

The RSPBA (NIB) recognises that children should be listened to, taken seriously and have the right to the safe use of premises and services. As an organisation the RSPBA (NIB) members have both a moral and legal responsibility to protect children through following these procedures adhering to this policy.

Children have a valuable role to play in the RSPBA (NIB). As an organisation the RSPBA (NIB) through its policies, procedures and dealing with children, will involve them as much as possible in decisions that affect them. We respect the children by listening to them. The RSPBA (NIB) will promote a culture in the organisation where children's participation is both encouraged and promoted.

8.2 Some points of guidance

1. Volunteers should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others. Any contact with an individual child should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is needed for any reason, doors should be left open and other volunteers informed where possible.
2. Volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with children and young people. There may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, i.e. when teaching a child to play a musical instrument, be it practice chanter, pipes or drums this also applies to teaching the drum majors. In all cases physical contact should only take place with the consent of the child or the young person. Tell the child exactly what you are going to do and seek their permission. Any resistance from the child must be respected.
3. Where it is necessary and unavoidable to take children alone in a vehicle on journeys this should be with the full consent of the parents.
4. Volunteers should not meet with children outside of the organisation without the consent or knowledge of parents.

8.3 CAUTION !! MEMBERS SHOULD NEVER

1. Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games including horseplay.

2. Allow children to use inappropriate language or behaviour unchallenged.
3. Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child even in fun.
4. Let any allegations a child makes go without being recorded and reported to the Designated Person.
5. Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.

9 Sharing information

Good communication with all – children, parents, volunteers and management committees will improve practice. Everyone will feel appreciated if they are listened to and their opinion valued. Children and young people should be involved and included in decision making whenever possible.

9.1 Supervision, Support and Training

Training formal or informal can be organised for any individual or group. Supervision and support will enable our organisation to identify the strengths and weaknesses of volunteers, address weaknesses through provision of training, identify any problems and deal with them quickly. It also offers an opportunity to recognise skills of volunteers and to acknowledge their work. The Designated Person will assist in an advisory capacity, or organise any training required.

10 Bullying

We in the RSPBA (NIB) do not tolerate bullying in any form, and any incidents of bullying will be seriously investigated.

We encourage children and young people to talk about bullying and report any concerns they may have.

Our anti-bullying statement applies to everyone involved with the R.S.P.B.A. (NIB), preventing bullying in this group is everyone's responsibility.

11 Use of Mobile phones and Email

- Contacting children and young people by phone, text or email should never be undertaken without parental knowledge or consent.
- Volunteers should not be emailing children and young people directly as individuals, but may do so as part of a disclosed list (having received prior permission to disclose in group email) where they are disseminating information in relation to events. Disclosed lists should be used for sending organisation information via a designated and suitably trained adult (because of their position this person should also have been subject to appropriate selection and vetting processes). Group emails should also give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as: “If you wish to be removed from this email list please contact the administrator”.
- Volunteers should not contact young people through chatrooms and social networking sites such as bebo, MSN.

12 Taking Photographs

- If the young person is named, avoid using their photograph;
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the young person;
- Ask for the young person's permission to use their image e.g. consent form;
- Ask for parental consent to use an image of a young person e.g. parental consent form;
- Only use images of young people in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times.
- Inform young people and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to young people or one to one photo sessions at events.
- Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a young person's home.

If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware of your expectations.

- Adults should be asked to register at an event if they wish to use photographic equipment.
- Young people and parents should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to a volunteer.
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or volunteer and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.

13 Health and Safety

13.1 Accidents

- Have first aid available during all activities.
- Have an up-to-date first aid kit available both on the premises and activities away from the premises.
- Have a named first aider who is easily contacted.
- Record all incidents.
- Know where the nearest available telephone is.

13.2 Fire safety in Band/ Teaching room

- Have regular fire drills.
- Have fire notices displayed
- Have fire appliances, and ensure they are serviced regularly.
- Has the local Fire Officer visited the premises?

13.3 Disability Access

- Consider suitable access/egress and provision made for disabled people.

13.4 Recording and Consent

- Have a register kept of all those in attendance.
- Have a parental consent form and health form completed for each child/young person.

13.5 Ratios

- Have adult/child ratios appropriate for the group and for the activity.
 - 0-2 years 1:3
 - 2-3years 1:4
 - 3-12 years 1:8

14 Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

If possible make a record of the following:

- Name of child
- Age
- Any special factors
- Name of parent(s)
- Home address (and phone number if available)
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else?
- What has prompted the concerns? Include dates times etc. of any specific incidents.
- Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
- Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

15 Recruitment and Selection

Most positions within RSPBA (NI) are “Regulated Positions”, if they have regular contact with children such as weekly Band practices/Drum major classes etc.

The majority of people who want to work with children are well motivated and without them voluntary organisations could not operate. Good selection procedures benefit everyone; volunteers should have a clearly defined role. This will enhance their self-confidence, which will have a positive impact on children.

Parents will be assured that all possible measures are being taken to ensure only suitable people will be recruited to work with children.

This organisation is committed to recruitment and selection procedures as follows:

- Definition of role.
- Open recruitment process.
- Volunteer application forms, which request the name and contact details of two referees.
- Signed declaration of suitability.
- Reference forms to be checked.
- Interview/meeting with at least two representatives of the organisation.
- Identification.
- If role is a regulated position the successful applicant shall be checked through Access N.I.

RSPBA (NI) has now been registered with Access N.I. as a registered body and can act as an umbrella organisation for all within RSPBA (NI).

Application forms can be obtained from www.accessni.gov.uk to have a volunteer checked for suitability. Print off form, complete and send form to the designated person. They will sign same and forward to Access N.I.

All new volunteers appointed to a regulated position within RSPBA (NI) **MUST** be checked as above.

It is recommended that anyone who is already in a regulated position should be considered for a check. Organisation (Band etc.) must obtain written permission from the volunteer before proceeding with the check.

The vetting and barring scheme will come into operation on October 2009 and the above process will change. Visit www.accessni.gov.uk for updates.

16 Effective Management of Volunteers

This includes:

- Induction: Making volunteers aware of policies and procedures and boundaries or limits within which they operate of gaining acknowledgement that they understand same.
- Trial period: Appointments conditional on satisfactory trial period and reviewed at end of period.
- Training: Volunteers should receive training to be reviewed and updated regularly in line with changing legislation.
- Support and supervision: Provision of a structure for regular formal/informal individual group support and supervision.
- Annual Appraisal: To provide a means of enhancing support and supervision and highlight training needs.