

Child protection

It's a sad fact these days that anyone involved with children needs to be aware of child protection issues. There is no evidence to suggest that children are at any greater risk in naturist environments, and some responses we have had from social services suggest they may in fact be safer, given the secure nature of many sites and the greater level of parental supervision found in naturism. However, along with schools, churches, scout troops and every other place where children are, we must play our part in protecting our children from harm.

Over the last year we have been running a series of very successful child protection workshops around the country. The original presentation was developed for us by a fully qualified child psychologist who specialises in cases within a Midlands child protection unit. We have, with her agreement, added to it to include issues very relevant to us, i.e. grooming and photography. Also, where we have been asked to provide extra information, on any relevant subject, we have endeavoured to do so.

Each person attending is given a workbook, which contains everything the presentation offers and also a selection of useful documents which will help if the need arises. I do hope that all club child protection officers have been kept informed of these workshops.

I am pleased to say that, after excellent feedback from relevant authorities, we are now in the process of having the course accredited, which would allow us to give out certificates of attendance and also mean we could take the workshop to an audience outside naturism.

Details of workshops that have been arranged are available from me or CCBN head office. Please attend where you can. If you are interested in hosting a workshop in your area, please let me know and I will see what can be arranged.

We advise that all clubs should have at least one child protection officer (two would be better, as it allows support for each other if necessary), and that their name(s) and contact details are readily available to everyone. All child protection officers should be CRB (criminal records bureau) checked, which can easily be done through BN. Some clubs have said that they don't have any or many children, so don't need a child protection officer, but every club needs to consider visitors and the chance that an adult may need advice. You will also need to be prepared for when children do join the club.

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. Be prepared - and don't think that issues could never arise at your favourite naturist place.

Pat Thompson