

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction: what is safeguarding?

A basic definition is to 'protect from harm or damage with an appropriate measure'. The Care Act 2014 defines safeguarding as 'protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect' thus ensuring vulnerable adults are also included. It sets out a legal framework for how agencies should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect by placing a general duty on local authorities to promote the wellbeing of individuals when carrying out care and support functions.

Organisations then apply the concept to their various circumstances to provide relevant definitions and policies.

The definition of wellbeing includes personal dignity, protection from abuse and neglect, control by the individual over day-to-day life, suitability of living accommodation and the individual's contribution to society. As an increasing number of the UK's population live longer and suffer with disabling conditions, provisions under this Act become increasingly relevant for all organisations, including choral societies. There are many reasons why an adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation. These include their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss, or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

2. Who do adult safeguarding duties apply to?

2.1 The Care Act 2014 sets out that adult safeguarding duties apply to *any* adult who:

- has care and support needs, and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect, because of those needs.

2.2 According to the Act, an "adult at risk" is therefore an adult aged 18 years or over who:

- is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness
- is or may be unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation (Department of Health 2000).

2.3 The term "adult at risk" may include people with a wide range of disabilities and circumstances, who may be experiencing conditions that reduce their choice and control, their ability to make decisions or to protect themselves from harm and exploitation. An adult at risk may therefore be an individual who:

- has a learning disability
- has a mental health/mental capacity issue
- misuses substances or alcohol.

3. Application to Ashtead Choral Society (ACS)

- 3.1 ACS is a non-professional choir. It is a registered unincorporated charity whose key objective is to advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by any means the Trustees see fit, including through the presentation of public events.

The Care Act states that everyone has a role to play in the safeguarding of adults and therefore ACS has created this document to identify what actions we might need to take. Because of the nature of the individual skills, commitment and focus required to fulfil this aim it is unlikely that we will have members who are at risk because of learning difficulties, although risk of abuse (e.g. domestic violence, controlling behaviours), self-harm or neglect, substance abuse or alcohol problems might occur at any time. Those needing extra support and vigilance through mental incapacity are likely occurrences.

- 3.2 We have a range of ages within the choir and some of our members have physical impairments or disabilities or may experience some mental health issues. This might affect how they go about their daily lives and therefore at times impact on how they interact with members of ACS. Where this is identified, the choir always aims to offer reasonable support to enable them to continue as a singing member.

- 3.3 ACS is aware that children and vulnerable adults may attend their concerts as members of the audience, or attend social functions hosted by ACS. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure adequate supervision. If a parent/guardian/carers is not personally attending an event this policy requires them to be satisfied that the child or vulnerable adult will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult always acting on their behalf.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 ACS will not tolerate the abuse of adults in any of its forms and is committed to safeguarding any vulnerable adults in supporting their needs within the resources available to the choir.
- 4.2 ACS is committed to ensuring that no vulnerable adult is disadvantaged, overlooked or treated unfairly because of their:
- Race or ethnicity
 - Language or nationality
 - Religion or belief
 - Gender identity or sexual orientation
 - Neurodiversity or disability
 - Social or family background

We will actively seek to challenge bias, whether conscious or unconscious, in all safeguarding practices.

- 4.3 The Trustees are responsible for making sure that no one is harmed by any contact with ACS. The Committee should appoint a Safeguarding Lead who will be available to discuss any arising safeguarding issues with the Chair. A decision will then be taken on how to proceed.
- 4.4 The Trustees should ensure they engender a fair, open and positive culture where all involved feel able to report concerns and be confident that they will be heard and responded to.
- 4.5 **Working with people under 18:** if we work with any choir where members are under 18, we will expect that choir to have their own Safeguarding Policy, and to demonstrate compliance with it. If a choir member is under 18, then we would require that they attend with a responsible adult who would ensure that safeguarding measures are in place.

5. Who do I go to if I am concerned about a safeguarding issue?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – If anyone notices a safeguarding issue that they feel needs further action they should inform the Chair who will discuss it with the Safeguarding Lead. They will decide what action should be taken or support given.

In certain circumstances it might be necessary to make a referral for help for the concerns identified. ACS is not responsible for the subsequent investigation of such concerns.

In certain circumstances we might need to report a safeguarding issue irrespective of whether the individual would want us to.

6. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all members and professionals working with ACS and with those who come into contact with the choir.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trustees and will be published on the ACS website.

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