

Ealing Choral Society

Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed: November 2024

Ealing Choral Society Safeguarding Policy

1. Overview

1.1 Commitment to safeguarding:

Ealing Choral Society believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and adults at risk we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

1.2 About this policy:

- This policy applies to; all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Ealing Choral Society or taking part in Ealing Choral Society activities.
- The purpose of this policy is to provide members, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of all vulnerable people
- This policy recognises vulnerable people as:
 - Children under the age of 16 or young people aged 16 to under 18.
 - Adults aged 18 or over at risk as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity. This policy also recognises risk is determined by the activity an adult is taking part in and not solely on the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult, as such any adult can be at risk, and the risk can be temporary.
- This policy aims to:
 - Protect children, young people and adults at risk who are; members of, receive services from, or volunteer for, Ealing Choral Society.
 - Ensure members, staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they are interacting with.
 - Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk is a primary consideration when Ealing Choral Society undertakes any activity, event or project.

1.3 How Ealing Choral Society might work with vulnerable people:

Membership is open to those over 16 years of age. We run regular rehearsals for members and put on concerts for the general public. As such our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

- Members of the group who attend rehearsals and concerts.
- Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity.
- Audience members at public concerts.

1.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

The Membership Secretary is the named individual who has responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to the DSL in the first instance. Two **Deputy DSLs** have been appointed (Chairman and Hon Secretary) to act in the event of the DSL being unavailable.

Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the DSL, and in line with established procedures and ground rules (see section 2).

1.5 Policy review:

This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis by the Trustees. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

2. Ground rules, ways of working and procedures

2.1 Recruitment practices around safeguarding:

DBS Checks

If an existing or potential new member, staff member or volunteer will be engaged in any regulated activities with vulnerable people, as part of the Ealing Choral Society activities, the appropriate level of DBS will be requested before that work is undertaken.

The level of DBS check required (enhanced check) will be in line with DBS rules regarding regulated activity. The results of any check to inform a decision will be used confidentially and in line with the Ealing Choral Society equal opportunities policy.

The Membership Secretary (DSL), Chairman and Hon Secretary (Deputy DSLs) will be required to have an enhanced DBS check on a 3-yearly basis.

The Director of Music and Accompanist will be required to have an enhanced DBS check at appointment and on a 3-yearly basis.

The DSL will undertake appropriate Safeguarding Training on a 3-yearly basis.

References

Written references will be requested for freelancers engaged in regulated activity (e.g. Director of Music and Accompanist) asking for:

- Details of the types of activities the freelancer carried out
- A character reference and a note of the quality of their work

Interviews

Job descriptions and person specifications will be drawn up for freelancers engaged in regulated activity (e.g. Director of Music and Accompanist) reflecting professional practice requirements and expressed in terms sufficiently explicit to allow a candidate's activities, experience, achievements and capabilities to be evidenced and assessed at interview.

2.2 Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people:

When Ealing Choral Society organises an activity (such as weekly rehearsals) or event where they will be responsible for vulnerable people they will ensure:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
- The activity/event is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults – this will be a minimum of one but more when practically possible.
- Where practically possible the total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be in line with Ofsted recommendations.
- There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been DBS checked (ie DSL or deputy DSL).
- The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking up arrangements for vulnerable people).

- That if vulnerable people of different gender will be taking part in activities adults of different gender will be in attendance too.
- A vulnerable person is not be left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity.
- Two adults (one DBS checked) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will be responsible for checking that vulnerable people have suitable arrangements in place for travelling home.
- If vulnerable people take part in an organised choir trip they must be accompanied by a responsible adult except during rehearsals.
- Child soloists (or a group of child singers) engaged by Ealing Choral Society to take part in a concert will be chaperoned by their responsible adult throughout the day apart from during the performance when the DSL or deputy will assume responsibility.
- Child front-of-house helpers at concerts will be chaperoned by their responsible adult throughout the event.
- The personal data (apart from name, voice and height) of young people (aged 16 to under 18 yrs) will be restricted to the Membership Secretary, Chairman and Hon Secretary.

2.3 Working with parents/guardians:

If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in Ealing Choral Society activities written permission (email is fine) should be obtained from parents/guardians where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: emergency contact details and any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for another adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished.

2.4 Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse:

- If any member, staff or volunteer in Ealing Choral Society witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the DSL (Membership Secretary).
- If the DSL is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to the Deputy DSLs (Chairman or Hon Secretary, both DBS checked).
- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the DSL or deputy or an individual they trust.

2.5 Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse:

The DSL or deputy will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.
2. If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time – remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.

If none of the above applies the DSL will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Speak with Deputy DSLs to decide how to handle the reported abuse. Excluding any person involved in the incident. It may be useful to contact NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- Escalate the report by either:
 - Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences call 999 or Police Child Protection Team 020 8246 1901.
 - Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection- Ealing Children and Families Social Care 020 8825 8000.
 - An internal investigation – for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful.
- Where cases are escalated, the DSL and deputies will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident. The rest of the committee will be informed.
- Where an internal investigation takes place the DSL and deputies will:
 - Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
 - Inform the family/guardians of the person reported as being abused of the incident.
 - Inform the rest of the committee.
 - Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
 - Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
 - Meetings will be attended by the DSL or deputy and at least one other committee member.
 - All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
 - Once meetings have taken place the committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. They will be either:
 - Escalate the incident to the relevant authority.
 - Further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - A decision or resolution.

2.6 Resolution and disciplinary action:

- If abuse is found to have taken place any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests of Ealing Choral Society.
- Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the Ealing Choral Society constitution.