



Safeguarding policy

OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Fakenham Choral Society (hereinafter FCS) has about eighty members and about fifty Friends, all of whom are adult. Occasionally, non-members rehearse and perform with FCS: some of these are children or young people.

The majority of FCS Members and Friends are over sixty years old and, therefore, a very few may be subject to age-related conditions but currently none have conditions severe enough to prevent them taking a full part in rehearsals and concerts. It would be unusual for a vulnerable adult to join the FCS or for a Member to become vulnerable.

A few Members have restricted mobility, but not so severe that they cannot function at rehearsals and concerts. No members have severe learning difficulties; all are literate and able to learn choral works. FCS does not advertise itself as choir for vulnerable children and young people nor for vulnerable adults.

This policy explains how the FCS ensures that any vulnerable people are safeguarded during rehearsals, concerts, meetings, and any other FCS activities.

This policy will be reviewed annually (and amended if necessary) by the FCS Committee; it will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Why this policy is important.

This policy ensures that FCS:

- protects any vulnerable people who could be engaged in FCS activities
- complies with safeguarding law¹ and follows good practice

1. Relevant legislation includes:
The Children Act 1989
The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 2022
The relevant government guidance includes Safe from Harm 1993
The Human Rights Act 1998
The Protection of Children Act 1999
Working Together to Safeguard Children updated
2024
Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000
The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006

Commitment to safeguarding

The FCS believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults². We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and vulnerable adults we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

About this policy

- This policy applies to; all Members (including the Committee), Friends, staff³ (whether regular (Musical Director and Accompanist), or occasional (instrumentalists and soloists)), Stewards, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of FCS or taking part in FCS activities.
- The purpose of this policy is to provide Members, Friends, staff, and volunteers with the principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people.
- This policy recognises vulnerable people as:
 - Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
 - Adults aged over 18 defined as vulnerable by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- This policy aims to:
 - Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are; Members, Friends, staff, audiences of, or volunteer for FCS
 - Ensure that members, staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals with whom they are interacting
 - Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a primary consideration when FCS undertakes any activity, event or project.

HOW FCS MIGHT WORK WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE

FCS membership is open to those over 16 years of age. FCS run regular rehearsals for Members and put on concerts for the general public. Our involvement with people who may be vulnerable might include, but is not limited to:

- Members who attend rehearsals, concerts, *Come and Sing*, meetings, and other activities (e.g. erecting and dismantling staging)
- Friends and volunteers who attend rehearsals, concerts, and other activities in a volunteering capacity
- audience members at public concerts.

However, we do not necessarily know which adults are vulnerable unless they identify themselves as such. We never work exclusively or mainly with vulnerable people.

2 See Annex 1 for definitions of relating to vulnerable adults.

3 In this context 'staff' refers to people whom are paid fees by FCS; they are not employees.

Named Safeguarding officer

FCS has a Safeguarding Officer, Grant Harrison, who is DBS-checked (if necessary, FCS will pay for DBS) and has responsibility for seeing that this policy is implemented (and for all safeguarding issues). All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to Grant Harrison in the first instance.

Any projects, events or other activities that may involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of Grant Harrison in line with established procedures and ground rules (see below).

Ground rules, ways of working and procedures

1. RECRUITMENT PRACTICES AROUND SAFEGUARDING

Since rehearsals and concerts are large group activities, it is not necessary for staff to be DBS-checked. However, on occasion, the Musical Director might work with small groups of children and young people and, therefore, she/he should be DBS checked (if necessary, FCS will pay for DBS). The level of DBS check required will be decided by the FCS Committee and 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 FCS equalities policy.

2. ORGANISING AN EVENT

When planning an event, FCS should ensure that:

- the Safeguarding Officer is present at the planning meeting (or the plans are approved by her/him subsequently if the event is likely to include vulnerable children or adults)
- planning is carried out in line with this policy and these procedures
- there is a main contact for safeguarding on the day. This should be either the Safeguarding Officer or another individual who has been DBS checked
- the main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking-up arrangements) for any known vulnerable people
- a vulnerable person is not left with a single adult alone
- whenever known vulnerable people are present, two adults (one DBS checked) should be the last to leave a venue once an activity has finished; they will be responsible for ensuring the vulnerable are met by their parents, guardians or carers.

3. WORKING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Whenever children and young people sing with FCS at rehearsals and concerts, they must, at all times, be accompanied by parents or guardians or friends, family, or teachers, who are deputised by parents and guardians to act in *loco parentis*.

Should a young person under eighteen years old apply to be an FCS Member, they could only do this with the written permission of their parents or guardians. Additionally, their parents or guardians would have to make arrangements for them to be delivered to and met from rehearsals and concerts. Members would not be permitted to transport them without the written permission of the parents and guardians. During rehearsals and concerts, Members sing as one (or sometimes two) large groups. The only possible one-to-one activity would be a Member's voice check (if this

was not done in a small group) with the Musical Director – young people and any adult known to be vulnerable should be accompanied by the Safeguarding Officer during such a one-to-one check.

If a Member is between 16 and 19 years old, they must provide the Safeguarding Officer with the name and contact details of their parent(s) or guardian(s) so that he or she could contact them in emergencies.

4. WORKING WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS

Should there be an adult Member who has made themselves known as vulnerable to the Safeguarding Officer or a Committee Member, the Safeguarding Officer should ask for the Member to provide them with the name of a friend, relative, carer, or social worker who could be contacted in emergencies.

5. PROCEDURES FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND INCIDENTS OF ABUSE

In the context of a Choral Society it is unlikely that any safeguarding concerns or incidents of suspected abuse will arise. Nevertheless, it is important to be prepared for any future eventuality. If any FCS Member, staff or volunteer witness, suspect or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse⁴, they should immediately report it to the Safeguarding Officer. If the Safeguarding Officer is not present, the Chairperson or other Committee Member not involved in the incident can be approached.

- If someone wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the named Safeguarding Officer. If the Safeguarding Officer is not present, the incident can be reported to a member of the Committee that they trust.

6. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND INCIDENTS OF ABUSE

All procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse will be kept in the strictest confidence; anyone reporting abuse and anyone accused of abuse can rely on this confidentiality. The Safeguarding Officer (or person reported to in their absence) 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 Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure that a child, vulnerable adult, parent or carer will be listened to and respected throughout the process of reporting their concerns. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be recorded on an **Incident/Concern Form** and the Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for taking the appropriate action.
- Decide, based on the severity of the matter and how this has impacted the complainant, whether it is appropriate to escalate the case immediately to the police or local authority, or whether it can be managed internally by the Committee (excluding any committee member(s) involved in the incident). This decision should be made in conjunction with the complainant.

⁴ See Annex 1 for a definition of abuse

- escalate the report by either:
 - raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences
 - requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection
 - requesting an internal investigation – for less serious incidents ⁵ where the Safeguarding Officer considers that internal mediation would be successful
- where cases are escalated, the FCS Committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident
- where an internal investigation takes place, the FCS Committee will:
 - inform all parties involved of the reported incident as soon as possible
 - Inform the family/guardians/carer of the person about the incident
 - 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 opportunity to bring a friend or representative to such a meeting
 - such meetings will be attended by the named Safeguarding Officer and at least one other committee member
 - all parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of such meetings
 - once meetings have taken place the FCS Committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within five days. The next steps might be to:
 - instigate further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - or provide a decision or resolution.

7. RESOLUTION AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- External investigations: 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 FCS
- Internal investigations: Any disciplinary action will be decided on by the Committee and will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests of FCS

The above Safeguarding Policy was approved by the Committee on 23rd October 2023.

Signed:

Chairman, Roger Burbidge

Next review date October 2024

⁵ Examples are behaviour or language in response to which a complainant feels uncomfortable or offended.

Annex 1

Safeguarding Adults Definitions⁶

1. Adult at risk (vulnerable)

An adult at risk refers to any adult aged eighteen or over:

“who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”

(No Secrets: Guidance on Developing and Implementing Multi-agency Policies and Procedures to Protect Vulnerable Adults from Abuse, DH, 2000)

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who:

- Is elderly and physically disabled due to ill health or cognitive impairment;
- Has a learning difficulty;
- Has a physical disability and / or a sensory impairment;
- Has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder;
- Has a long-term illness / condition;
- Misuses substances or alcohol;
- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision relating to their safety and is in need of care and support.

The above list is not exhaustive.

This does not mean that just because a person is elderly or has a disability they are inevitably ‘at risk’ for example, a person with a disability who has capacity to make a decision about their own safety may be perfectly able to make informed choices and protect themselves from harm.

In the context of safeguarding adults, the vulnerability of the adult at risk is related to how able they are to make and exercise their own informed choices free from duress, pressure or undue influence of any sort, and to protect themselves from abuse, Neglect and exploitation. It is important to note that people with capacity can be at risk.

Range of interconnected factors including personal characteristics, factors associated with their situation or environment and social factors determines an adult at risk’s vulnerability. Some of these are described in the following diagram.

6 Definitions from the Safeguarding Partnership Board - http://www.proceduresonline.com/jersey/adults/chapters/p_sg_adults_def.html

Risk Factors

Personal characteristics that may increase risk include:	Personal characteristics that may decrease risk:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having capacity to make decisions about their own safety including fluctuating mental capacity associated with mental illness and other conditions; • Communication difficulties; • Physical dependency - being dependent on others for personal care and activities of daily life; • Low self esteem; • Experience of harm/abuse; • Childhood experience of harm/abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having capacity to make decisions about their own safety; • Good physical and mental health; • Having no communication difficulties or if so, having the right equipment/support; • No physical dependency or if needing help, able to self direct care; • Positive former life experiences; • Self confidence and high self-esteem.
Social/situational factors that increase risk include:	Social/situational factors that may decrease include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being cared for in a care setting where care is more or less dependent on others; • Not getting the right amount of the right kind of care that they need; • Isolation and social exclusion; • Stigma and discrimination; • Lack of access to information and support; • Being the focus of anti-social behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good family relationships; • Active social life and a circle of friends; • Able to participate in the wider community; • Good knowledge of and access to a range of community facilities; • Being independent and active; • Able to access to sources of relevant information.

2. Abuse

The term 'abuse' can be subject to wide interpretation. For the purpose of this Safeguarding Adults Procedure, the term abuse is defined as:

"...a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons which results in significant harm."

(DH, 2000)

Abuse is about the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. Where there is dependency, there is a possibility of abuse or neglect unless adequate safeguards are put in place.

Intent is not an issue at the point of deciding whether an act or a failure to act is abuse; it is the impact of the act on the person and the harm or risk of harm to that individual.

Abuse can take place in settings such as the person's own home, day or residential centres, supported housing, educational establishments, or in nursing homes, clinics or hospital.

3. Significant Harm

In determining what justifies intervention and what sort of interventions are required, No Secrets (DoH 2000) uses the concept of 'significant harm'. This refers to:

- Ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical);
- The impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and/or
- The impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Therefore, in deciding what action to take, consideration must be given the immediate impact on and risk to the person and the risk of future, longer-term harm.

Seriousness of harm or the extent of the abuse is not always clear at the point of the Alert. All reports of suspicions or concerns should be approached with an open mind and could give rise to action under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

Factors to be taken into account when making an assessment of the seriousness of the risk to the person:

- Needs of the person;
- Nature and extent of the harm or neglect;
- Length of time the abuse or neglect has been occurring;
- Impact of the alleged harm on the adult at risk;
- Risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts of harm or neglect;
- Risk that serious harm could result if no action was taken;
- Illegality of the act or acts.

Fakenham Choral Society

Safeguarding Policy Annex 2

Confidential Record of Meeting

Name of Choir Member, Music Team, Orchestra or Soloist	
Contact Details	
Committee Member Present	
Other people present	
Location of meeting	
Date	
Time	
Reason for Meeting	
Key Points Discussed	
Agreed Action	
Designated Safeguarding Committee Member	Signature
Date and time of next meeting	
Details from Follow-up meeting	
Further Action Agreed	

Signed by Member of Choir/Music Team/Soloist/Orchestra Date.....

