

This Safeguarding Policy applies to Wellington Choral Society (WCS) employees, all choir members (including trustees), volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with WCS.

Wellington Choral Society is committed to ensuring that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity. WCS is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and explicitly recognises the additional needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults from minority ethnic groups and the disabled and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

The law requires any organisation involving children, young people or vulnerable adults to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to vulnerable adults' and children's welfare are minimised, and where there are concerns, to share them with other local agencies.

As a matter of good practice WCS has developed this policy to provide:

- protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom WCS has contact (including the children/relatives of adults who use our services);
- guidance to ensure that the risks of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults welfare are minimised;
- guidance for Responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an Allegation of Abuse;
- guidance on procedures that should be adopted in the event that any adult suspects a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing harm.

WCS recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused or not. This is the role of the Social Services department which has the legal responsibility, the NSPCC who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act or the Police.

The main laws and guidance supporting this policy are:

The Children's Act 1989 and 2004; The Human Rights Act 1998; The Protection of Children Act 1999; The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006; The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991; Government guidance on safeguarding children; Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000; The Care Act 2014; The Charity Commission's 'Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities'.

In developing this policy, WCS has taken input from the national amateur music performance association Making Music and the NSPCC

Who are Children or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is a child. An adult is defined in the Care Act 2014 as someone over 18 years old who has care and support needs: is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect as a result of their care and support needs or is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

How Wellington Choral Society Operates

WCS is a registered charity of amateur Choral Singers managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the annual general meeting or co-opted as necessary. Committee members are trustees of the charity. To carry out its charitable objects it presents a number of concerts a year sometimes performing with orchestral groups, professional soloists and other choirs. Rehearsals are run by our self-employed Musical Director or a substitute on occasion, with an accompanist. They attend weekly rehearsals with members in term time in order to prepare for the concerts. There are no employed staff or volunteers in the conventional sense. From time to time WCS organises other events such as choral workshops and social events.

WCS does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children, young people or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults and generally there are only one or two young people (under 18) out of a membership of 80 plus who rehearse and perform with the choir. Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities, and there is no need for a member of the choir to be alone with another member of any age. WCS is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults. Nevertheless WCS recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults with whom it works and comes into contact, and believes that everyone has the right to enjoy the activities of the Choir in a happy, safe and secure environment.

The Committee has, therefore, agreed the following Safeguarding Policy.

Wellington Choral Society (WCS) – Safeguarding Policy

The Policy

Wellington Choral Society will publicise its Safeguarding Policy on its website www.wellingtonchoralsociety.org.uk and draw it to the attention of members at the beginning of each term.

Guidelines

Membership - Should any child or close relative (under 18) of a member of WCS participate in choral works with WCS the member must act as a responsible adult. Should any other child/young person participate in any WCS activities they must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult who remains responsible for them throughout rehearsals and performances.

Joint concerts with schools - WCS will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school groups will always be in the care of their teachers and helpers and/or parents who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. This does not detract from the choir's general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

Audiences and Social Events -WCS is aware that children and vulnerable adults may attend their concerts as members of the audience, or attend social functions hosted by WCS. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure adequate supervision. If a parent/guardian/carer 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 acting on their behalf at all times.

Privacy - Parents and guardians should be aware that photography, audio and video recording are undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals. The images and recordings are used both on- and off- line including on the web. They provide valuable tools to promote the work of the choir to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work.

Abuse - WCS endeavours by the implementation of this safeguarding policy to protect and minimise the risks of abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The term child abuse is used to describe a range of ways that people harm children. They can be inflicted on a child or knowingly not prevented. In many cases children are subjected to a combination of forms of abuse. Abuse of adults can happen anywhere. It can happen at home, in a residential or nursing home, in a hospital, at work or in the street. There are four main categories of abuse namely physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. WCS notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty children or vulnerable adults may have in reporting it. See Appendix 2 - Guidelines for Responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an Allegation of Abuse.

Measures for implementation of this policy

- The WCS committee have nominated SARAH MERRY* as the Designated Person in respect of Safeguarding. The Designated Person, who is DBS checked, shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to children and vulnerable adults as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the Designated Person are given on the website (and Member's Leaflet).
- Any concerns regarding either, a child or a choir member, employee or other adult must immediately be reported to the Designated Person (or in his or her absence to the Chair of the Committee). See detailed guidance in Appendices 1-4. (*from 30/11/2016)

Recruitment - If WCS should need to recruit staff, then we will apply safeguarding principles to ensure that appointees are suitable to work with young or vulnerable people. See Appendix 7.

Policy Review - The policy and procedures will be reviewed annually at the first committee meeting following the AGM.

Adopted at a committee meeting on...12 October 2016.....

MIKE MADDOCK – see hardcopy

Signed by the Chair on behalf of the Committee.
Wellington Choral Society

Date.....12 October 2016.....

Review due: May 2018

List of Appendices to Accompany the WCS Safeguarding Policy

- Appendix 1 Ways to Recognise Abuse and Neglect of a Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult
- Appendix 2 Guidelines for Responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an Allegation of Abuse
- Appendix 3 What to Do if You Suspect that Abuse may have Occurred
- Appendix 4 What the Designated Person will do
- Appendix 5 Confidential Record of Suspected Abuse
- Appendix 6 Contacts in Somerset County Council
- Appendix 7 Recruitment Process for Staff – Applying Safeguarding Principles

Appendix 1

Ways to Recognise Abuse and Neglect of a Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult

What Constitutes Abuse?

Definitions are provided below of the different forms of abuse. This list is not exhaustive and should be considered as guidelines and examples only. Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

“Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it”. **No Secrets, Department of Health 2000**

Abuse can broadly be defined in the following categories:

Physical Abuse

The non-accidental infliction of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment. Examples of behaviour: hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, physical restraint, harassment, enforced sedation, inappropriate use of medication, and catheterisation for management ease.

Sexual Abuse

Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent.

Examples of behaviour: Non-contact: looking, photography, indecent exposure, harassment, serious teasing or innuendo, pornography. Contact: coercion to touch, e.g. of breast, genitals, anus, mouth, masturbation of either self or others, penetration or attempted penetration of vagina, anus, mouth, with or by penis, fingers, other objects.

Neglect

Ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs.

Examples of behaviour: failure to provide: appropriate food, shelter, heating, clothing, medical care, hygiene, personal care; inappropriate use of medication or over-medication.

Psychological / Emotional Abuse

Psychological abuse is that which impinges on the emotional health and development of individuals. Psychological / emotional abuse might also occur as a result of the other forms of abuse.

Examples of behaviour: shouting, swearing, insulting, ignoring, threats, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, depriving an individual of the right to choice and privacy.

Financial / Material Abuse

The unauthorised, fraudulent obtaining and improper use of funds, property or any resources of a vulnerable person.

Examples of behaviour: misappropriating money, valuables or property, forcing changes to a will, denying the vulnerable adult the right to access personal funds.

Professional Abuse

Professional abuse is the misuse of therapeutic power and abuse of trust by professionals, the failure of professionals to act on suspected abuse/crimes, poor care practice or neglect in services, resource shortfalls or service pressures that lead to service failure and culpability as a result of poor management systems/structures.

Examples of behaviour: entering into a sexual relationship with a person who uses the service, failure to refer disclosure of abuse, poor, ill-informed or outmoded care practice, failure to support vulnerable adult to access health care/treatment, denying vulnerable adults access to professional support and services such as advocacy, service design where groups of people living together are incompatible, punitive responses to challenging behaviours, failure to whistle-blow on issues when internal procedures to highlight issues are exhausted.

Wellington Choral Society (WCS) – Safeguarding Policy

Abuse of Individual Rights / Discriminatory Abuse

Abuse of individual rights is a violation of human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Discriminatory abuse consists of abusive or derisive attitudes or behaviour based a person's sex, sexuality, ethnic origin, age or disability.

Note

There are other sources of stress for families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug and alcohol misuse. These may have a negative impact on a child or vulnerable adult's health and development and may be noticed by a carer organisation. If it is felt that the person's well-being is adversely affected by any of these areas, the same procedures should be followed.

Where May Abuse Occur and By Whom

Abuse of vulnerable adults can occur in any setting or situation. Abuse may occur in:

- Domestic Settings - including the person's home or another person's home.
- Institutional Settings - including day care, residential homes, nursing homes and hospitals.
- Public Settings - including the street, any public area, or social or work environment.
- Abuse of vulnerable adults occurs in all cultures, all religions and all levels of society. The abuser may be anyone including family, friend, neighbour, partner, carer, stranger, care worker/service provider, manager, volunteer, another person who uses the service or any person who comes into contact with the vulnerable adult.

Appendix 2

Guidelines for Responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an Allegation of Abuse

If a child or vulnerable adult should talk to you of abuse:

- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others-do not promise to keep secrets
- Allow the child or vulnerable adult to continue at his/her own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and, at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
(see Appendix 4)

Helpful statements to make

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child or vulnerable adult says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

Do not say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure that this is true?
- Why? Who? When? Where?
- Never make false promises

Appendix 3

What to Do if You Suspect that Abuse may have Occurred

You must report the concerns immediately to the Designated Person who will obtain information, assess what to do next and take the appropriate action.

The Wellington Choral Society Designated Person is SARAH MERRY

The Designated Person has been nominated by WCS to refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the Designated Person the matter should be brought to the attention of the Chairman of the WCS MIKE MADDOCK

You should under no circumstances discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.

Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told). You should write down exactly what the child or vulnerable adult has said and what you said in reply and what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered) You should record the dates, times and when you made the record and ensure that the record is signed and dated. You should report your discussion with the Designated Person as soon as possible. If this person is implicated you need to report to the Chairman of the WCS. If both are implicated report the matter to Somerset Social Services – see Appendix 7 for contact details.

Note: Child Abuse

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is up to you to contact the child protection agencies directly.

Note: Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

To determine the appropriate action it is important to consider:

- Does the vulnerable adult understand and accept the risk?
- Is the vulnerable adult able to make their own decisions and choice, and do they wish to do so?
- How serious the abuse – with the starting point being the perception of the vulnerable adult.
- If the vulnerable adult expresses a wish for the concerns not to be pursued, this should be respected wherever possible, subject to considerations of safety and competence.

Appendix 4

What the Designated Person Will Do

The role of the Designated Person is to:

- obtain information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns or concerns about the welfare of a vulnerable adult, and to record this information.
- assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further clarification as appropriate.
- make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or appropriate agency for vulnerable adults, or the police without delay
- if in any doubt about what to do, to seek advice from Social Services (see Appendix 7 for contact details).

IT is NOT the Designated Person's role to investigate.

If a child or vulnerable adult has a symptom of physical injury or neglect, and the abuse may have been deliberate the Designated Person will:

- contact Social Services for advice
- seek emergency medical attention if it is necessary and inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.
- inform the parents or carers only if advised by Social Services to do so.

If a child or vulnerable adult has a symptom of physical injury or neglect, but there is no sign that the abuse was deliberate, the Designated Person will:

- seek emergency medical attention if it is necessary and inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.
- otherwise, speak with the parent/carer/guardian and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child.
- if appropriate, encourage the parent/carer to seek help from Social Services.

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse the Designated Person will:

- contact Social Services and speak to no one else about the matter.

Appendix 5

Wellington Choral Society Confidential Record of Suspected Abuse

Name of person recording

Name of child or vulnerable adult

Age and date of birth

Ethnicity

Religion

First language

Disability

Parent's/Carer's name (s)

Home address/Tel no

Are you reporting your concerns or reporting someone else's. Please give details.

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include date, time, specific incidents

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the child or vulnerable adult? If so, what was said?

Have you spoken to the parent(s) or carers? if so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, please give details?

Have you consulted anybody else? Please give details

Person reported to and date of reporting

Signature of person reporting..... Today's date.....

Appendix 6

Reporting - Contact Details In The Event of Suspected or Disclosed Abuse

In An Emergency – Telephone: 999

Social Services

Named Contact:

Telephone No. During Office Hours

Telephone No. Outside Office Hours:

Somerset Police:

Appendix 7

Recruitment Process for Staff – Applying Safeguarding Principles

Scope: recruitment as used here refers to employees, volunteers and self-employed musicians, including young people who have been involved with the organisation and have become volunteers.

The provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) will apply only in the exceptional circumstance that an employee, volunteer or self-employed musician will at choir have “substantial, unsupervised access on a sustained or regular basis” to children under the age of 18 or vulnerable adult. The Act requires a police check prior to making a job offer.

In order to embed the principles of safeguarding into the recruitment process we will:

- **Define the role:** we will think about the tasks and responsibilities involved and the type of person most suitable for the job.
- **Selection criteria:** we will put together selection criteria based on a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience.
- **Application Pack:** we will send a copy of our Safeguarding Policy with our application pack
- **Application form:** we will ask all applicants to apply in writing and their application should cover their personal details, previous and current work/volunteering experience.
- **Short listing:** we will assess the application against the selection criteria described above.
- **Declaration:** we will ask all applicants to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- **Identification:** we will ask for photographic evidence to confirm the identity of the applicant e.g. passport
- **Qualifications:** we will request to see documentation of any qualifications detailed by the applicant.
- **Selection tools:** we will always interview candidates and ask for two references check.
- **Interview:** we will have at least two people from our organisation on the interview panel.
- **Briefing Candidates:** Candidates will be briefed at interview about safeguarding policy and attitudes to working with children and vulnerable adults will be discussed at the interview
- **References:** we will request two written references who are not family members or friends and who have knowledge of the applicant’s experience of working with children or vulnerable adults. We will ask the referee to comment on the candidate’s suitability for working with children or vulnerable adults. We will also try and follow up written references with a telephone call.