



# BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY

First Concert 1845

[www.bfcs.org.uk](http://www.bfcs.org.uk)

**President:**  
THE LORD MAYOR OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**Patrons:**  
DAVID LAWRENCE  
ELIS PEHKONEN

**Music Director:**  
DAVID WYNNE

Registered Charity No. 510847

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## BFCS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT AND POLICY 2020

### STATEMENT

Birmingham Festival Choral Society (BFCS) aims to offer equality of opportunity to anyone wishing to join in its activities or enjoy its concert performances, irrespective of age; disability (see Appendix A); gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

As a registered charity the Society aims to 'promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts and recitals and by such other ways as the Society, through its Committee, shall determine.' (Ref: *Constitution of Birmingham Festival Choral Society paragraph 2 'Objects'*).

BFCS acknowledges that discrimination exists in many areas of society - both directly and indirectly - and is committed to playing its part in reducing its effects within the scope of its activities and available resources.

### POLICY

#### 1. In the management of the Society BFCS will:

- a. Elect an executive Committee from its whole membership
- b. Make agendas and minutes of general and Committee meetings readily available to its members
- c. For members who do not use the internet, ensure there is access to paper copies of correspondence issued electronically
- d. Make all printed documents available in large print when requested
- e. Actively consult its members about major issues
- f. Actively invite members' suggestions and comments and act on them as appropriate

#### 2. In making accessible the aims of the Society, in the public education and appreciation of music, BFCS will, as far as is practical:

- a. Provide maximum possible access for disabled people in all venues used for concert performances and rehearsals
- b. Organise choir seating to make it accessible for wheelchair users in all voice sections at rehearsals and performances
- c. Ensure that anyone addressing the choir in rehearsals or other meetings takes responsibility for enabling people to hear them, either by speaking loudly and clearly, or by using the microphone provided. Sound systems or induction loops will be used where they have been installed in any venue used by the choir
- d. Ensure suitable seats at concerts are made available for audience members with disabilities
- e. Have an Access Officer for rehearsals and concerts: currently the Equal Opportunities Representative is responsible for access at rehearsals and the Concert Manager, after due consultation with the Equal Opportunities Representative, for access at concerts

- f. Respond to the special needs of members
- g. Ensure that rehearsals take account of the range of singers' musical understanding and skills
- h. Make all publicity material available in large print on request
- i. Include a brief statement about venue accessibility in concert publicity material

**3. In making charges for its activities and services BFCS will:**

- a. Annually review and publicise its membership fees and ticket prices with their concessionary rates, in line with the policy of the Society and changing needs
- b. Offer different membership rates for waged and unwaged members. Anyone wishing to join BFCS who cannot afford to pay the unwaged rate or whose earnings make the subscription rate unaffordable should contact the Treasurer, who will, with the assistance of the Membership Secretary, agree a rate appropriate to the member's financial situation
- c. Offer half price tickets to anyone under 16 and full-time students. All other tickets will be at one standard price, but anyone with a disability who needs an assistant with them, will be entitled to an additional ticket free of charge

**4. In recruiting members to the Society BFCS will:**

- a. Advertise the availability of membership, within its available resources, to as wide a constituency of people as possible throughout the West Midlands Region. Any person is eligible to join the Society as a non-singing member
- b. Make singing membership available to any person who passes a singing test conducted by the Music Director
- c. Include in publicity material a statement that BFCS operates an Equal Opportunities Policy and that further details can be obtained on request

**5. In the choice of choral music to be studied and performed BFCS will:**

- a. Include a broad range of classical music and, from time to time, jazz, folk songs, carols and songs from musical theatre, which will appeal to and benefit a wide age group and a variety of taste/aesthetic awareness. This range will comprise sacred and secular choral music, both well-known and less familiar, from a variety of countries and cultures, and promote new and recently composed works
- b. Maximise participation in a wider spectrum of choral music by collaborating with other groups of singers and instrumentalists

**6. In monitoring and reviewing its practice in relation to Equal Opportunities BFCS will:**

- a. Involve its members in the development of the policy
- b. Ensure the policy reflects current legislation
- c. Review the policy at least annually at the AGM
- d. Make it clear that any concern about Equal Opportunities issues can be addressed to the Equal Opportunities Representative or any member of the Committee in confidence, either in person, in writing or by email. The Equal Opportunities Representative may refer any serious or persistent issue to the Chair.

**Action Plan in the event of a Singing Member developing a cognitive, mental or physical condition**

If a Singing Member of the choir has a cognitive, mental or physical condition that may be

- i. a danger to themselves or others and / or
- ii. harmful to the functioning of the choir

then the procedures below will be followed:-

1. Stage One: Identification Condition is noticeable but manageable  
The Committee and other key persons (including the Equal Opportunities Representative and the Safeguarding Officer) who need to know, will be informed. Given the sensitivity of the issue this will be treated as a confidential matter.
2. The Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for ensuring that a plan is put in place to manage the issue and support the person. This may include informing appropriate members of the choir e.g. Stage Manager, who need to be aware of the issue and / or asking members of the choir including, possibly, singers who sit / stand next to the person, to support the said person to allow them to continue singing in the choir.
3. The Safeguarding Officer will keep a confidential record of the issue and the actions taken to support the person. The Committee will be informed of the action taken and be updated on an annual basis.
4. Stage Two: Deterioration The person is formally classified as an Adult at Risk and will need to be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult (see BFCS Safeguarding Policy). The Safeguarding Officer will:-
  - a. ensure that arrangements are in place for the person to be accompanied at all times
  - b. keep a watching brief for any changes or deterioration
  - c. endeavour to give further support where possible and practical.
5. Stage Three: Major Loss of Functionality If the person's condition develops to the point where:-
  - a. the functioning of the choir is being harmed by their actions / behaviours and / or
  - b. the person has become a danger to others and / or
  - c. the person has become a significant danger to themselves,the Committee, in conjunction with the Safeguarding Officer and Equal Opportunities Representative will make a decision as to whether the person can remain in the choir or not. If it is decided that the person cannot remain in the choir the Chair and the Membership Secretary will inform the member with their nominated responsible adult present.