



BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY

First Concert 1845

www.bfcs.org.uk

President:
THE LORD MAYOR OF
BIRMINGHAM

Patrons:
DAVID LAWRENCE
ELIS PEHKONEN

Music Director:
DAVID WYNNE

Registered Charity No. 510847

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

BFCS is a registered charity managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the Annual General Meeting. Committee members are trustees of the charity. We present, generally, four concerts a year, sometimes performing with other groups of singers and/or orchestral players and musicians. BFCS works with a self-employed music director who has a 'contract for services' and a regular self-employed accompanist. From time to time a stand-in music director or accompanist may be required. They attend weekly rehearsals in term time in order to prepare for the concerts, and additional rehearsals and workshops on occasions. We organise a tour abroad every three years, interspersed with weekend workshops as well as occasionally taking part in other events.

Most choir members are independent adults, aged 18 or above. When children/young people/adults at risk have been present as choir members, they have been accompanied by a parent/carer who is also a member.

Commitment to safeguarding: BFCS recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk with whom it works or may work. They have the right to enjoy the activities of the choir in a happy, safe and secure environment and BFCS recognises that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk, safeguarding the well-being of all whom we come into contact with and to ensure that risks of harm are minimised.

About this policy:

1. This policy applies to: all members, all self-employed music staff and their stand-ins, musicians who may be engaged to sing or play in concerts etc, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of BFCS or taking part in BFCS activities.
2. The purpose of this policy is to provide members, musicians and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people.

This policy recognises vulnerable people as:

3. Children up to the age of 15 or young people aged 16 - 17.
4. Adults aged 18 or over defined as Adults at Risk by the Care Act 2014, i.e. someone 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.

This policy aims to:

5. Protect children, young people and adults at risk who are members of, receive services from, provide services to, or volunteer for BFCS.
6. Ensure members, musicians 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.
7. Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk is a primary consideration when BFCS undertakes any activity, event or project.

How BFCS might work with vulnerable people (ie children, young people and adults at risk). We run regular rehearsals for members and put on concerts for the general public. In addition we go on tour every three years and hold weekend workshops every three years. As such the society's involvement with vulnerable people may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Members of the society who attend rehearsals and concerts
- b. Members who go on tour and/or attend the weekend workshop
- c. Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity
- d. Relatives and friends of members who opt to go on tour and/or attend the weekend workshops
- e. Audience members at public concerts, both at home and on tour, or anyone who may be invited to the final session of the workshops.

A named Safeguarding Officer will have responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to the said Officer in the first instance.

Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the Safeguarding Officer.

Guidelines

Membership:

- a. If a child wishes to join then they must be accompanied by a parent or a responsible adult designated by the parent/guardian
- b. Young persons, aged 16/17 may attend unaccompanied with the written consent of a parent or guardian
- c. Adults defined as at risk are welcome to become members as long as they are accompanied by a responsible adult.

General:

- a. Rehearsals and other activities will take place in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Adult members and musicians should ensure that they are not alone with a vulnerable person
- b. The only exception is auditions where the music director may hear members individually. These auditions should be set up by the membership secretary in conjunction with the MD. The membership secretary, or another committee member, must be available for the duration of the auditions. In the case of a child or an adult at risk then a responsible adult should accompany them during the audition
- c. The name and responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officer will be made well known and all members of the choir will be encouraged to inform the Safeguarding Officer of any concerns.

Joint concerts with children's choirs:

- a. BFCS will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that children's choirs will always be in the care of their own music staff and parents/helpers who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. If, for example, the stage or concert manager needs to give the children's choir instructions they must ensure that parents are present
- b. Accompanying adults must escort the children's choir to and from the stage area and be present in the concert hall for the duration of both the rehearsal and concert
- c. It is the responsibility of the leader/s of the children's choir to show BFCS that they have an appropriate safeguarding policy. This does not detract, however, from BFCS's general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of our policy still apply.

Audiences and Social events:

- a. When vulnerable people attend our concerts as members of the audience, or attend a social function hosted by BFCS, it is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure adequate supervision
- b. If a parent, guardian or carer is not personally attending then our policy requires that person to be satisfied that the vulnerable person will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times.

Hired musicians:

- a. If the musicians being hired in for a concert are part of an orchestra or band, the Safeguarding Officer must check that they have their own Safeguarding Policy. If not then they must adhere to our Safeguarding Policy. They will also need to agree which policy applies if they have their own and this must be recorded by the Safeguarding Officer
- b. If they are individuals who have come together to accompany BFCS, singers or instrumentalists, then they must know who the Safeguarding Officer is, be given a copy of the Policy and adhere to it.

Privacy:

- a. If a child or adult at risk needs to change at the concert venue, then it is the responsibility of their responsible adult to ensure that their privacy is respected
- b. If there is a children's choir participating in the concert, and it is not possible for them to change beforehand or facilities are required between the rehearsal and performance, then a separate changing area, with separate toilet facilities if available must be identified and labelled accordingly by the concert or stage manager. Access to that area will be limited to the children's choir and accompanying adults only

- c. If a children's choir member needs to be in a non-children's choir designated area then they must be accompanied by one of their responsible adults at all times
- d. All members should be aware that photography, audio and video recordings may be taken at a rehearsal, concert or other activity. The images and recordings are used both on and off-line, including on the web and our own website. They are valuable tools for promoting the choir to a wider audience and form part of our archive. If a parent, guardian or carer objects to this they should make the committee aware that the vulnerable person is not to be included
- e. If the concert/rehearsal is with another adult or children's choir then they too must give explicit permission for the use of their image on media used by BFCS. This would be the responsibility of the Concert Managers of both choirs in the early stages of the organisation of a joint concert.

Event organisers and stewards:

- a. BFCS relies on volunteers to carry out its work. Volunteers/stewards on duty at events will wear clear identification
- b. The secretary will maintain a register of all volunteers who are not members of BFCS
- c. BFCS will provide a brief role description for the main steward activities, including to whom the steward is responsible, i.e. Front of House or Stage Manager, who in turn is responsible to the Concert Manager.

Abuse:

BFCS endeavours by the implementation of this safeguarding policy to protect children, young people and adults at risk and minimise the risk of abuse. The term 'abuse' is used to describe the ways in which children, young people and adults at risk can be harmed. Abuse can be inflicted or knowingly not prevented. There are four main categories of abuse - physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. More than one category may be occurring.

BFCS notes the importance of all members, music staff, musicians and volunteers being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulties that the child, young person or adult at risk may experience in reporting it. If contacted by someone with a concern the Safeguarding Officer will:

- a. Listen carefully
- b. Reassure the child/young person/adult at risk that this matter will be disclosed only to those who need to know about it and that they are doing the right thing in telling them
- c. Avoid leading or closed questions
- d. Write down what has been said, with date and time and any names mentioned.

BFCS notes that it is not the Safeguarding Officer's role to investigate any alleged abuse. Any concerns will be reported, by the Safeguarding Officer, to Social Services or the police.

Measures for implementation of this policy:

- a. The committee of BFCS will nominate a designated Safeguarding Officer who will be DBS checked, shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to all choir members as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries regarding safeguarding. Contact details of the Safeguarding Officer will also be available on the website
- b. Any concern regarding a vulnerable person must be reported to the Safeguarding Officer immediately (or in their absence to either the Chair or Vice Chair of the committee) who will:
 - i. Obtain and record information from the person expressing the concern
 - ii. Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further clarification as appropriate
 - iii. If felt appropriate refer the matter to Social Services or the police
 - iv. Maintain confidentiality as far as possible subject to the principle of that vulnerable person's welfare being paramount.

This policy is published on the BFCS website and is disseminated to all members, musicians and volunteers, who are required to familiarise themselves with its content. It will be brought to the attention of any persons invited to participate in any choir activity and a copy will be sent to our rehearsal venue.

The policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the committee and will be drawn to the attention of members after each review.

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.