

Safeguarding Policy – Goring Chamber Choir

Introduction

Commitment to safeguarding: Goring Chamber Choir 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.

About this policy

- This policy applies to; all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Goring Chamber Choir or taking part in Goring Chamber Choir 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 up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
 - Adults aged over 18 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 Goring Chamber Choir.
 - 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 Goring Chamber Choir undertakes any activity, event or project.

How Goring Chamber Choir 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

Named safeguarding person: Victoria Benbow has responsibility for safeguarding issues. It is not envisaged that Goring Chamber Choir events will need more than 1 safeguarding officer.

If an occasion arises that the named safeguarding officer is absent, then a deputy will be appointed by them and clearly communicated to the choir. If they are unable to appoint a deputy then this responsibility shall fall to the Chair of the Goring Chamber Choir to arrange. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to Victoria Benbow in the first instance using the following email:

gcc-safeguarding@goringchamberchoir.org.uk

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

Procedures and ground rules: A further document – ‘Ground rules, ways of working and procedures’ is available and forms part of this policy.

Policy review: This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis by the choir committee/Board of 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.

Safeguarding policy – Goring Chamber Choir - Ground rules, ways of working and procedures

This document forms part of the Goring Chamber Choir Safeguarding policy

- The policy applies to: all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Goring Chamber Choir or taking part in Goring Chamber Choir 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 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 at risk including those defined as vulnerable 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 places equal priority on keeping all people safe regardless of their age, disability, chosen gender, race, religion/belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- This policy recognises that some people may be additionally vulnerable because of the impact of discrimination, previous experiences, level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

This document includes:

- Recruitment practices around safeguarding
- Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people
- Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse
- Procedures for dealing with concerns and incident of abuse

Recruitment practices around safeguarding

If an existing or potential new member, staff member or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people as part of the Goring Chamber Choir activities the appropriate level of DBS will be requested before that work is undertaken.

The level of DBS check required will be decided by the 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 Goring Chamber Choir equal opportunities policy.

However, the current membership rules of the choir do not allow children to join. It is accepted that there are adults in the choir who have vulnerabilities and may be classed as “at risk”, but due to the activities of the choir being solely rehearsing and performing music the committee does not believe that the safeguarding officer is required to be in possession of a DBS check. This position also applies to members, staff members and volunteers providing the current

activities of the choir remain the same. If in the future the activities are expanded then the requirement to possess DBS checks will be reconsidered.

Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people

When Goring Chamber Choir organises an activity or event it is possible that vulnerable people (in addition to any within the membership) may attend they will ensure:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
- There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day.
- Where possible, that the venue has completed a risk assessment and that the venue has removed or minimised any identified risks.

Working with parents/guardians: Goring Chamber Choir does not accept children as members and does not run organised workshops (or similar) where they may be present. It is accepted that the choir does have some vulnerable members, but does not believe that they are adults at risk and there is no requirement to have written permission for them to take part. It is also accepted that children may attend Goring Chamber Choir concerts, but that they would be attending with their own parent/guardian and that no additional permission will be sought by the choir.

Safeguarding responsibilities

The named person will be responsible for the following:

- Be present at rehearsals and events, or confirm that another deputised member is available.
- If practical, to remain for the whole length of the rehearsal/event and ensure that any vulnerable choir members have left the venue.
- Confirm where possible that venues have completed a risk assessment to identify any potential hazards and that they have minimised or managed the risk.
- Communicate to the choir how safeguarding concerns may be raised.
- Bring any such concerns to the attention of the committee, if appropriate. This decision will be for the safeguarding officer to make.
- Liaising with the membership secretary/GDPR officer to keep an up-to-date list of members who do not wish to be included in publicity material.

Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

- If any member, staff or volunteer in Goring Chamber Choir witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse, or a safeguarding concern they should immediately report it to the safeguarding officer.
- If the safeguarding officer is not available, or is involved in or connected to the abuse or concern, it should be reported to the chair of the choir or a deputised member.

- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the named safeguarding officer or an individual they trust.

Procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

The Named person (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 named person will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Speak with committee members to decide how to handle the reported concern or abuse, excluding any committee members who may have been involved in the incident.
- 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 or assistance.
 - An internal investigation – for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful.
- Where cases are escalated the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident.
- Where an internal investigation takes place, the committee will:
 - Recuse the Vice-Chair and one other committee member from further discussions in order that they may lead any future complaints procedure.
 - Inform all parties involved of the reported concern or abuse as soon as possible.
 - If appropriate, arrange separate meetings with all 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 named safeguarding officer 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 reduced committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. They will be to:
 - Escalate the incident to the relevant authority; or
 - Carry out further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution; and they will
 - Notify all parties of a decision or resolution.
- A record of the investigation will be stored.
- If an investigation is not appropriate then the reduced committee will hold a discussion as to what steps may be taken to support the vulnerable member. That offer of support will be communicated to the appropriate parties for their consent or otherwise.

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 the Goring Chamber Choir.
- Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the Goring Chamber Choir constitution and other written policies.
- If a concern has been raised then it is acknowledged that any offer of support must be agreed by the affected member(s).
- The committee may decide that the correct resolution is to provide silent support and maintain an awareness of the vulnerability.

Complaints procedure

If a complaint is received it will be considered on the following grounds:

1. The above procedure was not followed, or
2. There was an abuse of the process.

On receipt of a complaint the Vice-Chair and the other member of the committee who did not take part in the investigation, will consider its merit.


If the complaint is malicious then no further action will be taken, other than to store a record of the complaint and to consider whether the member (if that was the source) should be dealt with under the Goring Chamber Choir membership policy.

If the complaint has merit, then any required safeguarding steps will be taken and the learning presented to the full committee.

Date that this policy came into force: 10th August 2023.



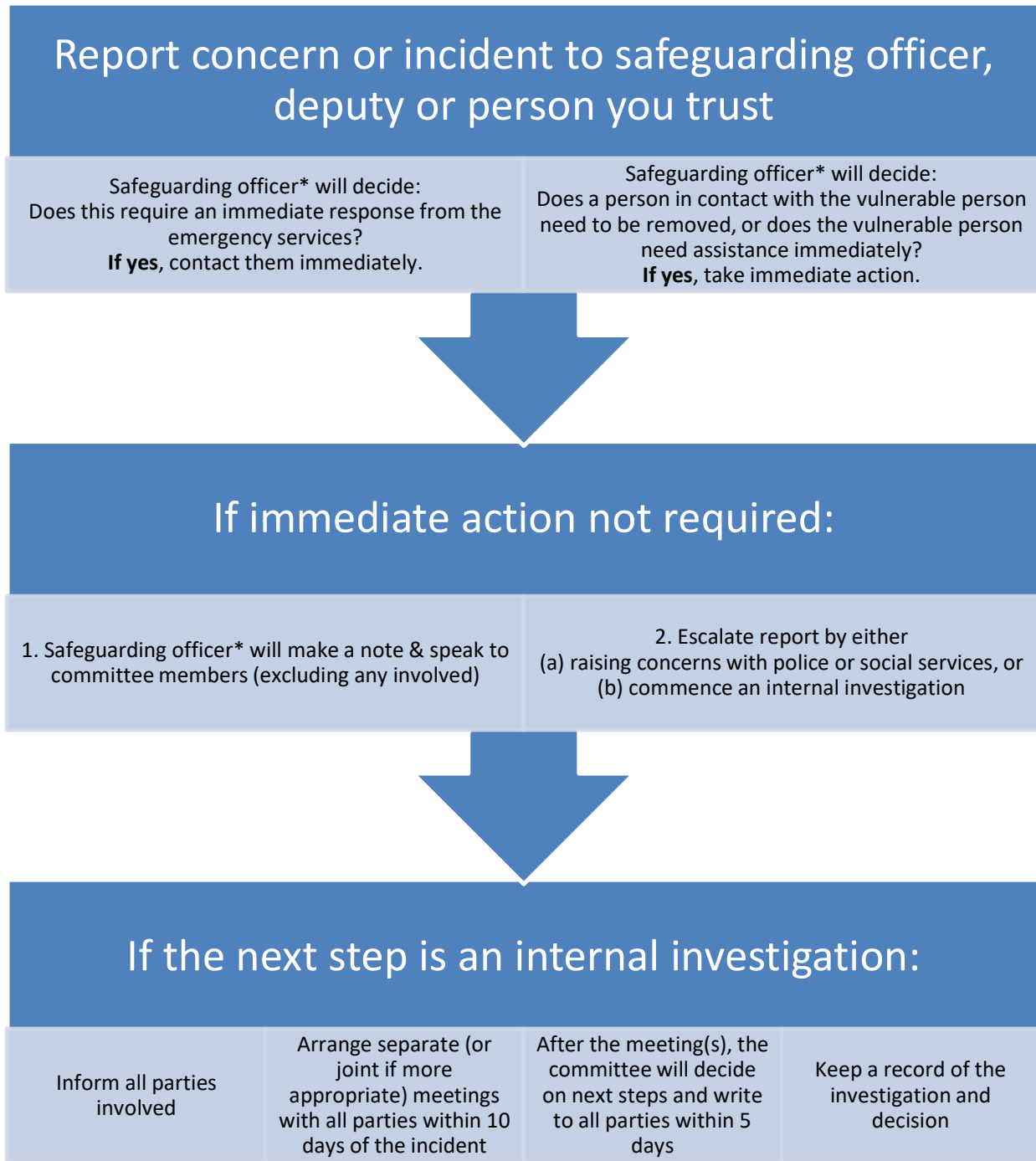
Signature of Safeguarding Officer:



Signature of Chair:

Review date: August 2024, or a change of Safeguarding Officer or Chair, whichever is sooner.

Flow diagram showing reporting and next steps for any safeguarding incident



*Safeguarding officer = designated person, the committee chair, nominated safeguarding deputy or the trusted person who was initially approached. Whichever is the most appropriate.