

# Rotherhithe & Bermondsey Choral Society

*Your community choir, where local people come together to sing*



## **Safeguarding Policy**

**21 January 2012**

### **Legal Context**

The law requires any organisation involving young people 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.

The relevant legal requirements arise from The Children's Act 1989, 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. The relevant government guidance includes Safe from Harm 1993, Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999 and Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000.

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

### **Good Practice**

In developing this policy, RBCS has taken input from the national amateur music performance association Making Music and has used the Capital Community Foundation Training and Resource Pack *Developing Your Child Protection Policy*. Much of the detail in the Appendices to the Policy has come from that resource pack.

### **Who are Children or Vulnerable Adults?**

In this context anyone up to the age of 19 is a child and anyone over 18 years who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation is a vulnerable adult.

### **How RBCS Operates**

RBCS is a community organisation, composed of choir members. Some members are elected and others coopted to serve on the management committee. Rehearsals are run by our self-employed Musical Director or a substitute, on occasion with an accompanist. There are neither employed staff nor volunteers in the conventional sense.

RBCS does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults. It happens only rarely that a young person or vulnerable adult joins, rehearses and performs with us.

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. RBCS is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults. Nonetheless, RBCS recognises the need to safeguard any young and vulnerable members and the Committee has therefore agreed the following Safeguarding Policy.

### **RBCS's Safeguarding Policy**

1 RBCS will publicise its Safeguarding policy on its website [www.rbc-choir.org.uk](http://www.rbc-choir.org.uk) and draw it to the attention of members at the beginning of each term.

2 Young or vulnerable people will be welcome to join RBCS as long as they bring a parent or other responsible adult who remains responsible for them throughout rehearsals and performances.

3 RBCS will nominate a Designated Person who will be CRB-checked regularly and who will attend appropriate training as required

4 Choir members will report any concerns to the Designated Person based on the detailed guidance in Appendices 1-5:

- Appendix 1 The Four Forms of Abuse
- Appendix 2 Ways to Recognise Child Abuse and Neglect
- Appendix 3 Guidelines for Responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an Allegation of Abuse
- Appendix 4 What to Do if You Suspect that Abuse may have Occurred
- Appendix 5 What the Designated Person will do.

5 The Designated Person will document the concern and report it to the appropriate local agency based on the detailed guidance in Appendices 5-7:

- Appendix 5 What the Designated Person will do
- Appendix 6 Confidential Record of Suspected Abuse
- Appendix 7 Contact in Southwark Council

A permanent confidential record will be kept of the report.

6 If RBCS 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 8).

7 The policy and procedures will be reviewed at every committee meeting.

Approved at a committee meeting on 9 January 2012.

Signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Committee.

Clare Birks

## **Appendix 1 Forms of Abuse**

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm or impairment. It can include misuse of medication, undue restraint or inappropriate sanctions. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child or vulnerable adult whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse can be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development. It may involve making the child or vulnerable person feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve threats of harm or being abandoned, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation, bullying, shouting or swearing.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. It may also involve causing the child or vulnerable adult to feel frequently frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child or vulnerable adult.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of, or consents to what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect the person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or dental treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a person's basic emotional needs.

### **Financial or Material Abuse**

This can include theft, fraud, misuse of property, inheritance, state benefits, possessions or pressure in relation to wills.

### **Discriminatory Abuse**

This can include harassment or slurs based on race, gender, disability or age.

### **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.

## Appendix 2 Ways to Recognise Abuse and Neglect of a Child or Vulnerable Adult

### Physical Abuse

Visible Signs	Behavioural Signs	What to listen for	Consider
<p>1 any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them</p> <p>2 injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games</p> <p>3 unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body</p> <p>4 bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)</p> <p>5 cigarette burns</p> <p>6 bite marks</p> <p>7 broken bones</p> <p>8 scalds</p> <p>9 injuries which have not received medical attention</p> <p>10 neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care</p> <p>11 repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains</p> <p>12 drowsiness due to too much medication</p> <p>13 sensory deprivation – eg spectacles or hearing aid not in place</p>	<p>1 furtive, secretive behaviour</p> <p>2 uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour</p> <p>3 compulsive eating or sudden loss of appetite</p> <p>4 the child who suddenly becomes ill-coordinated</p> <p>5 the child who finds it difficult to stay awake</p> <p>6 the child who is repeatedly absent</p> <p>7 fear of parents being approached for an explanation</p> <p>8 severe temper outbursts</p> <p>9 flinching when approached or touched</p> <p>10 reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather</p> <p>11 depression</p> <p>12 running away from home</p> <p>13 confusion</p>	<p>1 confused or conflicting explanations of how the injuries were sustained</p> <p>2 evaluate carefully what is said and preferably document it verbatim</p> <p>3 consider if the explanation is in keeping with the nature, age and site of injury</p>	<p>1 what you know about the family</p> <p>2 any history of known or suspected abuse</p> <p>3 whether the family has been under stress recently</p> <p>4 any concerns you have about the family</p>

### Emotional Abuse

Physical Signs	Parent/carer behaviours	Behaviours in the Child or Vulnerable Adult
<p>1 failure to thrive or grow particularly if eg a child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care</p> <p>2 sudden speech disorders</p> <p>3 persistent tiredness</p> <p>4 D development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress</p>	<p>1 poor attachment relationship with the child or vulnerable adult</p> <p>2 unresponsive or neglectful behaviour towards child's or vulnerable adult's emotional or psychological needs</p> <p>3 persistent negative comments about the child or vulnerable adult</p> <p>4 inappropriate or inconsistent developmental expectations of the child or vulnerable adult</p> <p>5 parental problems that supersede the needs of the child or vulnerable adult</p> <p>6 dysfunctional family relationships including domestic violence</p> <p>7 do not preserve dignity or privacy for the vulnerable person</p>	<p>1 emotional indicators such as low self esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress, anxiety</p> <p>2 behavioural indicators such as attention seeking, opposing, withdrawn, insecure</p> <p>3 physical indicators such as failure to thrive/faltering growth, delay in achieving developmental, cognitive or educational milestones</p> <p>4 obsessions or phobias</p> <p>5 sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration</p> <p>6 inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults</p> <p>7 being unable to play</p> <p>8 fear of making mistakes</p> <p>9 self-harm</p> <p>10 fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour</p> <p>11 lack of personal clothing</p>

## Sexual Abuse

Physical Signs	Behavioural Signs
1 signs of blood or other discharge on the child's or vulnerable adult's underclothes	1 sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive
2 awkwardness in walking or sitting down	2 fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
3 tummy pains	3 having nightmares
4 regression into enuresis	4 running away from home
5 tiredness	5 sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
6 pain or itching in the genital/anal area	6 sexual drawings or language
7 bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas	7 bedwetting
8 sexually transmitted disease	8 eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia
9 vaginal discharge or infection	9 self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
10 pregnancy	10 saying they have secrets they can not tell anyone about
	11 substance or drug abuse
	12 suddenly having unexplained sources of money
	13 not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
	14 child acting in a sexually explicit way with adults
	15 unkempt, unwashed smell
	16 over-meticulous
	17 inappropriately dressed

## Neglect

Physical Signs	Behavioural Signs
1 constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children or vulnerable adults	1 complaining of being tired all the time
2 constantly dirty or smelly	2 not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
3 loss of weight or being constantly underweight	3 having few friends
4 inappropriate dress for the conditions	4 mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

### **Appendix 3 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 time 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 4 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 RBCS Designated Person is John Hawthorne.

The Designated Person has been nominated by RBCS 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 RBCS, Clare Birks.

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 RBCS. If both are implicated report the matter to Southwark Council 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 5 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 6 RBCS 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

Action taken

Notes

## **Appendix 7 Contact in Southwark Council with Responsibility for Child Protection**

Southwark Local Safeguarding Children's Board  
Mable Goldwin House  
Level 2  
49 Grange Walk  
London  
SE1 3DY

Contact Tina Gosbee  
Tel 020 7525 3308  
Email [tina.gosbee@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:tina.gosbee@southwark.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren)

## Appendix 8 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.