

Portsmouth Baroque Choir: Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

This Safeguarding Policy applies to members of, and visitors to, any rehearsal, workshop, concert, or event organised by the Portsmouth Baroque Choir (also referred to in this document as “PBC”).

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

PBC is an organisation of amateur choral singers managed by a committee. It presents a number of concerts a year, sometimes performing with orchestral groups and/or professional soloists. Rehearsals are run by our Musical Director or by a guest conductor and with our Rehearsal Pianist.

PBC does not advertise its activities as being suitable for children, young people, or adults at risk. Choir members are generally adults, and rehearsals and performances are group activities such that there is no need for any member of the choir or potential choir member or visitor to be alone with another member of any age. Nevertheless, PBC recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of any children and adults at risk with whom it comes into contact and believes that everyone has the right to enjoy the activities of the Choir in a safe environment.

PBC is committed to ensuring that all children, young people and adults at risk have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

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

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

It is not the role of Portsmouth Baroque Choir or its members to decide whether a child, young person or adult at risk has been abused or not. This is the role of the Social Services Department which has legal responsibility, or the NSPCC which has powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act, or the Police. The contact phone numbers for these organisations are listed below.

Who are Children or Adults at Risk?

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

Guidelines

Joining in rehearsals, performances, or other events - Should any child or close relative (under 18) of a member of PBC wish to participate in any rehearsal, performance or other event organised by the Choir, that member must accompany the child or close relative and act as a responsible adult throughout. Should any other child/young person participate in any activity organised by PBC they must be accompanied throughout the activity or event by a parent or other responsible adult who remains responsible for them.

Audiences and Social Events – Children and adults at risk may attend concerts as members of the audience or attend any social event that PBC may host. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or carer to ensure adequate supervision of such child or adult at risk. If a parent/guardian/carers is not personally attending an event, then this policy requires them to be satisfied that the child or adult at risk will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times.

Privacy - Photography, audio and video recording is undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals. The resulting images and recordings are used to promote the activities of the PBC to a wider audience. This includes publishing images and recordings online, on the PBC website and on social media.

Joint concerts with schools or youth organisations – in the event that PBC organises a joint concert with a school (or other organisation involving children or adults at risk), then PBC will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that such children or adults at risk will always be in the care of their teachers or helpers and/or parents who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. PBC acknowledges that this does not detract from its general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

Implementation of this policy

Abuse - The term child abuse is used to describe a range of ways that people harm children. Abuse of adults can happen anywhere - at home, in a residential or nursing home, in a hospital, at work or in the street. There are five main categories of abuse, namely physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, and neglect. PBC notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty that children or adults at risk may have in reporting it.

Safeguarding Officer – PBC has named **Lucy Bradley** as the Safeguarding Officer.

The Safeguarding Officer

- has a duty to ensure that this safeguarding policy is followed by all members and visitors and shall undertake appropriate training as required.
- will be identified to children and adults at risk as the principal person that they should turn to if they have any safeguarding concerns or queries.

Any concerns regarding either a child or a choir member or other potentially adult at risk must immediately be reported to the Safeguarding Officer (or in his or her absence to the Chair of the Committee).

Publication of this Policy

This policy will be published in full on the Portsmouth Baroque Choir website (<https://portsmouthbaroquechoir.co.uk/>)

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually at the first Choir Committee meeting following the AGM.

Safeguarding Guidance

How to respond to safeguarding concerns or allegations:

What is a safeguarding concern?

- A person discloses alleged abuse.
- A person discloses concern for another person.
- You notice signs of abuse.
- There is an accident to a child or an adult at risk in your care.
- There is a disclosure regarding an offender against a person.
- Behaviour is observed which poses risk to others or to themselves.

What should you do?

- Listen carefully to the person disclosing.
- Take the person seriously.
- Be non-judgemental.
- Ask open questions.
- Do not promise to keep it secret.
- Tell them what you will do next (if possible).
- Check that you have the necessary contact information.

Action:

Immediate danger – call the police immediately.

Non-emergency – seek advice from the designated Safeguarding Officer

Make sure you

- Write an accurate, factual record of the concerns reported to them.
- Talk to the Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.

Remember

- Safeguarding concerns are the responsibility of statutory agencies.
- The priority is the person's safety.
- Do not delay.
- Avoid gossip.

Who may need support?

- Alleged victim.
- Family and friends of alleged victim.
- Alleged perpetrator.
- Family and friends of alleged perpetrator.
- Other members of the choir affected.
- Yourself.

Confidentiality

- You must tell the Safeguarding Officer
- Say as little as possible to others without being too secretive.
- Kill rumours.

Afterwards

- Remain non-judgemental.
- Avoid gossip – and try and prevent others from gossiping.
- The committee (via the Safeguarding Officer) will review how the choir operates to reduce/prevent future risks.

Relevant Documents

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991.

The Human Rights Act 1998.

The Children Act 1989 and 2004.

The Protection of Children Act 1999.

The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006.

The Care Act 2014.

The Charity Commission's Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups including Children Issues in Charities 2016.

UK Government Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

NSPCC Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure 2019.

Contact Information

In an emergency, if you suspect you or someone else is in immediate danger, phone 999.

For safeguarding concerns or reporting abuse phone:

Hampshire Adult Services 0300 555 1386 (out of hours 0300 555 1373)

Hampshire Children's Services 0300 555 1384

or

Portsmouth Adult Services 02392 680810

Portsmouth Children's Services 0845 6710271

or

The Police on 101