Maidstone Choral Union

Safeguarding Policy & Procedures for Children and Vulnerable Adults

This policy and accompanying procedures apply to; all members, staff (whether employees or freelances), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Maidstone Choral Union or taking part in Maidstone Choral Union activities.

The purpose of this policy is to provide members of 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 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 aims to:
    - Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are; members of, take part in Maidstone Choral Union activities, or volunteer for, Maidstone Choral Union.
    - Ensure members, staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults 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 vulnerable adults is a primary consideration when Maidstone Choral Union undertakes any activity, event or project.

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
- Contact details of Designated Named Person.

Policy review: This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis by the Maidstone Choral Union Committee. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Policy

Maidstone Choral Union is committed to taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children and vulnerable adults are minimised. The Committee have therefore agreed the following safeguarding policy:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We will work together to prevent and minimise opportunities for abuse. If we have concerns that someone is being abused, our loyalty to the vulnerable person comes before anything else – our group, our colleagues and the person's friends and family.

- We will ensure that the Designated Named Person and other volunteers for appropriate choirs will have access to training around Safeguarding Children and Adults.

- We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that all children and vulnerable adults should be offered respect and given inclusion and empowerment within their choirs.

- All suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to. If we know or suspect that a young person or vulnerable adult is being abused, we will do something about it and ensure our work is properly recorded.

- We undertake to notify Local Authorities/Police and other appropriate agencies when an abuse situation is identified.

- The Committee will cooperate fully with the relevant agencies in every situation and will not conduct its own investigations. It recognises that it is not the role of the Committee to decide whether a child or vulnerable adult has been abused or not. This is the role of the Social Services department that has legal responsibility, or the NSPCC who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act.

- Confidentiality for all parties will be maintained at every stage of such event.

- We will review and endorse our safeguarding policy annually.

Maidstone Choral Union accepts that we have a duty of care to abide by this policy and to report concerns. All choir members, officers and volunteers are required to familiarise themselves with this document, and the Committee will publicise its safeguarding policy on its website.

Procedures

Maidstone Choral Union believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and vulnerable adults we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

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
- Musicians performing in concerts as guest artists, including rehearsals for these events
- Audience members at public concerts

The Named Safeguarding Person, Beverley Grove, has responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to Beverley Grove in the first instance.

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

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 Maidstone Choral Union 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 Maidstone Choral Union equal opportunities policy.

Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people

When Maidstone Choral Union organises an activity or event where they will be responsible for vulnerable people they will ensure:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
- The event is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults – this will be a minimum of one but more when practically possible.
- Where practically possible the total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be in line with the ratio table below - as per Ofsted recommendations.

- There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been DBS checked.
- The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking up arrangements for vulnerable people).
- That if vulnerable people of different gender will be taking part in activities adults of different gender will be in attendance too.
- Two adults (one DBS checked) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will be responsible for ensuring vulnerable people get home safely.

Child to adult ratio table

Childs age	Number of adults	Number of children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
12-18	1	10

Working with parents/guardians/carers: If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in Maidstone Choral Union activities written permission (email is fine) should be obtained from parents/guardians/carers where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: emergency contact details for any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for another adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished.

Notes

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, Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Guidelines

1. 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 Designated Person is **Beverley Grove**, email: maidstonechoralunion@gmail.com Telephone: 07929 508438.

The Designated Person has been nominated by the Committee 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 Group Chair or a DBS checked adult.

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 – see 2 below).

You should report your discussion with the Designated Person as soon as possible. If this person is implicated, you need to report to the Chair of the Committee. If both are implicated report the matter to Kent County Council Social Services.

2. 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 times 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

- 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.

3. How to record suspected abuse

This format should be used to report all suspicions or allegations of abuse or a serious incident and is to be sent to the Local Authority Designated Child Protection Officer or Adults Central Duty team at Kent Social Services –see useful contacts. (Use additional pages if necessary).

1. Your name and designation and the name and designation of anyone else who has been involved in collecting information
2. The date, time and place that you were advised of the Incident or when you became suspicious of abuse.
3. The names address and telephone contact details of any witnesses to the incident.
4. The name and address and telephone contact details of the person making the allegation.
5. The name, address and (if known) the telephone number of the alleged victim of the incident
6. Brief account given of the incident including if any abuse has occurred.
7. If applicable, describe any injuries which have been observed (e.g. cuts, bruises, burns etc. and where on the body they were observed).
8. If the incident relates to neglect, please describe the conditions that are in place that have led to the need to take safeguarding action, e.g. state of the home, clothing or the child or vulnerable adult

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.

4. 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.

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 by contacting 999 or 111, if it is necessary and inform the service 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 or vulnerable adult
- 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 1

Useful Contacts

- Kent Social Services:
- Adults Central Duty Team – 03000 41 61 61, **text relay 18001 03000 41 61 61 or email social.services@kent.gov.uk.**
- Children and Young People Central Duty Team: 03000 41 11 11, **text relay 18001 03000 41 11 11) or email social.services@kent.gov.uk.**
    - Out of Hours after 5pm (Covers both Children and Adults): 03000 41 91 91
    - LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for allegations relating to staff/volunteers and relating to children and young people: 03000 41 08 88
- Police: Tel: 101 – 24 hours for advice
- NSPCC Help line Tel: 0800 800 500 – 24 hours, Freephone
- Child Line (NI) Tel: 0800 1111 – Freephone

Reviewed September 2023

Appendix 2 Who are Children and Vulnerable Adults?

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

A vulnerable adult may fall into any one of the following groups: older and frail people; people with a mental health need, a learning difficulty, a physical impairment, a sensory impairment; people who are substance or alcohol dependent; or family carers providing assistance to another vulnerable adult.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other persons(s) or group of people. Abuse may be single or repeated acts. Abuse of vulnerable adults occurs in all cultures, all religions and all levels of society. The abuser may be anyone including family, friend, neighbour, partner, carer, stranger, care worker/service provider, manager, volunteer, another person who uses the service or any person who comes into contact with the vulnerable adult. It can be:

- Physical: for example, hitting, slapping, burning, pushing, restraining or giving the wrong medication.
- Psychological and emotional: for example, shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring or humiliating a person, threats of harm or abandonment, intimidation, verbal abuse.
- Financial: including the illegal or unauthorised use of a person's property, money, pension book or other valuables, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.
- Sexual: such as forcing a person to take part in any sexual activity without his or her informed consent – this can occur in any relationship.
- Discriminatory: including racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This also includes stopping someone from being involved in religious or cultural activity, services or support networks;
- Institutional: the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people. This includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers of care.

Abuse of vulnerable adults can occur in any setting or situation:

- Domestic Settings – including the person's home or another person's home.
- Institutional Settings – including day care, residential homes, nursing homes and hospitals.
- Public Settings – including the street, any public area, or social or work environment.