

## **1. Introduction: what is Safeguarding?**

A basic definition is to “protect from harm or damage with an appropriate measure”. The Care Act 2014 defines safeguarding as protecting “an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect” thus ensuring vulnerable adults are also included. It sets out a legal framework for how agencies should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect by placing a general duty on local authorities to promote the well-being of individuals when carrying out care and support functions.

Organisations then apply the concept to their various circumstances to provide relevant definitions and policies.

The definition of well-being includes personal dignity, protection from abuse and neglect, control by the individual over day-to-day life, suitability of living accommodation and the individual’s contribution to society. As an increasing number of the UK’s population live longer and suffer with disabling conditions, provisions under this Act become increasingly relevant for all organisations, including choral societies. There are many reasons why an adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation. These include their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss, or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but may be unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

## **2. Who do safeguarding duties apply to?**

2.1 The Care Act 2014 sets out that safeguarding duties applied to *any* adult who:

- has care and support needs, and
- is experiencing or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect, because of those needs

2.2 According to the Act, an “adult at risk” is therefore an adult aged 18 years or over who:

- is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness
- is or may be unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation (Department of Health 2000).

2.3 The term “adult at risk” may include people with a wide range of disabilities and circumstances, who may be experiencing conditions that reduce their choice and control, their ability to make decisions or to protect themselves from harm and exploitation. An adult at risk may therefore be an adult who:

- has a learning disability
- has a mental health mental capacity issue
- misuses substances or alcohol

### **3. Application to Epsom Choral Society (ECS)**

3.1 ECS is a non-professional choir primarily for adults aged 18 or over. Applications for membership of the choir by someone under the age of 18 will be considered, provided they are accompanied by a responsible adult.

3.2 ECS is a registered unincorporated charity whose key objective is the study and practice of choral music in order to foster public knowledge, education and appreciation of such music by means of public performance.

3.3 The Care Act states that everyone has a role to play in the safeguarding of adults and therefore ECS has created this document to identify what actions we might need to take. Because of the nature of the individual skills, commitment and focus required to fulfil this aim it is unlikely that we will have members who are at risk because of learning difficulties, although risk of abuse (eg domestic violence, controlling behaviours etc), self-harm or neglect, substance abuse or alcohol problems might occur at any time. Those needing extra support and vigilance through mental incapacity are likely occurrences.

#### **Principles**

Promoting safeguarding is embedded throughout the ESC. Aspects under the ‘umbrella’ of Safeguarding include but are not restricted to:

Keeping members safe during Society activities from:

- Radicalisation
- Accidents
- Crime
- Bullying and harassment including cyber bullying
- Maltreatment
- Domestic violence and bullying
- Financial abuse
- Discrimination abuse
- Abuse – there are many categories of abuse and include areas such as physical, emotional, sexual and neglect
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.
- Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

- Mental health issues and improving well-being.

#### **4. Policy statement**

4.1 ECS will not tolerate the abuse of adults in any of its forms and is committed to safeguarding any vulnerable adults by supporting their needs within the resources available to the choir.

4.2 The committee is responsible for making sure that no one is harmed by any contact with ECS. The committee will appoint a Safeguarding Lead who will be available to discuss any arising safeguarding issues with the Chairman. A decision will then be taken on how to proceed.

4.3 The committee should ensure it engenders a fair, open and positive culture where all involved feel able to report concerns and be confident that they will be heard and responded to.

4.4 If we work with the choir where members are under 18, we will expect that choir to have their own Safeguarding Policy, and to demonstrate compliance with it.

4.5 If a choir member is under 18, then we would require that they attend with a responsible adult who would ensure that safeguarding measures are in place.

#### **5. Who do I go to if I am concerned about a safeguarding issue?**

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** - if anyone notices a safeguarding issue that they feel needs further attention, they should inform the Chairman who will discuss it with the Safeguarding Lead. They will decide what action should be taken or support given.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to make a referral for help for the concerns identified. ECS is not responsible for the subsequent investigation of such concerns.

In certain circumstances we might need to report a safeguarding issue irrespective of whether the individual would want us to.

#### **6. Who does this policy apply to?**

This policy applies to all members and professionals working with ECS and with those who come into contact with the choir.

#### **7. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the committee and will be published on the ECS website.

**Approved by a vote of the ECS General Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

Reviewed: February 2024 Approved in committee 14.03.24