

Safeguarding Policy

This Safeguarding Policy applies to members and staff (including trustees) of, and visitors to, any rehearsal, workshop, concert or event organised by the St Bartholomew's Hospital Choral Society (referred to in this document as "Barts Choir").

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

Barts Choir is an organisation of amateur choral singers managed by a committee of charity trustees. 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 Assistant Conductor with our Rehearsal Pianist.

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

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

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

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

It is not the role of Barts Choir or its members to decide whether a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused or not. This is the role of the Social Services Department which has legal responsibility, the NSPCC which has powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act, or the Police.

Who are Children or Adults at Risk?

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is a child. An adult at risk ('a vulnerable adult') is defined in the Care Act 2014 as someone over 18 years old who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect as a result of their care and support needs or is unable to protect himself or herself against the 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 Barts Choir 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 Barts Choir 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 vulnerable adults may attend concerts as members of the audience, or attend any social event Barts Choir may host. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure adequate supervision of such child or vulnerable adult. If a parent/guardian/carer is not personally attending an event this policy requires them to be satisfied that the child or vulnerable adult 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 Barts Choir to a wider audience. This includes publishing images and recordings online, on the Barts Choir website and on social media.

Joint concerts with schools or youth organisations – in the event that Barts Choir organises a joint concert with a school (or other organisation involving children or vulnerable adults), Barts Choir will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that such children or vulnerable adults will always be in the care of their teachers or helpers and/or parents who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. Barts Choir 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. Barts Choir notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty children or vulnerable adults may have in reporting it.

Safeguarding Officer – Barts Choir has named **Sally Loader** (safeguarding@bartschoir.com) as the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer

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

Any concerns regarding either a child or a choir member, a member of staff or other potentially vulnerable adult 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 Barts Choir website (<https://barts-choir.com>).

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 vulnerable person in your care.
- There is a disclosure regarding an offender against a person.
- Behaviour is observed which poses risk to others or to themselves.

Be aware of your feelings. It is very natural to feel the following emotions:

- Anxiety
- Panic
- Fear
- Disbelief
- Split loyalties
- Anger
- Denial – you want it to disappear

Recognising your emotions will help you be able to handle the situation appropriately.

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 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 down what has happened or been disclosed and keep that record.
- 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.

APPENDIX

The Children's Act 1989 and 2004;

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 1991;

Government guidance on safeguarding children;

Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000;

The Care Act 2014;

The Charity Commission's Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities.