

**R Community Choirs - Birmingham
Safeguarding Policy and Procedure**

Document Control		
Version and date	Date of next review - at least annually	Reviewer
V1 – 1/07/26	Before July 2027	David Fittro – Director Safeguarding Lead

Terms and definitions used in this policy

Our organisation R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC

Directors - Individuals appointed to the board of R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC who hold legal responsibility for governance and safeguarding.

Employees - Paid staff members of the organisation. (Currently this refers only to the Choir Director who leads choir sessions.)

Choir members - Adults, young people or children who attend or take part in any choir sessions or activities delivered by R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC.

Parents / Carers - Individuals with parental responsibility or caring responsibility for children or vulnerable adults who attend choir activities.

Introduction

R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC recognises the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and is committed to safeguarding practices that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

- We recognise the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children, young people and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, vulnerable adults,
- Carers and other agencies are essential in promoting young people's welfare.

1. Purpose:

R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC will:

- Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in our organisation's services and activities.

This policy applies to all directors, employees, choir members and anyone representing R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC.

2. Definitions

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or are in hospital.

Adult at Risk/Vulnerable Adult

- An adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Child and Adult Abuse

Children, young people and vulnerable adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 5 main categories of abuse, which are:

1. **Sexual abuse** is any sexual activity with a child or non-consenting vulnerable adult. Many children and young people and vulnerable adults who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child or vulnerable adult may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.
2. **Physical abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child or vulnerable adult. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.
3. **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse, and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.
4. **Neglect** is a pattern of failing to provide for a child or vulnerable adult's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.
5. **Financial abuse** is the mistreatment of someone in terms of their money or assets, such as their property. This can include: money being stolen or misused; fraud; exploiting someone's financial affairs, restricting someone's access to money, employment or possessions; and pressuring or coercing someone about their will, lasting power of attorney, property or inheritance.

Other recognised forms of abuse:

6. **Spiritual abuse** Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse that involves coercion, control, manipulation or exploitation in a spiritual or religious context. It may include the misuse of spiritual authority, beliefs or practices to pressure, shame, dominate or isolate a child, young person or vulnerable adult. While R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC is not a faith-based organisation, we recognise that spiritual abuse can occur in wider community settings and we are committed to safeguarding against all forms of harm.

It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults includes:

- protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of children, young people and vulnerable adults' health or development.
- ensuring that children, young people and vulnerable adults are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the best outcomes.

3. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from nspcc.org.uk/learning.

Our organisation's directors are responsible for ensuring appropriate policies and arrangements are in place that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Our organisation's directors also have the responsibility for ensuring sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated for the effective implementation of this policy and arrangements.

All our organisation's directors are accountable for the proper maintenance and implementation of this policy and its associated arrangements. Lead responsibility for the

coordination and management of our organisation's safeguarding activities will be assigned to a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or organisational changes require it.

4. Training and Awareness

Our organisation will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its directors, employees, and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it.

For all who are working with children, young people and vulnerable adults this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Recognise a child, young person or vulnerable adult potentially in need of safeguarding and take appropriate action.
- Understand how to report a safeguarding concern.
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children, young people and vulnerable adults Policy.
- Exercise caution about being alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult. In situations where this is unavoidable, they should ensure another director or employee knows what they are doing and where they are.

5. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Our organisation expects all directors and employees to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child, young person or vulnerable adult is deemed to be at risk of harm or **contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.**

6. Recording and Record Keeping

A written record must be kept about any concern regarding a child, young person or vulnerable adult with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decisions made and why they were made.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Safeguarding records will be retained for a minimum of 6 years in accordance with statutory guidance.

7. Safe Recruitment & Selection

Our organisation is committed to safe recruitment practices that reduce the risk of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

Our organisation requires anyone who delivers activities on our behalf and has regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults must have an up-to-date DBS check. At present, all activities are delivered solely by the Choir Director, who holds an enhanced DBS check.

8. Electronic Communications & Social Media

Directors and employees must not communicate privately with children or vulnerable adults via personal social media or messaging apps.

All choir participants, parents, carers and visitors must follow the organisation's rules regarding the use of mobile phones and digital technology. It is unlawful to photograph children, young people or vulnerable adults without the explicit consent of the person with parental responsibility.

9. Whistleblowing

It is important that people within our organisation have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another director, employee or choir member. There is also a requirement by our organisation to protect whistle-blowers. Whistleblowing concerns will be handled confidentially and without detriment to the person raising the concern.

**Information to be shared with all Directors, Employees, and Choir Members
R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC Safeguarding Procedure**

Safeguarding Procedure – what to do if you have concerns

Remember that safeguarding children/young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone that works with our organisation in any capacity, this includes directors, employees, and choir members.

As part of your induction training, you will receive information about our safeguarding procedure, and most importantly you should never ignore a concern regarding safeguarding. The main thing to remember is that if you notice Abuse or find evidence of Abuse you simply need to report it to the relevant person.

What to do if you are aware of or concerned that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm:

Your first point of call should ALWAYS be to report your concern to David Fittro – Safeguarding Lead. Email address: davidfittro@gmail.com. Telephone number: **07950 841551**

They will take a written note of your concerns, and these will be signed and dated.

The safeguarding lead will take the appropriate action and report to the relevant authority if necessary. In Birmingham -

- **Concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a child or young person**
If you have any concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a child or young person telephone the Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) on 0121 303 1888 or via secure email CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
_Outside of normal office hours call 0121 675 4806 for the Emergency Duty Team
- **Concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a vulnerable adult**
If you have any concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a vulnerable adult telephone Adult Social care on 0121 303 1234 or via secure email; CSAdultSocialCare@birmingham.gov.uk
- **Concerns that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in IMMEDIATE DANGER**
If however, you believe the child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger contact the police on 999.

Where the named person in charge of the safeguarding, or usual person to report the safeguarding concern to is the suspected cause, or somehow involved in the safeguarding event, you should instead report your concern to **thirtyone:eight** on **0303 003 1111**. If you are unsure who is the right person to report your concern to, you can email or ring Adult Social Care who will provide free advice.

Where you have raised a concern to your Designated Safeguarding Lead but feel that the problem has not been adequately addressed or resolved you should then report this to **thirtyone:eight** on **0303 003 1111**.

Safeguarding Procedure and guidance

- If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult, you should always make a report to the relevant person (see above for guidance).
- If someone discloses (tells you) they've been abused, follow these simple steps:
 - Remain calm and listen without judgement
 - Don't ask any leading questions, e.g. "did it hurt?" as this can lead to false information. If you need to ask questions to clarify details they make them as open as possible.
 - Never promise to keep information about abuse a secret and let the person know that you will need to report this to someone.
- If you witness abuse:
 - Always ring the police (999) if the person is in immediate danger. Do this first, then report to your Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as practically possible after that.
 - Where the danger is not immediate, make a note of what you have witnessed and report this as soon as possible to your Designated Safeguarding Lead.

It is never your responsibility to investigate or gather evidence of abuse, all you need to do is tell someone.

Important Contacts

Safeguarding Lead

Name: **David Fittro**

Email address: **davidfittro@gmail.com**

Telephone number: **07950 841551**

The Safeguarding Lead has the authority to make referrals to statutory agencies without prior approval from directors.

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Name: **Paul Tucker**

Email address: **paultucker73@hotmail.co.uk**

Telephone number: **07913 785505**

R Community Choirs – Birmingham CIC is a member of **thirtyone:eight** safeguarding service. In the event you feel unable to report a concern to our Safeguarding lead or deputy safeguarding lead, please contact thirtyone:eight

Name: **thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent. BR8 7UQ**

Email address: **info@thirtyoneeight.org**

Safeguarding Helpline: **0303 003 1111**

Birmingham City Council – Safeguarding referrals Safeguarding concerns about children and young people

For safeguarding concerns about children and young people

Contact number: 0121 303 1888

Email: CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

For URGENT safeguarding referrals for children and young people out of office hours team

Outside of normal office hours - 0121 675 4806 (Emergency Duty Team)

Safeguarding concerns about vulnerable adults

For safeguarding concerns about vulnerable adults

Contact number: 0121 303 1234

Email: CSAdultSocialCare@birmingham.gov.uk

Out of hours team for URGENT referrals for vulnerable adults

Contact number: 0121 464 9001

Text Relay: Dial 18001, followed by the full national phone number

Out of hours email: AMHPoutofhours@birmingham.gov.uk

Police

Emergency – 999

Non-emergency – 101

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000