



# **Guild of Church Musicians**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

**For children, young people and vulnerable adults.**

**November 2016**

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## 1. Introduction.

The Guild of Church Musicians is committed to the support and well-being of all children and adults who are involved with the organisation; or come in to contact with officers or members during Guild activities.

The welfare of children and adults is paramount, for the purposes of this policy a child is defined as any person who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults.

Voluntary organisations and private sector providers play an important role in delivering services to children and adults. They should have arrangements in place in the same way as organisations in the public sector, and need to work effectively with the Local safeguarding Boards and statutory partners.

Paid and volunteer Officers and Members need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary.

The Care Act 2014 outlines how a local authority should respond to adults who are or may be at risk of harm. It is essential, when considering sharing information with the local authority or other statutory agencies, that the wishes of the individual are respected; however there may be occasions when it is in the best interest of the individual that information should be shared without consent.

## 2. Definitions of Abuse and Neglect (children and adults at risk of harm)

### 2.1 Abuse & neglect are forms of maltreatment.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children and adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

They may be abused by an adult or adults, by children or carers; abuse can be caused by an act or an omission to act.

### 2.2 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

## 2.3 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, for example witnessing domestic violence.

It may involve serious bullying, causing a person frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

## 2.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves a person taking part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can children.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) does not necessitate force, a child can be subject to sexual exploitation by a person who they feel they have a relationship with; dependence on the offender is often a factor in this form of abuse.

## 2.5 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and/or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Abuse affects individuals in many ways and the effects can emerge some considerable time after the actual event. These may be triggered by apparently unrelated incidents; they may suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress, self-harming behaviour and eating disorders.

Behavioural difficulties may mask depression caused by abuse. Workers working with children and adults who self-harm should always bear in mind that they may have suffered from abuse.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children and young people are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

## 2.6 Domestic Abuse

It is widely acknowledged that domestic abuse within families can have a detrimental effect on the safety and well-being of children.

Children are affected not only in relation to witnessing domestic abuse but also by living in an environment where their parent and caregiver is repeatedly victimised. Children who are subjected to domestic abuse are at greater risk of being abused themselves.

As well as the possibility of physical violence the children will almost certainly be subjected to emotional abuse. Concerns that involve incidents of domestic abuse need to be assessed in respect of the needs and safety of children.

## 3. Purpose

The Guild of Church Musicians is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all the children and adults with whom it works; and to the safety of its Officers and Members.

This policy is one of a suite of practice guidance documents which operate to ensure the safeguarding of children, adults, members and officers.

All Officers, paid and voluntary, are required to be familiar with the policy and the necessary response to hearing a disclosure or concern relating to the welfare of any individual.

Additionally all Officers have a responsibility to be familiar with policies relating to their own behaviour, and that of others, in regard to:

Confidentiality.

Social media.

Whistle blowing

Responding to allegations against Officers or Members.

#### 4. Principles and responsibility.

The Guild of Church Musicians believes that the abuse or neglect of children and adults is a serious violation of their human rights and development potential.

We aim to provide and promote a safe environment for children and adults, respecting their confidentiality where possible and working at the young person's pace to address issues and obtain support.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All Officers and Members, voluntary or paid, must ensure that everyone is treated respectfully and that their concerns and allegations are listened to, and responded to, respectfully and safely in accordance with the safeguarding policy and current legislation.

REPORT CONCERNS – DO NOT INVESTIGATE THEM

#### 5. Procedure for reporting concerns, suspicions and allegations relating to children.

Disclosure by a child or young adult.

When taking or considering any action, the welfare of the child or young person is paramount.

If a child or young person discloses abuse or neglect to a member of staff or Trustee they must work to the following guidance for working with a child or young person that has disclosed abuse or neglect.

- Stay calm and approachable. Do not show any reaction as this could prevent the child disclosing.
- Listen very carefully to what is being said without interrupting.
- Explain that the information being given by the child or young person may need to be shared and passed on to others. Seek their permission to share the information and explain why it is necessary. Do not in any circumstances agree to keep it a secret.

- Make it clear that you are taking them seriously and acknowledge how difficult this must be.
- Allow the child or young person to speak at their own pace.
- Reassure the child or young person that they are doing the right thing telling you.
- If you need to ask questions, then only ask questions for clarification. Avoid asking questions that suggest particular answers or are probing questions – you do not need to know all the details that is a job for the experts.
- Let the child or young person know what will happen next, who you will report the information to, what will happen once it has been recorded.
- Ask the young person what they would like to happen as a result of sharing this information with you?
- Record all the details of what was said using the exact wording of the child or young person.

Do not try to interpret any of the information yourself. Record details such as names mentioned, dates, times, who the information went to, what action was taken next. Don't forget to sign it and if appropriate, ask the young person to read it, record any amendments/disagreements and sign it.

If the child or young person does not give permission to share information then you must discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead .....  
If necessary, the Safeguarding Lead will liaise with Social Care (without sharing personal details) to discuss the concerns and to consider possible risks to the individual, whilst preserving anonymity at this stage.

If, after consultation, it is decided that the child or young person is not at immediate risk and no other person is at risk from the alleged perpetrator then confidentiality will be maintained and on-going support offered, until the individual feels empowered to take action themselves or gives permission to disclose.  
If the alleged perpetrator is in a position of trust, within GoCM or any other organisation, the concern must be reported.

#### Risk Factors to consider

- The severity of the neglect/abuse
- Category of concern: Physical; Sexual; Emotional; Neglect
- The duration & frequency of neglect/abuse
- The age/vulnerability of the child
- The family context and previous history
- Siblings – Are there any other children in the family that may be at risk
- Child's development within the context of family, wider social and cultural environment.
- The adequacy of parental care
- The child's views, wishes, feelings and reactions
- Any special needs such as medical condition, communication difficulty or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family
- The nature of the harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care

- The impact upon the child's health and development
- Associated physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- Reliability of concerns
- Other risk factors: mental health; substance misuse; social isolation

If, after consultation, it is decided to break confidentiality without permission of the client, this will be done by Safeguarding Lead. (if an immediate risk is believed or identified then a report may be made by the person receiving the disclosure to the police or local authority as required).

### Breaching Confidentiality

In exceptional circumstances, the designated Safeguarding Lead may decide to break confidentiality.

It is not GoCM's role to investigate the concerns or to assess whether a child/young person has suffered abuse or significant harm. In making the decision to breach confidentiality, it will be necessary to consider the following guidance questions (this is not exhaustive):

- Does the child/young person/someone else require immediate protection or medical treatment?
- Is the child/young person at immediate risk of harm?
- Is another child/young person at immediate or potential risk of harm?
- Are there younger siblings in the home that are, or may be, at risk?
- Are there other children/young people that visit the home? [or setting where the alleged abuse is/has occurred]
- Have there been any previous concerns identified by staff/volunteers?
- Is this historic abuse? [i.e. how long ago did it happen? Are there any concerns that it could still be continuing with other children?]
- How have these concerns arisen? [e.g. disclosure by young person; observation from staff/volunteer; indirectly]
- Has the young person told anyone else about the concerns? If so, what has happened as a result of them sharing the concerns?
- Are there any other professionals involved in working with this young person/their family/others? If so, are they aware of the concerns?
- What support network does the young person have?
- What would the young person like to happen next?

### Notes:

It is vital to take account of possible consequences of inappropriate or premature breach of confidentiality, which may result in the young person denying abuse, refusing to co-operate with Social Services, or putting themselves at further risk (running away, attempting suicide).

If an individual discloses perpetrating sexual abuse or children display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours staff should immediately consult with the Safeguarding Lead.

## REPORT CONCERNS – DO NOT INVESTIGATE THEM

### 6. Disclosure by an adult who may be at risk of harm

An adult is any person 18yrs and over, they may not be by definition a vulnerable adult.

If abuse is disclosed to you, however partially, then:

- If you are not the appropriate person to assist further, offer the assistance of the appropriate colleague or manager. If the adult asks that no further action is taken, you will need to explain your own need to discuss this matter with the identified safeguarding lead.
- You must make it clear to the adult that you have an obligation to breach confidentiality should the disclosure raise any implications for the safety of a child, another person or the adult themselves.
- State that you will keep a record of the disclosure and will need to share confidentially with a line manager.
- Offer to assist in identifying the support that may be available from other organisations or agencies
- You can always contact the local authority for advice without giving any names.
- Record what action you have taken and why you did or did not take particular action.

## REPORT CONCERNS – DO NOT INVESTIGATE THEM