

Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

1. Overview

Commitment to safeguarding:

Newcastle Choral Society (NCS) acknowledges that adults have the right to take risks as long as they have the capacity to make an informed decision. We also acknowledge that it is everyone's right to live free from abuse in accordance with their human rights. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we come into contact.

About this policy

- This policy and these procedures apply to all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Newcastle Choral Society or taking part in our activities.
- The purpose of this policy is to provide members, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children, young and vulnerable adults.

2. Definition 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 at risk as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This might include adults who are frail, those who may have learning or physical disability, a mental illness or reduced physical or mental capacity. Those who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This policy also recognises that risk is determined by the activity which an adult is taking part in and not solely on the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult. Any adult can be at risk, and the risk can be temporary.

3. Definition of abuse:

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- Physical abuse e.g., hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Sexual abuse e.g., involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism

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- Domestic abuse e.g., Incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality, this includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence; Female Genital Mutilation; forced marriage. Age range extended down to 16
- Emotional/psychological abuse e.g., intimidation or humiliation
- Financial abuse e.g., theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc
- Modern Slavery e.g., Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude

4. Policy Aims:

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that members, staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they are interacting with.
- Ensure that the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a primary consideration when Newcastle Choral Society undertakes any activity, event or project.

5. Working with vulnerable people:

Membership is open to those over 18 years of age (in exceptions we admit 16- and 17-year-olds, with parental permission). We run regular rehearsals for members and hold 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
- Working in collaboration with other choirs who may be comprised of vulnerable people
- Audience members at public concerts

6. Named safeguarding persons:

The Safeguarding Lead and names of members of the Safeguarding Team are stated in Appendix 1.

All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to the Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. The Safeguarding Lead should have preferably Enhanced DBS Check in place as best practice.

Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of one or all of the Safeguarding Team, in line with established procedures (see below).

7. Safeguarding procedures:

7.1 Events and activities

When Newcastle Choral Society organises any activity or event where they will be working with 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 when working with children, the total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be in line with Ofsted recommendations.
- There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be ideally the Safeguarding Lead, but can 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).
- The Safeguarding Team and Committee will be mindful that events and activities may require guardians/parents/carers to be in attendance at all times. Indication of this will be given ahead of the event or activity.
- A vulnerable person will not be left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity.
- 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.

7.2 Recruitment practices

If an existing or potential new member, staff member or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people as part of Newcastle Choral Society's activities, the appropriate level of DBS checking will be requested and that it is in date 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 Newcastle Choral Society's Data Protection policy.

7.3 Working with parents/guardians/carers

If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in Newcastle Choral Society activities, specific written permission should be obtained from parents/guardians/carers where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: emergency contact details of any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for another adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished.

7.4 Raising safeguarding concerns and reporting incidents of abuse

- If any member, staff or volunteer in Newcastle Choral Society witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the named safeguarding officer on duty or through the Committee.

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- If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported another of the Safeguarding Team. In the unlikely event that none of the above are available report to the Chair of Newcastle Choral Society.
- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves, they should report it anyone of the Safeguarding Team or another individual they trust.

7.5 Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

The person who took the report and/or the Safeguarding Team will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – calling the police and/or ambulance service.
2. If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time – remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.

If none of the above applies, the person who took the report will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them. These notes must be securely kept and handed over to the Safeguarding Lead or a Committee member as soon as possible. It is important to understand that notes of the incident are highly confidential and must be treated as such. Making notes or a recording on a mobile phone should be avoided to ensure notes are not automatically uploaded to personal storage areas. The Committee will store these notes in the secure members area of the NCS Platform for a minimum retention period of 6 years to ensure they can be called on, if needed, in a centralised place.
- Speak with one of the Safeguarding Team or a Committee member to decide how to handle the reported abuse. This should not be discussed with anyone who is named as involved in the incident or with anyone outside the Safeguarding Team or Committee to ensure anonymity before further investigation.
- Escalate the report by either:
 - Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
 - Requesting an assessment by the Newcastle City Council Children / Adult Social Care Services about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection.
 - An internal investigation – for less serious incidents where internal mediation is appropriate.

Local contact numbers can be found in Appendix 1. The NCS Safeguarding Team are responsible for regularly reviewing this information for accuracy. Where a case of abuse is escalated, the committee will cooperate with the police and Newcastle City Council in dealing with the reported incident.

- Where an internal investigation takes place, the committee will:
 - Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
 - Inform the family/guardians of the person reported as being abused of the incident if not already aware.

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- Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
- Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
- Meetings will be attended by the Safeguarding Lead and at least one other committee member.
 - All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
- Once meetings have taken place the committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. They will be either:
 - Escalate the incident to the relevant authority.
 - Further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - A decision or resolution.

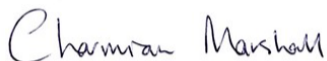
7.6 Resolution and disciplinary action

- If abuse is found to have taken place, any final resolution or decision will be guided by the recommendations of Newcastle Safeguarding Board / Partnership.
- Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with both Newcastle Choral Society's constitution and Equalities and Diversity policy.

8. Policy review:

This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on a biennial basis by the Committee of Newcastle Choral Society. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, best practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Policy Agreed by Newcastle Choral Society and confirmed at AGM 29 September 2025



Signed.....

Mrs Charmian Marshall

Chair of Newcastle Choral Society

Review Date: September 2027

Appendix 1

Local Safeguarding Contacts:

- In an emergency, or if you are worried that someone is in immediate danger, always call the Police on 999.
- If your concern is about an adult (over 18), contact:
Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council:
[Newcastle Safeguarding reporting](#) and report online.
Or call 0191 2788377 from 8-5pm
Out of hours call 0191 278 7878 emergency duty team
- If you are concerned about a child or young person, contact:
Newcastle City Council:
[Report a concern for Child or Young Person](#)
Or call 0191 2772500 8.45-5pm
Out of hours call 0191 2787878 emergency duty team
- If you need general guidance on the situation
[Initial Response Service](#): Northumberland 0800 652 2861
[Initial Response Service](#): South of Tyne 0800 652 2867
NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Newcastle Choral Society will be guided by the Newcastle Safeguarding Board and Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership in dealing with all concerns and incidents of abuse:
for Safeguarding boards Tel: 0191 211 6748