

# Sansara Choir: Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

29.11.22

## Table of Contents

<b>Purpose .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Aims and Objectives .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Organisation .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The role of all members of staff .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Procedures to follow if a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Procedures to follow if a member of staff is concerned about the welfare or safety of a child or vulnerable adult.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What staff should do if they have concerns about another member of staff.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Peer on peer abuse .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Professional confidentiality .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Specific safeguarding issues .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Recognising abuse .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: Low Level Concern Form .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: Beyond Low Level Concern .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: Safeguarding Information for Staff.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: Safer Recruitment Guidelines .....</b>	<b>15</b>

This policy applies to all contract and volunteer staff – safeguarding is the responsibility of ALL. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone’s responsibility. This policy contains practical guidance and information on what to do in specific situations.

It should be read in conjunction with these policies:

- Sansara Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety
- Whistleblowing
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

Chair of Trustees – Charles Graham

Designated Safeguarding Trustee – Sarah Rennix

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Fiona Fraser

Artistic Director – Tom Herring

## **Purpose**

The Safeguarding and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy provides clear direction to staff and others about expected behaviour in dealing with Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection issues. The policy also makes explicit the commitment to the development of good practice and sound internal procedures. This ensures that Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally; staff should always act in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by the DfE (KCSiE, 2018) as “protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes”. Safeguarding vulnerable adults involves “preventing the risk of significant harm from neglect or abuse, while also supporting people to maintain control of their own lives’.

## **Aims and Objectives**

Sansara Choir ("The Choir") believes and treats all as equal and seek to provide the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise the additional needs of children and vulnerable adults from minority ethnic groups and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

In order to protect and safeguard children and vulnerable adults, there is an emphasis on:

- Prevention through a positive and open atmosphere.
- Protection through following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection concerns.
- Support for children/vulnerable adults who may have been abused.

## **Organisation**

All adults working with, or on behalf of, children and vulnerable adults have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare. There are, however, key individuals who have specific responsibilities under Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection procedures:

### **The role of the Local Authority (LA) Child or Adult Protection Service;**

- be responsible for investigating and taking appropriate action, including reporting back to the Choir when referrals are made due to concerns regarding Child or Vulnerable Adult Protection.

### **The role of the Trustees;**

- be familiar with the Safeguarding and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and the Sansara Staff Code of Conduct,
- ensure staff have read and understand the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Sansara Staff Code of Conduct.

### **The role of the Designated Trustee(s);**

- be responsible for the leadership and management of safeguarding policies and procedures,
- ensure that procedures are followed to make a referral to the DBS if a person has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been if they had not resigned.

### **The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);**

- ensure that the Safeguarding and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and procedures are embedded in the Choir.
- lead or organise Safeguarding and Child and Vulnerable Protection training.
- receive referrals, and liaise both internally with trustees and staff and externally with agencies in regard to Child and Vulnerable Protection,
- record concerns and reports from members of staff,

- record any concerns from staff which concerns result in a referral and the outcome of that referral,
- report anonymous information and statistics to the Trustees,
- keep copies of Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Records confidential,
- refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child/vulnerable adult to the DBS,
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required,
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff,
- ensure the Choir holds and maintains a Single Central Record of vetting checks that comply with statutory safeguarding,
- ensure staff have read and understand the Safeguarding and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct,
- ensure that all new staff, including supply staff and volunteers, receive appropriate training,
- ensure that parents and carers are informed about the Choir's duties and responsibilities regarding Safeguarding and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection,
- ensure that volunteers and visitors are appropriately supervised, particularly if they do not have DBS checks,
- ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keeping looked after children and vulnerable adults safe.

## **The role of all members of staff**

- Identify and report concerns, possible or actual instances of abuse to the Designated Trustee or Lead (using the Concern Form, Appendix 1),
- not promise confidentiality and always act in the interests of the child/vulnerable adult,
- deliver the activities of the Choir to support the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults,
- ensure that the child/vulnerable adult's voice is heard and that all children and vulnerable adults are able to express their views and give feedback,
- contact Children or Adult's Services directly in exceptional or emergency situations.

Staff are advised to avoid situations where allegations may be made against them and are advised against working one-to-one with children and vulnerable adults.

## **Procedures to follow if a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure**

It is vital that staff never guarantee confidentiality to a child/vulnerable adult as other people may need to be informed and involved. If a child/vulnerable adult asks a member of staff to keep a secret, the child/vulnerable adult should be informed sensitively that this cannot be guaranteed.

Staff should follow these guidelines if they receive a disclosure:

- do not promise confidentiality,
- allow the child/vulnerable adult to tell you what they want to say in their own time,
- do not interrupt unless you need clarification,
- do not lead or prompt the child/vulnerable adult's disclosure,
- reassure the child/vulnerable adult about what you will do next,
- write your concerns down as soon as you can (using the Concern Form in Appendix 1 where possible).
- report your concerns to the DSL urgently.

## **Procedures to follow if a member of staff is concerned about the welfare or safety of a child or vulnerable adult**

- Record the concern using the Concern Form,
- pass the Concern Form onto the DSL,
- the concern should record precisely what the child/vulnerable adult has said,
- no interpretations should be made about the concern.

## **What staff should do if they have concerns about another member of staff**

If staff members have concerns about another staff member, then this should be referred to the DSL (Fiona Fraser, [fiona@sansarachoir.com](mailto:fiona@sansarachoir.com)). If the concerns are about Fiona Fraser, they should be reported to Sarah Rennix (Designated Safeguarding Trustee, [sarahrennix@gmail.com](mailto:sarahrennix@gmail.com)).

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline - 0800 028 0285 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## **Peer on peer abuse**

Staff should recognise that children and vulnerable adults are capable of abusing their peers and we follow procedures to minimise this. Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyber bullying),
- gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.

Staff who have concerns about peer on peer abuse should follow the Anti-Bullying Policy and where appropriate speak to the DSL. The DSL will ensure that the allegations of abuse are investigated. If an allegation of abuse is confirmed, appropriate support is given to the victim/s

## **Professional confidentiality**

Individual Safeguarding and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Concerns are confidential. All Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult documentation involving individuals are kept in a password protected digital file and will be deleted after 3 years.

Only members of staff who need to be informed are informed of such concerns. Staff will be given 'need to know' information and not necessarily all details linked to the case. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to inform other members of staff about some aspects of an open case.

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children and vulnerable adults if there is an exchange of relevant information between them; this has been recognised in principle by the courts. Any disclosure of personal information to others (including to social service departments) must always have regard to both common and statute law. In some circumstances, obtaining consent may not be possible or in the best interest of the child. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or vulnerable adult.

The Local Safeguarding Children or Adults Board must be informed of any allegation made against a member of staff.

## **Specific safeguarding issues**

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues – some of which are listed below. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children and vulnerable adults in danger. Staff should also be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse.

Staff can also find up to date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues such as:

bullying (including cyberbullying); child missing from home or care; domestic violence; drugs; fabricated or induced illness; faith abuse; gangs and youth violence; gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG); hate; mental health; missing children and adults strategy; private fostering; relationship abuse; sexting and trafficking on GOV.UK website.

There are some signs often associated with particular types of child or vulnerable adult abuse and neglect:

physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

### **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

### **So-called 'honour based' violence (HBV)**

HBV encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so-called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubts staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child or vulnerable adult being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies, and

individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl or woman being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM.

Staff must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the staff has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the Choir's DSL and involve children or adult's social care as appropriate.

There are a number of factors in addition to a girl's or woman's community, country of origin and family history that could indicate she is at risk of being subjected to FGM.

Potential risk factors may include, but are not limited to:

- a female child is born to a woman who has undergone FGM,
- a woman/family believe FGM is integral to cultural or religious identity,
- a girl confides to a professional that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion to 'become a woman',
- a girl talks about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent,
- parents state that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period,
- a parent or family member expresses concern that FGM may be carried out on the girl,
- a family is not engaging with professionals (health, education or other),
- a girl requests help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM.

### **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage.

Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

### **Preventing radicalisation and extremism**

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 "places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the 'Prevent duty')". We believe that the activities of the Choir do not fall under the terms of the Act. However, the Choir does ensure that its staff are aware of potential risk factors and signs of engagement.



## **Recognising abuse**

The following information may signal the presence of child or vulnerable adult abuse. The lists are not exhaustive and staff should seek advice if they have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult.

Abuse:

A form of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet).

### **Criteria for Registration and Categories of Abuse**

The Child or vulnerable adult may:

- show sudden changes in behaviour,
- not have received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' or carers' attention,
- have learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes,
- be always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen,
- lack adult supervision,
- be overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn.

The Parent or Carer may:

- show little concern for the child or vulnerable adult
- see the child or vulnerable adult as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- demand a level of physical or academic performance the child or vulnerable adult cannot achieve
- look primarily to the child or vulnerable adult for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs

### **Signs of Physical abuse**

Physical Abuse:

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

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the child or vulnerable adult:

- has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes,
- has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence,
- seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home,
- shrinks at the approach of adults,
- reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child/vulnerable adults' injury
- describes the child or vulnerable adult as "evil," or in some other very negative way,
- uses harsh physical discipline with the child/vulnerable adult,
- has a history of abuse as a child.

## **Signs of Neglect**

Neglect:

The persistent failure to meet a child/vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child/vulnerable adult's health or development.

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:

provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

Consider the possibility of neglect when the child/vulnerable adult:

- is frequently absent,
- begs or steals food or money,
- lacks needed medical or dental care, immunisations or glasses,
- is consistently dirty and has severe body odour,
- lacks sufficient clothing for the weather,
- abuses alcohol or other drugs,
- states that there is no one at home to provide care.

Consider the possibility of neglect when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- appears to be indifferent to the child/vulnerable adult,
- seems apathetic or depressed,
- behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner,
- is abusing alcohol or other drugs.

### **Signs of Sexual abuse**

Sexual Abuse:

Involves forcing or enticing a child/vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child/vulnerable adult 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, inappropriate ways, or grooming a child/vulnerable adult 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 other children or vulnerable adults.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child/vulnerable adult:

- has difficulty walking or sitting,
- suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities,
- reports nightmares or bedwetting,
- experiences a sudden change in appetite,
- demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behaviour,
- becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14,
- runs away,
- reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- is unduly protective of the child or severely limits contact with others, especially of the opposite sex,
- is secretive and isolated,
- is jealous or controlling with family members.

## **Signs of Emotional Abuse**

Emotional Abuse:

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child/vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child/vulnerable adult's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child/vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child/vulnerable adult opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children/vulnerable adults.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children/vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children/vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all maltreatment of a child/vulnerable adult, although it may occur alone.

Consider the possibility of emotional abuse when the child/vulnerable adult:

- shows extremes in behaviour, such as overly compliant or demanding behaviour, extreme passivity, or aggression,
- is either inappropriately adult or inappropriately infantile,
- is delayed in physical or emotional development,
- has attempted suicide,
- reports a lack of attachment to the parent/carer.

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the parent or other Adult caregiver:

- constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child/vulnerable adult,
- is unconcerned about the child/vulnerable adult and refuses to consider offers of help for the child/vulnerable adult's problems,
- overtly rejects the child/vulnerable adult.

## **Financial Abuse**

Financial abuse occurs when an abuser restricts a person's ability to acquire, use and maintain money or other economic resources. This can include:

- stealing,
- spending someone else's money inappropriately,
- forcing someone to spend money on things they don't want.

## **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse is usually carried out by someone in the home – like a family member, partner, house mate or carer. Domestic abuse includes:

- Controlling
- Coercing
- Threatening physical violence
- Degrading
- Manipulating

## APPENDIX 1: Low Level Concern Form

A concern is when the care of a child/vulnerable adult is less than may be expected from a reasonable parent or carer, or when a child/vulnerable adult's behaviour indicates they may not be receiving an adequate level of care but this does not amount to an allegation disclosure or child/vulnerable adult abuse concern.

Choir Staff to make a written note of the following:

- Child/vulnerable adult's full name/s, DOB
- Parent/carers full name/s
- Are there any other children in the family (if applicable)? If yes, give details.
- Address
- Nature of concern or incident
- Where it took place
- Who saw and reported it
- Who else informed further action
- Date form passes to Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Name of person making report: Position/Agency
- Date and sign it
- Further action

Please pass this form directly to Fiona Fraser (DSL). **Do not** save your information electronically. **Do not** discuss this information with anybody else.

## APPENDIX 2: Beyond Low Level Concern

What to do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult beyond Low Level Concerns:

- fill out a concern form,
- immediately pass these to the DSL.

What to do if a child or vulnerable adult discloses information:

- listen to the child or vulnerable adult,
- stop - do not ask more questions,
- fill out a concern form,
- reassure the child or vulnerable adult, and affirm that they are right to tell you
- report your concerns immediately,
- keep the information confidential - do not discuss with anyone else.
- If in doubt, ask for advice.

## **APPENDIX 3: Safeguarding Information for Staff**

This set of guidelines is included in the Staff Code of Conduct. It is important for staff to be mindful at all times of their behaviour in relationship to individual/small groups of pupils and of the potential risk of an allegation. Staff should take necessary precautions in order to minimise the opportunity for an allegation to be made against them.

- If a child or vulnerable adult wishes to disclose personal information to you, ensure that they understand that you cannot guarantee confidentiality. Do not probe about their personal life unless they approach you. Report concerns to Fiona Fraser (DSL, [fiona@sansarachoir.com](mailto:fiona@sansarachoir.com)) immediately.
- Whenever possible try not to be alone in a room with a child or vulnerable adult, regardless of gender. If you are on your own with a child or vulnerable adult, leave the door open and inform a colleague if possible. Always keep an appropriate distance between you and the child or vulnerable adult.
- Do not engage in conversations about your personal life.
- Keep boundaries very clear between particularly if the conversation involves relationships, emotions, and sexual content.
- Do not exchange mobile phone numbers with children or vulnerable adults. Do not have your mobile phone out when working with an individual child or vulnerable adult.
- Do not accept children or vulnerable adults as 'friends' on social media (including Facebook and Twitter). If a child or vulnerable adult contacts you via social media, this must be reported to the DSO.
- Be aware of conversations that you have with children or vulnerable adults and the need to avoid sexual innuendo at all times.

Please discuss with the DSL if at any time you are concerned about a situation and wish to seek advice.

## **APPENDIX 4: Safer Recruitment Guidelines**

All staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults with the Choir will be recruited safely. The flexible nature of the Choir's work means that DBS checks, proof of right to work and identity will be required as appropriate.