

Policy Statement

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus (SPC) will ensure the safety and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in its activities through adherence to its Safeguarding Policy and guidelines.

Definitions: A child is defined as a person under the age of 11, young people are aged 11-18, and a vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or maybe unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

The nature of SPC's activities are such that interaction with children is likely to be very minimal; the words 'vulnerable adults' will therefore be used in this document. **However, throughout the document they refer to 'children, young people and vulnerable adults'.**

SPC members includes the Chorus, Music Director, Accompanist, and Voice Coach.

SPC may appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) with appropriate experience and understanding wherever possible. They may or may not be a member of SPC and will be appointed by the Trustees. In accordance with this provision, Jim Monach (Trustee) was appointed in January 2023; he holds a DBS Advanced Certificate.

1. Practices never to be sanctioned

SPC members and volunteer helpers should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a vulnerable adult
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults away from others
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow a vulnerable adult to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a vulnerable adult, even in fun
- Reduce a vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- Do things of a personal nature for vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow vulnerable adults to visit them at home unsupervised
- Allow allegations made by a vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Build individual relationships with young people or vulnerable adults via networking sites or any other kind of electronic communications

2. Incidents that must be reported / recorded

If any of the incidents listed below occur, SPC members must report the incident immediately to the SPC Chair or, if the Chair is involved, another Trustee. Account should also be taken of SPC's Risk Management Policy, and advice taken from any qualified First Aiders, in these situations. The Chair will inform the DSO who will then take responsibility for the process to be followed. The incident must be recorded, with witness statements

logged where possible / appropriate. The parents/guardians/carers of the vulnerable adult should also be informed by the DSO

- if a vulnerable adult is accidentally hurt
- if they seem distressed in any manner
- if a vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by their actions

3. Photography & film

SPC will gain parental permission, via a third party if necessary, for anyone under 18 years old who will be photographed or filmed as part of a project or event being organised by SPC. Such photos / films will be stored securely in password-protected and limited access files. SPC will seek photo & film permissions for every under-18 taking part in its projects to be able to build up a stock of permitted images to use for funding and publicity purposes.

SPC will communicate this requirement clearly to schools and/or parents at the beginning of the project or event, and wherever possible will take reasonable steps to accommodate under-18s for whom permission cannot be obtained. Often this will be done through requiring coloured stickers to be worn; photographers and film-makers will then know who not to record.

At public events involving under-18s, the default practice will be to display signs advising that “filming/photography are taking place today. Anyone preferring not to appear should contact a member of SPC.” Such individuals will then be [still] photographed and SPC will use these images solely for the purposes of deleting any images or footage later found to depict those people. These images will then be securely deleted.

While parents are always welcome, for personal family use, to photograph their own under-18s who may be involved in an event organised by SPC, and a professional photographer may be employed by SPC to make a photographic record of such an event, SPC cannot allow any other photographing of under-18s by the general public. The ban on photography by the general public will be clearly indicated by signage, and SPC members will be encouraged to intervene if such activity occurs, with sensitivity to the production taking place. Exceptions to this rule might be made from time to time, in which case, appropriate signage and announcements will be put in place.

Anyone taking photos or film in an official capacity for SPC will be clearly identified, e.g.. with a lanyard and will receive a briefing that includes any Safeguarding considerations.

Any under-18 should be identified in public only by a first name, and then only when explicit parental or guardian permission has been given. SPC or an approved partner, should keep a record of this permission.

4. Recruitment and training

SPC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse vulnerable adults in some way. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with vulnerable adults. Any SPC member or volunteer helper who is working with vulnerable adults will:

- have their job requirements and responsibilities made clear in advance, and monitored as appropriate

- be required to adhere to SPC's Safeguarding Policy (this policy)

The SPC Chair is responsible for communicating new or changing safeguarding policies to SPC members and volunteer helpers.

5. Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of SPC members to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. SPC will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports their concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a vulnerable adult.

Where there is a complaint against an SPC member or volunteer helper, there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child-protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child-protection investigations may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily. If the allegation is deemed to be poor practice, it will be dealt with as a misconduct issue.

Any suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused by an SPC member should be reported to the SPC Chair, who will refer the matter to the DSO. They will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the vulnerable adult in question and any other vulnerable adults who may be at risk.

The DSO will refer the allegation to Children and Family Services (CFS) at SCC (which may involve the police) or go directly to the police, as most appropriate. It is a legal requirement that such referrals are made within two working days of receipt of the allegation. The parents or carers of the vulnerable adult will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from CFS/police. The DSO should also notify Trustees in confidence in order to deal with any media enquiries.

If the SPC Chair is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the DSO will liaise with another Trustee.

6. Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. The DSO might make the following people party to such information and should explain their duty of confidentiality:

- The SPC Chair
- One or more Trustees
- The parents/carers of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Sheffield Safeguarding Board/police
- The alleged abuser (and their parents/carers if the alleged abuser is a vulnerable adult)

Information should be stored in a secure place, access to which is restricted to designated people. In line with data protection laws, in the first instance this shall be the SPC Chair and the Chorus Administrator, who should ensure that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure.

7. Internal enquiries and suspension

The SPC Chair, in consultation with the DSO and the SPC committee at a specially convened Trustee Board meeting, will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended from SPC pending further inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of CFS or police inquiries, Trustees will assess individual cases to decide whether an SPC member or volunteer helper can be reinstated and to ensure that this is sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, Trustees must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the vulnerable adult should remain of paramount importance throughout.

8. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following:

- The vulnerable adult's name, age, date of birth, home address, and telephone number.
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, any special factors, and other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between fact, opinion, and hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries, and of any indirect signs such as behavioural changes
- Details of any witnesses.
- The vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Whether the parents/carers have been contacted; if so, what has been said
- Whether anyone else has been consulted; if so, details should be recorded.
- If the vulnerable adult was not the person who reported the incident, whether the vulnerable adult has been spoken to. What was said?
- Whether anyone has been alleged to be the abuser; details should be recorded.

Where possible, referral to the police or CFS should be confirmed in writing by the DSO within 24 hours. The name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Anyone worried about sharing concerns about abuse with the DSO, can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

9. Support

The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189www.bacp.co.uk

10. Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse might be made some time after the event (e.g., by an adult who was abused as a young person or by an SPC member who is still currently working with vulnerable adults). Where such an allegation is made, SPC should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other vulnerable adults, either within or outside the activities organised by SPC, might be at risk from this person.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with young people and vulnerable adults. This is reinforced by the Protection of Children Act 1999.

11. Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Report any concerns to the DSO and/or those in charge of any place where the bullying is alleged to be taking place).
- Where appropriate, help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority, or ask the DSO to do so on your behalf.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe or ask the DSO to do so on your behalf.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise not to tell anyone else.
- Keep records (written up as soon afterwards as possible) of what is said (including what is said to have happened, who did what, and when). It might be helpful to record contemporaneous verbal notes on a smartphone or other device which can then be written up later.

Action towards the bully / bullies:

- Report any concerns to the DSO and/or those in charge of any place where the bullying is alleged to be taking place.
- Inform the bully's parents/carers or ask the DSO to do so on your behalf
- Impose sanctions as necessary
- Encourage and support the bully to change their behaviour

- Inform all organisation members of action taken
- Keep a written record of action taken

Duration and review of this policy

This policy shall remain in force until amended at a later date or superseded by a new version. Best practice is that it should be reviewed each year and comprehensively examined and updated every three years.

APPENDIX

Local Safeguarding Authority procedures / contact details for responding to disclosure, suspicions and allegations of abuse of a Child or Adult at Risk.

Children (under the age of 18)	SHEFFIELD 0114 273 4855 Out of hours 0114 273 4855
	ROTHERHAM 01709 336 080 Out of hours 01709 336 080
	BARNESLEY 01226 772 423 Out of hours 01226 787 789
	DONCASTER 01302 737 777 Out of hours 01302 796 000
Adults at Risk (over the age of 18)	SHEFFIELD 0114 273 4908 Out of hours 0114 273 4908
	ROTHERHAM 01709 822 3300 Out of hours 01709 822 330
	BARNESLEY 01226 773 300 Out of hours 01226 787 789
	DONCASTER 01302 737 063 Out of hours 01302 796 000