



A registered charity for public benefit, to preserve and protect good health among people with dementia their families and carers particularly, but not exclusively through the provision of a choir

Head Office: Jordan House, 47 Brunswick Place, London N1 6EB

Registered Charity Number: 1187483



Safeguarding Policy – Version A

26 July 2022

1. Introduction

Our Dementia Choir (ODC) is committed to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of all members. This policy and its associated procedures apply to all individuals involved in ODC including the Board of Trustees, choir leaders, members, chaperones, volunteers, supporters, and all other individuals working within or on behalf of ODC (hereafter collectively referred to as 'the Choir').

We expect our partner organisations, including, for example, affiliated organisations, suppliers, and sponsors to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practices as set out in this Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures.

The Our Dementia Choir recognises that all of the Choir has a full and active part to play in protecting our members from harm.

The Choir is committed to Safeguarding Adults in line with national legislation and relevant national and local guidelines. ODC believes that our choir should provide a caring, positive, safe, and stimulating environment for people living with dementia.

Safeguarding can be applicable to a wide range of adults, often these adults are identified as 'vulnerable' or 'at risk'. This can include people with dementia, people with learning disabilities, people with sensory or physical disabilities and includes carers.

People with dementia will have cognitive symptoms that may make them more at risk of abuse or neglect. They may experience:

- Memory loss
- Problems with concentrating, planning and organising – including making decisions and problem solving
- Communication difficulties
- Difficulties with orientation

All of these can make it harder for the person to protect themselves.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of ODC to safeguarding adults and to ensure that everyone involved in ODC is aware of:



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- The legislation, policy, and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within the organisation.

3. Safeguarding Policy

- 3.1 ODC will proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of the Choir and the general public during choir activities.
- 3.2 ODC recognises its Duty of Care toward groups of vulnerable people to ensure that all rights to protection from abuse are upheld.
- 3.3 The welfare of our members is paramount in all the work we do and, in all decisions, we take and vulnerable adults have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- 3.4 All of the Choir should work together to promote good practice in working in a safe choir environment.
- 3.5 All people and vulnerable groups will be treated with respect at all times, regardless of age, sex, disability, gender, ethnicity, marital status, or religious or political beliefs. (See our Equal Opportunities Policy)
- 3.6 Some members are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of their dementia, level of dependency, communication, and other issues.
- 3.7 The Choir recognises that working in partnership with members, their chaperones, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting vulnerable people's welfare.
- 3.8 ODC is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.
- 3.9 ODC recognises that health, well-being, ability, disability, and need for care and support can affect a person's resilience. We recognise that some people experience barriers, for example, to communication in raising concerns or seeking help. We recognise that these factors can vary at different points in people's lives.
- 3.10 When planning activities and events ODC includes an assessment of, and risk to, the safety of all adults from abuse and neglect and designates a person who will be in attendance as a safeguarding lead for that event.
- 3.11 Vulnerable people should wherever practically possible be accompanied by their designated carer/ chaperone(s).
- 3.12 ODC recognises that all suspicions or allegations of abuse must be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- 3.13 The Policy should be applied whenever it is alleged a member of The Choir during choir activities involving vulnerable people:
 - behaved in a way that has, or may have, harmed a vulnerable person.



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- possibly committed a criminal offense against/related to a vulnerable person.
 - behaved toward a vulnerable person in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm.
- 3.14 Actions taken by ODC will be consistent with the principles of adult safeguarding ensuring that any action taken is prompt, proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the adult concerned.
- 3.15 ODC acknowledges that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and is committed to preventing abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all adults involved.
- 3.16 The Choir has a duty of care to abide by this Policy and to report concerns.
- 3.17 The Choir is required to familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy document and especially the procedures for reporting and responding to any concerns.
- 3.18 Carers and/or chaperones of members will be provided with a copy of this Policy.
- 3.19 ODC recognises the consequences of breaching any part of this policy and any such breaches will be subject to disciplinary and grievance procedures by the Trustees as is deemed appropriate to the situation.

4. Implementation

In order to ensure this policy is followed ODC will implement the following:

- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for the safety and welfare of all adults.
- Access to relevant legal and professional advice.
- Regular management reports to the Board detailing how risks to adult safeguarding are being addressed and how reports have been addressed.
- Safeguarding adult procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- A Safeguarding Lead
- A delegated Safeguarding Lead for events/trips/performances/practice
- Arrangements to work effectively with other relevant organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults, including arrangements for sharing information.
- Codes of conduct for The Choir that specify zero tolerance of abuse in any form.
- Risk assessments that specifically include the safeguarding of adults.

5. Nominated Senior Safeguarding Lead/Trustee

The ODC Trust shall appoint a suitably qualified and trained safeguarding officer who is the main point of contact for all concerns. This person will respond to concerns and allegations promptly and appropriately and will be a Trustee of the Charity.



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Safeguarding Lead: Karen Bonser – Charity Manager

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Daniela Smith, Trustee and Assistant Choir Director

6. Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission, or ignorance.

There are different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and different circumstances in which they may take place.

Safeguarding legislation (Care Act 2014) lists categories of abuse as:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional/Psychological/Mental
- Neglect and Acts of Omission
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory
- Organisational / Institutional
- Self-neglect
- Domestic Abuse (including coercive control)
- Modern slavery

An adult may confide to a member of staff, coach, volunteer or another participant that they are experiencing abuse inside or outside of the organisation's setting. Similarly, others may suspect that this is the case.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- Person is not attending / any longer enjoying their sessions. You may notice that a participant in a team has been missing from practice sessions and is not responding to reminders from team members or coaches.
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance. This could be a member whose appearance becomes unkempt, does not wear suitable clothing and there is a deterioration in hygiene.



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- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. For example, a participant may be looking quiet and withdrawn when their brother comes to collect them from sessions in contrast to their personal assistant whom they greet with a smile.
- Self-harm.
- A fear of a particular group of people or individuals.
- A chaperone/carer always speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices.
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e., a disclosure

7. Mental Capacity and Decision Making

We make many decisions every day, often without realising. UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proven that they can't. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise.

We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted. The Law says that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate our decision

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health.

Most adults have the ability to make their own decisions given the right support however, some adults with care and support needs have the experience of other people making decisions about them and for them.

Some people can only make simple decisions like which colour T-shirt to wear or can only make decisions if a lot of time is spent supporting them to understand the options. If someone has a disability that means they need support to understand or make a decision this must be provided. A small number of people cannot make any decisions. Being unable to make a decision is called "lacking mental capacity".

Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time that decision is needed. A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe/possible to wait until they are able to be involved in decision making or to make the decision themselves.



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For example:

- A person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure.
- Someone who is anxious may not be able to make a decision at that point.
- A person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Mental Capacity is important for safeguarding for several reasons.

Not being allowed to make decisions one is capable of making is abuse. For example, a disabled adult may want to take part in an activity but their parent who is their carer won't allow them to and will not provide the support they would need. Conversely the adult may not seem to be benefiting from an activity other people are insisting they do.

Another situation is where an adult is being abused and they are scared of the consequences of going against the views of the person abusing them. It is recognised in the law as coercion and a person can be seen not to have mental capacity because they cannot make 'free and informed decisions'.

Mental Capacity must also be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an 'adult at risk' has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened, however, in some situations the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

Each home nation has legislation that describes when and how we can make decisions for people who are unable to make decisions for themselves. The principles are the same.

- We can only make decisions for other people if they cannot do that for themselves at the time the decision is needed.
- If the decision can wait, wait – e.g. to get help to help the person make their decision or until they can make it themselves.
- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we must make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account what we know about their preferences and wishes.
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe will restrict them then we must think of the way to do that which restricts to their freedom and rights as little as possible.



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Many potential difficulties with making decisions can be overcome with preparation. A person needing support to help them make decisions whilst taking part in an activity will ordinarily be accompanied by someone e.g. a family member or formal carer whose role includes supporting them to make decisions.

It is good practice to get as much information about the person as possible. Some people with care and support needs will have a 'One page profile' or a 'This is me' document that describes important things about them. Some of those things will be about how to support the person, their routines, food and drink choices etc. but will also include things they like and don't like doing. It's also important to have an agreement with the person who has enrolled the adult in choir activities about how different types of decisions will be made on a day to day basis.

If a person who has a lot of difficulty making their own decisions is thought to be being abused or neglected you will need to refer the situation to the Local Authority, and this should result in health or social care professionals making an assessment of mental capacity and/or getting the person the support they need to make decisions.

There may be times when ODC needs to make decisions on behalf of an individual in an emergency. Decisions taken in order to safeguard an adult who cannot make the decision for themselves could include:

- Sharing information about safeguarding concerns with people that can help protect them.
- Stopping them being in contact with the person causing harm.

8. Promoting good practice

All ODC personnel (paid and unpaid) should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behavior in order to promote members' welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following list (not exhaustive) are common-sense examples of how the ODC wish to promote a positive culture and climate of safeguarding.

Good practice means:

- Making singing fun, and enjoyable.
- Always working in an open environment (that is avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communications with no secrets).
- Treating everyone with respect.
- Always putting the welfare of each person first, before winning or achieving goals.



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- Maintaining a safe and appropriate physical distance from members of the choir. (Sometimes this may involve helping dress/undress and adjust outer clothing/choir uniform. Talking to them whilst this is undertaken and with the understanding and consent of the member).
- Ensuring any form of manual support is required (for example, to demonstrate correct posture/breathing techniques) and this is done in an open environment.
- Involving chaperones/carers where possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their members in toilets and changing rooms. If groups are to be supervised away from chaperones/carers that members of staff (paid or unpaid) work in pairs.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Avoiding excessive rehearsal or competition and not pushing against their will.
- Ensuring that if a mixed-gender choir is taken away (residential or day trip) it should always be accompanied by male and female staff or choir officials.
- Securing consent in writing to act in loco parentis if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping written records of any illness or injury that occurs during choir activities along with presenting the details of any treatment given.

9. Actions prior to new members joining the Choir

- 8.1 Prior to any involvement with choir members, new trustees, choir leaders, members, chaperones, volunteers, supporters, and all other individuals working within or on behalf of ODC has any contact with choir members, safer recruitment procedures will be followed including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and the follow-up of necessary references should have been undertaken by ODC. (See our Recruitment Policy)
- 8.2 Prior to an activity involving external groups, ODC's Designated Safeguarding Lead, where appropriate in conjunction with The Choir, will complete a Safeguarding Risk Assessment Form which should be discussed with all relevant officers and group leaders working with The Choir.
- 8.3 Should a member of The Choir be barred from working with vulnerable groups they will be prevented from taking part in any activities. Members of the Choir are asked to declare any such restrictions to the Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 8.4 Before the start of any activity involving external groups the Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead should be put in contact with and at the earliest possible opportunity be introduced to the group designated leader(s). The group leaders should at all times approach the Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead if they need to discuss any safeguarding issues relating to the Choir.



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9 Reporting procedures

- 9.1 Any expression of concern by a vulnerable person regarding the conduct of anyone involved with the Choir will immediately be reported to the Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead or in his/her absence the Deputy Designated Trustee.
- 9.2 Confidentiality for all parties will be maintained at all times. ODC must comply with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the UK GDPR.
- 9.3 The purpose of Data Protection legislation is not to prevent information sharing but to ensure personal information is only shared appropriately. Data protection legislation allows information sharing within an organisation. For example:
- Anyone who has a concern about harm can make a report to an appropriate person within the same organisation
 - Case management meetings can take place to agree to co-ordinate actions by the organisation
- 9.4 There are also many situations in which it is perfectly legal to share information about adult safeguarding concerns outside the organisation. Importantly personal information can be shared with the consent of the adult concerned. However, the adult may not always want information to be shared. This may be because they fear repercussions from the person causing harm or are scared that they will lose control of their situation to statutory bodies or because they feel stupid or embarrassed. Their wishes should be respected unless there are overriding reasons for sharing information.
- 9.5 The circumstances when we need to share information without the adult's consent include those where:
- it is not safe to contact the adult to gain their consent – i.e. it might put them or the person making contact at further risk.
 - you believe they or someone else is at risk, including vulnerable adults.
 - you believe the adult is being coerced or is under duress.
 - it is necessary to contact the police to prevent a crime, or to report that a serious crime has been committed.
 - the adult does not have mental capacity to consent to information being shared about them.
 - the person causing harm has care and support needs.
 - the concerns are about an adult at risk living in Wales or Northern Ireland (where there is a duty to report to the Local Authority).
- 9.10 When information is shared without the consent of the adult this must be explained to them, when it is safe to do so, and any further actions should still fully include them.
- 9.11 If you are in doubt as to whether to share information seek advice e.g. seek legal advice and/or contact the Local Authority and explain the situation without giving personal details about the person at risk or the person causing harm.



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- 9.12 Any decision to share or not to share information with an external person or organisation must be recorded together with the reasons to share or not share information.
- 9.13 All allegations must be recorded clearly and accurately and include details of how the matter was resolved.
- 9.14 Information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect the vulnerable person, facilitate the enquiry, avoid victimisation and safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected.
- 9.15 Where a concern is raised by a vulnerable person it would be usual for that person to approach their carer, chaperone, or another member of their group in the first instance. In such a case the other group adult should then approach The Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 9.16 The Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for the secure storage of records of concerns, incidents, and referrals in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

10. Responding to allegations or suspicions

- 10.1 Any allegation of abuse must be dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for the young or vulnerable person and supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- 10.2 It is not the responsibility of anyone working with ODC, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or appropriate authorities.
- 10.3 ODC will assure all staff/volunteers/members that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a choir member.
- 10.4 Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.
- 10.5 In the case of an allegation being made against a member of The Choir, The Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead will:
 - log the incident as set out in "Reporting Procedures".
 - contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours.
- 10.6 The Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the Board of Trustees that an incident has occurred but will not at this stage pass on names or the nature of the incident.
- 10.7 Where there is a complaint about a member of staff/volunteer or member of the Trust there may be three types of investigation:
 - A criminal investigation



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- A vulnerable adult protection investigation
 - A disciplinary or misconduct investigation
- 10.8 The results of the police and vulnerable adult protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.
- 10.9 Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences relating to abuse is automatically excluded from working with vulnerable adults.
- 10.10 Once the facts are clear and proven, serious incidents will be reported to the Board of Trustees in adherence to their requirements.

11. Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process might involve training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities and deal with situations correctly. This may involve some online volunteer training, if appropriate.

12. Handling the Media

- 12.1 In the case of an alleged abuse a media strategy should be agreed upon with no improper or inadvertent release of information to the media.
- 12.2 Only the appointed officer should perform this role. The person appointed must ensure that they work closely with the Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead, Chair of the board and LADO.

13. Appointment of officers

- 13.1 The Trustees will appoint the Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead on an annual basis.
- 13.2 In the absence of the Choir Designated Safeguarding Lead the Deputy Safeguarding Lead will assume the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead.

14. Sources of Information and Support

Dementia UK

Looking for information or advice about dementia or Alzheimer's? Call our Dementia Helpline for free on **0800 888 6678** for support from our dementia specialist Admiral Nurses. The Helpline is open from 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturday to Sunday.



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Action on Elder Abuse

A national organisation based in London. It aims to prevent the abuse of older people by raising awareness, encouraging education, promoting research and collecting and disseminating information.

Tel: 020 8765 7000

Email: enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk

www.elderabuse.org.uk

Ann Craft Trust (ACT)

A national organisation providing information and advice about adult safeguarding.

Tel: 0115 951 5400

Email: Ann-Craft-Trust@nottingham.ac.uk

www.anncrafttrust.org

Men's Advice Line

For male domestic abuse survivors

Tel: 0808 801 0327

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Tel: 0800 999 5428

National 24Hour Freephone Domestic Abuse Helplines:

Tel: 0808 2000 247

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/Contact-us

15. Process for policy review

The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Choir Safeguarding Lead and a representative of the Trustees. The named Safeguarding Lead shall be responsible for ensuring that up-to-date legislation and policies and procedures are adhered to.

This policy was adopted by the trustees on 26 July 2022

The next review date is on or before 1 September 2023



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