

## **Bournemouth Bach Choir**

### **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS**

#### **Introduction**

Bournemouth Bach Choir is rightly proud of its reputation as a friendly choir. It is our aim that all members and visitors feel valued and included in our activities. For this reason we aim to deal effectively with any report of inappropriate or offensive behaviour, or any suspicion of bullying, however minor.

#### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is action taken to protect people, including vulnerable adults, i.e. adults who cannot protect themselves due to age, illness, disability, or other reasons; and to promote the well-being and safety of individuals. This can include measures to prevent abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm. Everyone in an organisation should know:

- what safeguarding vulnerable adults means
- the signs of abuse
- how to report it

Thus, vulnerable people can receive the protection and support they need.

#### **Examples of vulnerable adults:**

Vulnerable adults are at increased risk of harm due to their age, physical or mental health, or other personal circumstances. Some examples of vulnerable adults include people who are or have:

- older
- receiving care and support
- homeless
- subject to domestic abuse
- subject to trafficking or exploitation
- disabilities
- mental health conditions
- experience of sexual abuse

It is anticipated that members and associates of BBC will fall into only a few of these categories.

#### **How to spot signs of abuse in older people**

Ideally, members should be aware of the signs of abuse in older adults, as they may be vulnerable and unwilling or unable to speak out or protect themselves. Some signs are:

- Physical signs

Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, broken bones, or sudden changes in an older person's physical appearance.

- Behavioural changes
- Sudden changes in behaviour, such as increased anxiety or withdrawal or becoming clingy or fearful of certain people.
- Emotional changes

Changes in an emotional state, such as becoming sad, depressed, or agitated, or displaying unusual behaviour or mood swings.

- Changes in hygiene

Neglecting personal hygiene, for example wearing dirty clothes or having poor personal grooming.

- Changes in diet

Unexpected weight loss, malnutrition or dehydration.

- Financial changes

Sudden changes in financial circumstances, such as missing money or having valuable items go missing.

- Unexplained injuries

Bruises or injuries that are not explained or appear in areas that are difficult to reach, such as the back, arms, or legs.

- Isolation

Being isolated from friends, family, or other social contacts.

If it is not possible or appropriate to have a friendly word with the person at risk themselves, concerns about any of these signs can be drawn to the attention of a member of the BBC Committee. They will be able to act on any concerns and to approach the person or a family member discreetly, or report suspected abuse to the relevant authorities, who can investigate and provide support to the vulnerable person.

### **How to safeguard a vulnerable adult**

- Create a safe and supportive environment for vulnerable adults, and respect their rights and dignity, including avoiding unkind 'banter' and bullying.
- Educate vulnerable adults, and those around them, about their rights and how to recognise and report abuse.
- Be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, such as changes in behaviour, physical injuries, or sudden changes in financial circumstances.
- Encourage the person concerned to report any concerns to the appropriate authorities, especially if the vulnerable person is already in contact with support services.
- Support vulnerable adults to get help and access the necessary services, such as medical care, counselling, or legal assistance.
- Regularly review and assess the situation. It helps ensure that vulnerable adults receive the support and protection they need.

*adapted from material provided by Training Express, DA July 2024*