SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Effective date	September 2026
Date of last review	October 2025
Reviewed by	Sally Melson - Chairperson
Approved by Committee	September 2026
Next review date	September 2027

Introduction
This Safeguarding Policy applies to Portishead Choral Society members (including Trustees), volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with the Society.

Portishead Choral Society is committed to ensuring that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

The Society is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and explicitly recognises the additional needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults from minority ethnic groups and the disabled and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

The law requires any organisation involving children, young people or vulnerable adults to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to vulnerable adults' and children's welfare are minimised, and where there are concerns, to share them with other local agencies.

As a matter of good practice Portishead Choral Society has developed this policy to provide:

- protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom Portishead Choral has contact (including the children/relatives of adults who use our services);
- guidance to ensure that the risks of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults welfare are minimised;
- guidance for Responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an Allegation of Abuse;
- guidance on procedures that should be adopted in the event that any adult suspects a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing harm.

Portishead Choral Society recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused or not. This is the role of the Social Services department which has the legal responsibility, and the NSPCC, who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act or the Police.

The main laws and guidance supporting this policy are:

- The Children's Act 1989 and 2004
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- The Protection of Children Act 1999.
- The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991.
- Government guidance on safeguarding children.
- Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000.
- The Care Act 2014.
- The Charity Commission's Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Children and
- Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities.

Portishead Choral Society will publicise its Safeguarding Policy on its website **www.portisheadchoral.co.uk** and draw it to the attention of members at the beginning of each term.

Who are Children or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is a child. An adult is defined in the Care Act 2014 as someone over 18 years old who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect as a result of their care and support needs or is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

How Portishead Choral Society operates

Portishead Choral Society is a registered charity of amateur choral singers managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the annual general meeting or co-opted as necessary. Committee members are trustees of the charity. To carry out its charitable objects, it presents a number of concerts a year sometimes performing with orchestral groups, professional soloists and other choirs. Rehearsals are run by our self-employed Musical Director or a substitute on occasion, with our self-employed accompanist. They attend weekly rehearsals with members in term time in order to prepare for the concerts. There are no employed staff or volunteers in the conventional sense. From time-to-time Portishead Choral Society organises other events such as choral workshops and social events.

Portishead Choral Society does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children, young people or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults and currently there are no young people (under 18) out of a membership of 80 plus who rehearse and perform with the choir. Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities, and there is no need for a member of the choir to be alone with another member of any age. Portishead Choral Society is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults. Nevertheless, Portishead Choral Society recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults with whom it works and comes into contact and believes that everyone has the right to enjoy the activities of the choir in a happy, safe and secure environment.

Guidelines

Membership - Should any child or close relative (under 18) of a member of Portishead Choral Society participate in choral works with the choir, the member must act as a responsible adult. Should any other child/young person participate in any Portishead Choral Society activities they must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult who remains responsible for them throughout rehearsals and performances.

Joint concerts with schools - Portishead Choral Society will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school groups will always be in the care of their teachers and helpers and/or parents who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. This does not detract from the choir's general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

Audiences and Social Events - Portishead Choral Society is aware that children and vulnerable adults may attend their concerts as members of the audience, or attend social functions hosted by Portishead Choral Society. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure adequate supervision. If a parent / guardian / carer is not personally attending an event this policy requires them to be satisfied that the child or vulnerable adult will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times.

Privacy - Photography, audio and video recordings are undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals. The images and recordings are used both on- and off- line including on the web. They provide valuable tools to promote the work of the choir to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work. Portishead Choral Society will require written permission from all members and the parent / guardian of young people aged under 18.

Abuse - Portishead Choral Society endeavours by the implementation of this safeguarding policy to protect and minimise the risks of abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The term child abuse is used to describe a range of ways that people harm children. Abuse of adults can happen anywhere. It can happen at home, in a residential or nursing home, in a hospital, at work or in the street. There are five main categories of abuse namely physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and neglect. Portishead Choral Society notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty children or vulnerable adults may have in reporting it.

Measure for implementation of this policy
The Committee have named Sarah Stevens as the Designated Person in respect of Safeguarding. The Designated Person, who is DBS checked, shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to children and vulnerable adults as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries.

Any concerns regarding either a child or a choir member, employee or other adult must immediately be reported to the
Designated Person Sarah Stevens **portisheadchoral+safeguarding@gmail.com**
or in her absence to the
Chairperson Sally Melson **portisheadchoral+chairman@gmail.com**

SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE

How to respond to safeguarding concerns or allegations:

What is a safeguarding concern?

- A person discloses alleged abuse.
- A person discloses concern for another person.
- You notice signs of abuse.
- There is an accident to a vulnerable person in your care.
- There is a disclosure regarding an offender against a person.
- Behaviour is observed which poses risk to others or to themselves.

Be aware of your feelings. It is very natural to feel the following emotions:

- Anxiety
- Panic
- Fear
- Disbelief
- Split loyalties
- Anger
- Denial – you want it to disappear

Recognising your emotions will help you be able to handle the situation appropriately.

What should you do?

- Listen carefully to the person disclosing.
- Take the person seriously.
- Be non-judgemental.
- Ask open questions.
- Do not promise to keep it secret.
- Tell them what you will do next (if possible).
- Check you have the necessary contact information.

Action:

Immediate danger – call the police immediately

Non-emergency – seek advice from the designated Safeguarding Officer

Make sure you:

- Write down what has happened or been disclosed and keep that record.
- Talk to the designated Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.

Remember:

- Safeguarding concerns are the responsibility of statutory agencies.
- The priority is the person's safety.
- Do not delay.
- Avoid gossip.

Who may need support?

- Alleged victim.
- Family and friends of alleged victim.
- Alleged perpetrator.
- Family and friends of alleged perpetrator.
- Other members of the choir affected.
- Yourself.

Confidentiality

- You must tell designated Safeguarding officer.
- Say as little as possible to others without being too secretive.
- Kill rumours.

Afterwards

- Remain non-judgemental.
- Avoid gossip – and try and prevent others from gossiping.
- The committee (via the safeguarding officer) will review how the choir operates to reduce/prevent future risks.