

Oxford Proud Voices

Safeguarding Policy 2025 V1.3

The law requires any organisation involving young people and/or vulnerable adults to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to their welfare is minimised, and where there are concerns, to share them with relevant local agencies.

Everyone has a role to play in the safeguarding of adults and children and this policy applies to all members of Oxford Proud Voices (OPV).

The relevant legal requirements arise from:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006
- Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

The relevant government guidance includes:

- Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding 2013
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015;

Oxford Proud Voices recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult is or has been subject to abuse or neglect. This is the role of the local authority Children's or Adult Services department who have legal responsibility. However, we are committed to act responsibly within the context of our choir and all its activities.

Definitions of vulnerable people

This policy recognises vulnerable people as:

- Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
- Adults aged over 18 at risk as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity. This policy also recognises risk is affected by the activity in which an adult is involved, rather than solely on the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult. Therefore, any adult can be at risk, and the risk can be temporary.

Types of abuse

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory abuse

The Purpose of this Policy

This policy aims to:

- Provide guidance for members on how to raise a concern about the wellbeing of a choir member
- Protect vulnerable adults and children involved with OPV from abuse
- Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk is a primary consideration when OPV undertakes any activity, event or project.

Although our membership is open solely to those aged 18 years and above; we do not invite children to choir events. However, *on occasion* children may be involved in choir activities, e.g. social events. For this reason they, as well as vulnerable adults, are included in this policy.

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of possible abuse - guidance for an OPV member who observes or suspects abuse:

- If a vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention call the police and/or ambulance service.
- If the person at the centre of the allegation is in close contact with a vulnerable person at the time of the concerns, remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable person and liaise with OPV's Safeguarding Lead or Chair of the choir if Lead not available.
- If a member of OPV has **any** safeguarding concerns relating to the choir in any of its activities, they should contact OPV's Safeguarding Lead (or co-chairs if Safeguarding Lead is not available).

Responsibility of Safeguarding Lead or Co-chairs of OPV if Safeguarding Lead not available:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Decide whether the incident needs to be reported to a competent authority
- Escalate the report by either:
 - Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
 - Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person needs protection.
- Complete an internal investigation – for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful.

If there is a safeguarding concern relating to the Safeguard Lead, please report this to OPV Co-chairs. If the Lead is also a co-chair, please contact the other co-chair, using their personal email address.

Any information shared will be dealt with sensitively and seriously.

Contact email for Safeguarding Leads, Aitch and Rae: safeguarding@oxfordproudvoices.org

Contact email for Co-Chairs, Ben and Debbie: chair@oxfordproudvoices.org

Version 1: December 2025; for annual review; next review - December 2026

With thanks to Michelle Hebborn-Gibson, Safeguarding Lead for Manchester Proud Chorus, for support in compiling this Policy