

The Vigo Singers Safeguarding Policy March 2025

This policy is based upon advice from Making Music for those choirs who have limited involvement with Vulnerable adults and children.

Vigo Singers is an independent choir managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the AGM. As part of our objectives, in the promotion of music for enjoyment and charitable objectives, it presents three concerts a year. The Vigo Singers organise other events and tours.

We have a musical director (MD) and an accompanist for concerts who are self-employed and not members of the choir. The MD attends weekly rehearsals in term times and concerts.

Currently we are an adult female choir, except for two under 18-year members, who are the children of two choir members. Inclusion of under 18-year-olds is at the discretion of the choir committee.

Safeguarding under 18-year-olds will be the responsibility of the parent choir member and include all rehearsals, choir performances and trips away, plus any other choir functions. Any further admission of under 18 years will be the responsibility of the committee and at their discretion.

The Vigo Singers recognise its commitment to Safeguarding and sets out its approach below. This is based on 'Making Music guidance' for choirs with limited involvement with vulnerable adults/children.

Commitment to safeguarding: The Vigo Singers believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility and are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and vulnerable adults we encounter and to protecting them from harm.

About this policy

- This policy applies to; all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of the Vigo Singers or taking part in Vigo Singers activities.

- The purpose of this policy is to provide members, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people.
- This policy recognises vulnerable people as:
 - Children up to the age of 18. Adults aged over 18 defined as vulnerable 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. More recent legislation includes Care act 2014 and a useful review carried out by HMCTS in November 2024 gov. document.
- This policy aims to:
 - Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are members of and receive services from, or volunteer for, the Vigo Singers. We aim to ensure members, staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they are interacting with.
 - Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a primary consideration when the Vigo Singers undertakes any activity, event or project.

How the Vigo Singers might work with vulnerable people: Membership is normally open to those over 18 years of age. We run regular rehearsals for members and put on concerts for the public. As such our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

- Members of the group who attend rehearsals and concerts.

- Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity.
- Audience members at public concerts
- Other musicians
- Friends of Vigo Singers

Named safeguarding person: The Chairman of the Committee together with the committee take responsibility for safeguarding. Judy Yallop our chair is currently our lead nominated member. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to the Chairman or to any of the committee if appropriate.

Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the Committee and in line with established procedures and ground rules (see below).

Procedures and ground rules: A further document – ‘Ground rules, ways of working and procedures’ is available and forms part of this policy.

Policy review: This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) by the Committee. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Ground rules, ways of working and procedures.

This document forms part of the Vigo Singers Safeguarding policy

- The policy applies to; all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Vigo Singers or taking part in Vigo Singers activities.
- This policy states it is the responsibility of all members of the choir to be aware and responsible for safeguarding and to refer any concerns to the committee and lead person. The safeguarding policy will be disseminated

to choir members via email and members will be signposted to the members section on the private members' website for further information.

This document includes:

- Recruitment practices around safeguarding
- Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people.
- Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse.
- Procedures for dealing with concerns and incident of abuse.

Recruitment practices around safeguarding

If a situation arises where an existing or potential new member, staff member or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people as part of the Vigo Singers activities the appropriate level of DBS will be requested before that work is undertaken.

The level of DBS check required will be decided by the Committee and in line with DBS rules regarding regulated activity. The results of any check to inform a decision will be used confidentially and in line with equal opportunities.

Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people.

If the Vigo Singers organises an activity or event where they will be responsible for vulnerable adults, they will ensure:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
- The event is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults – this will be a minimum of one but more when possible.
- Where possible the total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be

appropriate to the activity and in line with good practice ensuring the safety of the vulnerable people. There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been DBS checked.

- The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking up arrangements for vulnerable people).
- A vulnerable person is not left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity.

Working with parents/guardians: If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in the Vigo Singers activities written permission (email is fine) should be obtained from parents/guardians where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include emergency contact details of any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for another adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished. When seeking permission from parents it is important to ask concerning any medical conditions and allergies

Visiting musicians will be asked to provide emergency contact details to be used.

The role of volunteers:

When organising events particularly concerts, where we may rely on the support of volunteers, that the volunteers are known to us, and we will seek to ensure that they wear identification. A badge will be provided. These events are usually limited to three times a year. Our volunteers will be made aware of our safeguarding policy and the lead safeguarding members.

Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse.

- If any member, staff or volunteer in the Vigo Singers witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the named safeguarding representative or committee member.

- If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to a DBS checked adult or member of the committee: If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the named safeguarding official or a committee member

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse.

The Named person (or committee member) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.
2. If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time – remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.

If none of the above applies the named person will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them and keep copy in confidential file held by the chair.
- Speak with committee members to decide how to handle the reported abuse. Excluding any committee members who may be involved in the incident.
- 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.
- Where cases are escalated the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident.

- The Vigo Singers note it is not its role to investigate whether a child has been abused or not. It is not qualified to do so. This is the role of bodies such as social services, NSPCC or the police.

Responsibilities of outside organisations and parents

At present we do not work with underage children, but should the need arise a separate procedure fitted to the occasion would be put in place prior to the event to meet the needs of that vulnerable/individual in terms of safeguarding and the event.

When staging concerts the Vigo Singers consider the safety and wellbeing of children in the audience to be the responsibility of the parents concerned and expect they would normally be in attendance. If this is not possible then a responsible adult must be nominated by the parent to the concert organiser in writing.

If there are larger groups of children or vulnerable adults attending, then the ratio of adults to children must meet safety requirements.

Reviewed and updated by Linda King and Jane Scott on behalf of the committee and agreed by the committee on

Policy to be reviewed annually at committee AGM and discussed at choir AGM annually.

Considerations pertaining to the present policy March 2025

When appointing a musical director, it is important that the appointed candidate has an enhanced DBS check which is reviewed every three years or as appropriate, should their role be redefined in terms of working with children and vulnerable adults.

Where an outside organisation is involved with the Vigo Singers they will be notified of their responsibility in the case of joint concerts regarding vulnerable people and directed to our policy information on our website. It would be our expectation that schools' parents and lead musical teacher

would take the responsibility for these arrangements, but our choir would liaise in terms of venue arrangement.

An informal buddy system which already exists may be extended on a more formal basis should the committee consider it is needed.
