LONDON CHORAL COMPETITION

14–17 JULY 2027
LONDON

LONDON CHORAL FESTIVAL CIC · POLICY DOCUMENT

Safeguarding *Policy*

Keeping every singer, child and adult at risk safe while they sing for the crown.

DESIGNATED LEAD	DEPUTY LEAD	APPLIES	NEXT REVIEW
Nika Grigolia	Sophio Lejava	1 February to 31 August 2027	30 September 2027

SECTION 01

Policy statement and *scope*

London Choral Festival CIC is committed to keeping every child, young person and adult at risk who takes part in London Choral Competition 2027 safe from harm. Everyone involved shares responsibility for safeguarding, and the welfare of the child is always paramount.

This policy applies to:

- All competition activity from 1 February to 31 August 2027, including the opening event (14 July), competition days at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden (15 July) and the Royal College of Music (16–17 July), masterclasses, rehearsals, warm-ups and the Grand Prix.
- Directors, paid staff, freelancers (including all jury members), volunteers and anyone acting on behalf of the CIC.
- Participating choirs and their leaders, both UK-based and international, while taking part in competition activity.
- Online activity linked to the competition: registration, email, the website and social media.

Who is a child: anyone under 18. **Who is an adult at risk:** anyone aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and, because of those needs, cannot protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

The CIC does not take parental responsibility for participants. Each choir remains responsible for the care and supervision of its own members at all times (see section 7).

SECTION 02

Key safeguarding *contacts*

Any concern goes to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) first, or to the Deputy if the DSL is unavailable. If anyone is in immediate danger, call 999 first.

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Nika Grigolia, Festival Director	07350 175291 · nika.grigolia@gmail.com
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Sophio Lejava, Project Manager	07933 830941 · lejava.sopo@gmail.com
Emergency (immediate danger)	Police / Ambulance	999
Police, non-emergency	Metropolitan Police	101
Children's social care (child lives in Westminster, or urgent and home area unknown)	Westminster City Council Children's Services	020 7641 4000 (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm) · out of hours: Emergency Duty Team 020 7641 2388 · accesstochildrensservices@westminster.gov.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Westminster LADO	020 7641 7668 (ask for the Duty LADO) · lado@westminster.gov.uk
Adult social care	Westminster Adult Social Care	020 7641 2176 · adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk
Advice for adults worried about a child	NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Support for children and young people	Childline	0800 1111

During the event days (14–17 July 2027), the DSL or Deputy will be on site at every venue session and reachable by phone. Their names and photos will be shown at the registration desk and in the choir leaders' information pack.

SECTION 03

Principles and legal *framework*

We will act on any concern, however small, and never assume someone else will.

Our principles:

- The welfare of the child or adult at risk comes first.
- Everyone has an equal right to protection, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or nationality.
- We listen to children and adults at risk and take what they say seriously.
- We share information appropriately and promptly with those who need to know.
- We work with choir leaders, parents and carers, venues and statutory agencies.

This policy follows:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Care Act 2014 (adults at risk)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (DBS checks)
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Arts Council England's safeguarding expectations for funded projects

SECTION 04

Roles and *responsibilities*

The board owns this policy; the DSL runs it day to day; everyone else must follow it and report concerns.

WHO	RESPONSIBILITIES
CIC director	Adopt and review this policy; make sure it is resourced; receive an anonymised safeguarding summary after the event
Designated Safeguarding Lead (Nika Grigolia)	Receive and act on all concerns; decide on referrals to statutory agencies; keep secure records; make sure staff, jury and volunteers are briefed; check choir leaders' safeguarding declarations; review the policy after the event
Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Sophio Lejava)	Act as DSL whenever the DSL is unavailable or the concern involves the DSL; support briefings and on-site cover
Staff, freelancers and jury	Follow the code of conduct (section 6); report any concern to the DSL the same day; never work alone with an under-18
Volunteers	Attend the safeguarding briefing before their shift; follow the code of conduct; report concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy
Choir leaders	Supervise their own members at all times; bring enough responsible adults (section 7); hold parental consents; share relevant medical, access and welfare information; follow this policy while at competition activity
Venues	Work with us on emergency, evacuation and lost-person procedures; their own safeguarding policies apply to venue staff

If a concern involves the DSL, report it to the Deputy. If it involves both, report it directly to the LADO or children's social care (section 2).

SECTION 05

Safer recruitment, DBS checks and *training*

No one from the CIC team will be alone with an under-18 at any time. Checks and training will be complete by 30 April 2027, as set out in the project timeline.

ROLE	CHECK REQUIRED	TRAINING
DSL and Deputy	DBS checks at the appropriate level, subject to a role-specific eligibility assessment (see note below)	Designated Safeguarding Lead course (e.g. NSPCC or equivalent), completed by 30 April 2027
UK-based jury and masterclass leaders	Enhanced DBS where they work with under-18s; always in sight of the choir's responsible adults	Written briefing on this policy and the code of conduct
International jury	Equivalent criminal record certificate from home country where available; always supervised when with under-18s	Written briefing on this policy and the code of conduct
Volunteers	Basic DBS where their role includes contact with under-18s; never unsupervised with participants	Safeguarding briefing before their first shift
Other freelancers (accountant)	None: no contact with participants	None

Safer recruitment steps for anyone working with participants: a clear role description, at least one reference, an identity check, and signing the code of conduct before starting.

The CIC will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service if it removes someone from a role because they harmed, or posed a risk of harm to, a child or adult at risk.

DBS eligibility: DBS checks at the appropriate level, subject to a role-specific eligibility assessment in accordance with current Disclosure and Barring Service guidance. Enhanced checks, including Children's Barred List checks, will be requested only where legally eligible.

SECTION 06

Code of *conduct*

Everyone working or volunteering for the competition signs this code before taking part. Breaking it may lead to removal from the event.

Always:

- Treat every participant with respect, fairness and dignity.
- Work in open, visible spaces, with other adults present.
- Keep physical contact to what is necessary and appropriate (for example a handshake at an award), and only with consent.
- Give feedback in a constructive, encouraging way, in public sessions, through the choir leader.
- Report any concern, allegation or breach of this code to the DSL the same day.
- Wear your competition lanyard and ID while on duty.

Never:

- Be alone with an under-18 or an adult at risk, or take them anywhere away from their choir.
- Contact participants under 18 directly by phone, text, email or social media; communicate through choir leaders only.
- Give gifts, money or favours to individual participants, or show favouritism.
- Use language, jokes or behaviour that is sexual, discriminatory, humiliating or bullying.
- Take photos or videos of participants on personal devices.
- Drink alcohol or use drugs while on duty, or supply them to participants.
- Promise to keep a disclosure secret.

Jury integrity: jury members must declare any link to a participating choir before the competition and will not adjudicate a choir they have a close connection with.

SECTION 07

Responsible adults and *supervision*

Every choir with members under 18 must bring at least one responsible adult for every 10 under-18s, and never fewer than two adults. These adults supervise their own members throughout the competition, including breaks, warm-ups and travel between venues.

At registration, each choir with under-18 members must provide:

1. The names and mobile numbers of its responsible adults, and the lead contact on each event day.
2. Confirmation that parental or carer consent is held for each under-18 to take part, travel and be photographed (or not).
3. Confirmation that its responsible adults have been vetted under the choir's own safeguarding arrangements (UK: DBS; international: the home-country equivalent).
4. Relevant medical, dietary, access and emergency-contact information, held by the choir leader and shared with the DSL where needed.
5. A signed declaration that the choir will follow this policy.

On event days:

- Choirs sign in and out at each venue; the registration desk keeps the list.
- Under-18s use changing and toilet areas set aside by the venue, supervised by their own responsible adults; no one else enters those areas.
- Under-18s are never left unattended in a venue or released to anyone other than their choir.
- A quiet space will be available at each venue for anyone who needs a break or support.

The CIC does not arrange host-family or homestay accommodation for any participant. Visiting choirs arrange their own accommodation and remain responsible for their members there.

SECTION 08

Photography, filming and online *safety*

Only the CIC's official, briefed photographer or videographer may photograph or film participants. Because all sessions are free and open to the public, audience members will be asked, by signs and announcements, not to photograph or film performances.

- **Consent:** choir leaders confirm at registration that consent is held for each under-18. Anyone without consent wears a coloured lanyard so the photographer leaves them out.
- **Publishing:** images of under-18s are published by choir name only, never with a child's full name, school or other identifying detail.
- **No-go areas:** no photography or filming in changing rooms, toilets or warm-up rooms.
- **Requests to remove:** any image will be taken down from our channels within 48 hours of a request from a participant, parent or choir leader.
- **Online contact:** all communication goes through choir leaders and official CIC accounts and email addresses. Staff, jury and volunteers do not follow, friend or message participants under 18 on social media.
- **Data:** registration data is collected only for running the competition and handled in line with section 14.

SECTION 09

Recognising abuse and responding to a *concern*

You do not need proof to raise a concern; your job is to notice, listen and pass it on to the DSL, not to investigate.

Types of abuse include physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, bullying (including online), discrimination, exploitation and, for adults, financial abuse and self-neglect. Possible signs include unexplained injuries, sudden changes in behaviour, fear of a particular person, withdrawal, or something a person tells you.

If someone tells you something (a disclosure), follow the 5 Rs:

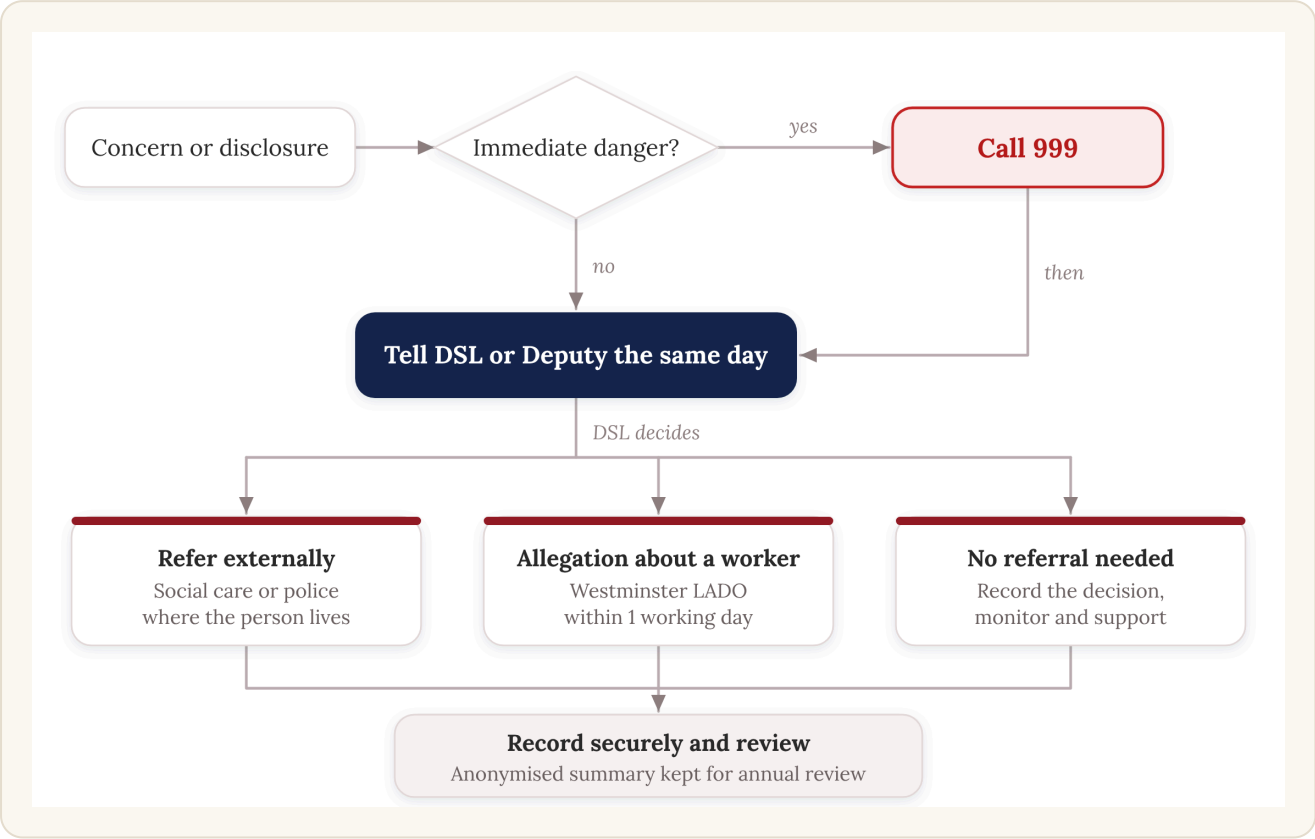
1. **Receive:** listen calmly, let them speak in their own words, and do not show shock.
2. **Reassure:** tell them they were right to tell you and that it is not their fault. Do not promise to keep it secret; explain that you must tell the person whose job it is to help.
3. **React:** ask only open questions ("What happened next?") if you need to; do not ask leading questions or contact the person they name.
4. **Record:** as soon as possible, write down what was said in their words, the date, time, place and who was present, and sign it. Record facts, not opinions.
5. **Refer:** tell the DSL (or Deputy) immediately and hand over your note. If anyone is in immediate danger, call 999 first.

Do not discuss the concern with anyone other than the DSL or Deputy.

SECTION 10

Reporting procedure and *escalation*

Every concern reaches the DSL (or Deputy) the same day; if anyone is in immediate danger, call 999 first, then tell the DSL.



The DSL decides on next steps within 24 hours, or immediately on event days, and records the reasons for every decision, including a decision not to refer. A concern about a visiting international participant goes to Westminster Children's Services, who advise on contacting the home-country authorities.

SECTION 11

Allegations against staff, jury, volunteers or choir *leaders*

Any allegation that someone working for the competition has harmed, or may pose a risk to, a child is reported to the Westminster LADO within one working day.

1. Report the allegation to the DSL straight away. If it concerns the DSL, report to the Deputy; if it concerns both, contact the LADO directly.
2. The DSL records it and contacts the LADO; the LADO advises on next steps. The CIC does not investigate on its own.
3. If needed, the person is removed from contact with participants while the matter is looked into. This is a neutral act, not a finding.
4. If the concern is about a choir leader or responsible adult, the DSL also informs the LADO, and the police where a crime may have been committed. For international choirs, the LADO advises on contacting the home-country authorities.
5. If the person is removed from their role because of harm or risk of harm, the CIC makes a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Whistleblowing: anyone can raise a concern about how safeguarding is handled at the CIC. If you feel it has not been dealt with, contact the LADO, the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (0800 028 0285) or Arts Council England.

SECTION 12

Adults *at risk*

Many of our singers are older adults or have access needs, and the same reporting route applies to them as to children (sections 9 and 10).

- We respect adults' right to make their own decisions. Where possible, we ask for their consent before sharing a concern, unless someone is in danger or a crime may have been committed.
- Access needs identified at registration are planned with venues in advance: step-free routes, seating, rest breaks, and help on stairs or stages.
- Concerns about an adult at risk are referred by the DSL to adult social care in the area where the person lives (Westminster Adult Social Care if urgent and unknown), or to the police if a crime may have been committed.
- Choir leaders of adult choirs share relevant welfare and emergency information with the DSL where a member agrees or needs support.

SECTION 13

Venues, travel, international choirs and missing *persons*

Each venue's emergency and evacuation procedures apply, and the DSL agrees a joint plan with every venue before 10 July 2027.

- **Venues:** a risk assessment is completed for each venue, covering capacity, first aid, evacuation, access and separate areas for under-18s. Venue staff lead on evacuation; choir leaders account for their own members at the assembly point.
- **Travel:** choirs are responsible for their members when travelling to and between venues. Where the Participation Access Fund pays for travel, the CIC books it directly with a licensed provider and the choir's responsible adults travel with the group.
- **International choirs:** this policy is sent to every visiting choir before arrival. Their leaders confirm their own home-country safeguarding arrangements and the same supervision ratios. Language support is arranged where needed so that concerns can be raised and understood.
- **Public audience:** members of the public do not have access to warm-up, changing or backstage areas, which are controlled by wristband or lanyard.

If a participant is missing:

1. The choir leader alerts the registration desk and the DSL straight away.
2. Venue staff check exits and all areas; the choir leader stays with the rest of the group.
3. If the person is not found within 15 minutes, or sooner if they are under 18 or vulnerable, the DSL calls 999.
4. The DSL records what happened and informs parents or carers with the choir leader.

SECTION 14

Record keeping, confidentiality and data *protection*

Safeguarding records are kept separately and securely, and only the DSL and Deputy can access them.

- Every concern, decision and referral is recorded on a concern form: what happened, what was said, actions taken, who was informed and why, with dates and times.
- Paper notes are scanned and stored in a password-protected folder, then the originals are securely destroyed.
- Information is shared only with people who need it to keep someone safe, in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data protection law never stops us sharing information to protect a child or adult at risk.
- Registration data (names, contacts, ages, consents, access and medical notes) is used only to run the competition and is deleted within 12 months of the event, unless needed for a safeguarding matter.
- Safeguarding records are kept in line with statutory guidance; records of allegations against people working with children are kept until that person's normal retirement age or for 10 years, whichever is longer.

SECTION 15

Review, adoption and *sign-off*

The CIC's director adopts this policy before the Arts Council application is submitted, and reviews it every year and after any serious incident.

- **Next review:** by 30 September 2027, after the post-event evaluation, or sooner if the law, guidance or our activity changes.
- **Sharing:** the policy is published at londonchoralcompetition.co.uk/safeguarding and sent to every choir leader, jury member and volunteer before the event.

	NAME	ROLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
Adopted by	Nika Grigolia	Director, London Choral Festival CIC; Designated Safeguarding Lead	N. Grigolia	5 Nov 2026
Acknowledged by	Sophio Lejava	Project Manager; Deputy Safeguarding Lead	S. Lejava	5 Nov 2026

In an emergency always call **999** first, then tell the DSL. *London Choral Competition 2027*