

Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults - 2023

KENTISH OPERA - Policy Document

Date this policy was approved by Kentish Opera Council:

Date of next review:

CONTENTS

Section	Starts on page:
Policy Statement	1
Procedural guidelines for all members	2
Code of conduct and behaviour	2
Members' responsibilities around safeguarding	2
Sharing information	3
Contact Details	5
Record keeping	5
Disclosure	5

Policy Statement

The Kentish Opera company (KO) is committed to a practice which protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, whilst operating as a charity and company performing operatic shows at least once every year.

All members of the company accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of issues which may cause harm to vulnerable people.

We will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults by -

- Adopting safeguarding guidelines through a code of behaviour for all people involved in the opera group
- Planning the rehearsal schedule and production processes of the company so as to minimise opportunities for vulnerable people to suffer harm whilst being involved
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, relatives and children appropriately
- If we were ever to recruit staff or volunteers, we would follow carefully the procedures for safe recruitment and selection
- Providing effective monitoring of all KO personnel through supervision, support and training as required
- Operating a Child Protection policy if children are brought into our productions, with trained chaperones in place at all times.
- We are committed to owning this policy throughout our organisation and to ensuring that we review our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Statement of Intent

It is the policy of KO to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in our activities by protecting them from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

This organisation is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people and adults can feel comfortable and secure while attending any of KO's activities or events.

We will at all times show respect and understanding for each individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct ourselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of KO.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL KO PERSONNEL

Code of conduct and behaviour

All KO members and associates should be committed to:

- Treating all children, young people and adults with respect and dignity, fairly and without prejudice.
- Always listening to what a person is saying
- Valuing each person and recognising the unique contribution each individual can make

BY EXAMPLE

- Providing an example of how we would wish others to treat us
- Using appropriate language when working with young people and challenging any inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language or behaviour used by a young person or by an adult working with young people.
- Respecting the individual's right to privacy and dignity.

ONE TO ONE CONTACT

- Not spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults, away from others
- In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person or vulnerable adult making every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

- Never engaging in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay.
- Never doing things of a personal nature for a child, young person or adult that they can do for themselves. If such an incident arises, for example, where a service user has limited mobility, KO Council should seek an appropriate person to deal with such an incident.
- Never allowing, or engaging in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

GENERAL

- Being aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned
- Never drawing any conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Never exaggerating or trivialising abuse issues or making suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person or adult, even in fun.

Members' Responsibilities around Safeguarding

- All members need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary. (*Working Together to safeguard children, HM Government (2013)*)
- These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child or adult who participates in activities run by KO. It is recognised that abuse can be a difficult subject for workers to deal with. KO believes that the protection from harm and abuse of vulnerable children and adults is EVERYBODY'S responsibility and the aim of these procedures is to ensure that all people involved in KO act appropriately in response to any concern around such abuse.

Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

- KO is committed to ensuring that all its members, occasional helpers and performers undertake training to gain a basic awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse. The Designated Named Person and other members of the council will have access to training around Safeguarding Children and Adults.

Understanding the definitions:

- Vulnerable adults are people who are over 18 years of age and are getting or may need help and services to live in the community; they may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.
- Safeguarding children - the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm - is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.
- "Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons" (*No Secrets: Department of Health, 2000*)

Abuse includes (for children or adults):

physical: including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint

sexual: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material

psychological or emotional: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation, domestic abuse

neglect and acts of omission: including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs

In addition, adult safeguarding also identifies the following extra categories:

financial or material: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

discriminatory: including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

institutional or organisational: including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practices, lack of person-centred care or treatment.

WHEN and WHERE?

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly, and may be a single act or repeated acts. It can occur in any setting, public or private.

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who partake in the same activities as the person experiencing abuse.

Designated Named Person for Safeguarding

- KO has an appointed an individual who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns; the Designated Named Person for Safeguarding is:

Name: Ian Alexander, 23 Oakley Drive, Bromley, BR2 8PS

Tel: 07803 246999

Email: ianalexander107@msn.com

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR ADULTS

Good communication is essential in any organisation. In KO every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns, they will be listened to and taken seriously.

It is the responsibility of the KO Council to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between all those involved in this organisation and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have a right to information, especially any information that could make life better and safer for them. KO will act to ensure they have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties.

When sharing information, KO personnel will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing.

We publicly state our commitment to safeguarding by:

- Publishing the named Designated Officer (s) and how they can be contacted
- Publishing and making available a full copy of our Safeguarding Policy.

Other Bodies

A copy of this Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body upon request.

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CONCERNS WITH AGENCIES REPORTING CONCERNS

The Designated Officer is responsible for receiving and dealing with child protection or vulnerable adult concerns and liaising with statutory agencies.

It is not the responsibility of the KO members to investigate or to try to decide whether abuse has occurred and under no circumstances should anyone attempt to deal with the situation alone. It is your responsibility to pass on concerns to the Designated Officer.

All concerns must be reported to the Designated Officer who can decide on the appropriate level of action with partner agencies and ensure that a written record of what you have witnessed is made.

If the KO member is unable to contact the Designated Officer, they should report their concerns to a Council member without delay.

When alerted to concerns about a child or vulnerable adult the Designated Officer should:

- Ensure that the child or vulnerable adult is in no immediate danger and that any medical or police assistance required has been sought;
- Consider whether the concern is a safeguarding issue or not. This may involve some clarification of information provided, but being careful not to investigate.
- If the concern is not considered a safeguarding issue and it is decided that there should be no referral made to a statutory authority, a record should be made of the concern; details kept on file; including any action taken; the reasons for not referring; and the situation monitored on an ongoing basis.
- Consult with statutory agencies where there is any doubt or uncertainty. If the concerns are in relation to a child, this consultation should be with the local children's social care contact team. If the concerns are in relation to a vulnerable adult, consultation should be via the Adult Protection team at Kent County Council.
- Where a discussion has taken place with Social Care and it is decided that a referral should not be made, this should be recorded and the situation monitored as above. The decision to monitor should also be recorded. This is important in case further concerns are raised which, when taken together, indicate that the child or vulnerable adult is being harmed and protective action is required.

- A formal referral will be made if, after discussion, Social Care considers the concern to be a safeguarding issue. The contact should be made by telephone in the first instance, but should be confirmed in writing under confidential cover within two working days using the Referral proforma.

Allegations against KO members or associated performers:

If an allegation is made by a young person or vulnerable adult, family member, friend or another KO member, all details will be fully recorded by the Designated Officer who will, without delay:

- Consult with and take advice from the local council
- Agree the next course of action, ensuring it is in line with any investigation being undertaken by the Police or Social Care.
- Take protective measures, which may include suspending the KO person from all activities.

CONTACT DETAILS of the DESIGNATED PERSONS

The following is the Designated Safeguarding Leads for the organisation:

Name: Ian Alexander, 23 Oakley Drive, Bromley, BR2 8PS		
Tel: 07803 246999	Email: ianalexander107@msn.com	

The Designated Person will inform the relevant outside organisation of the incident.

<p>Social Care</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kent Children Services: Tel: 03000 411111 2. Kent Adult Protection Services (Central Referral Unit): Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm: 03000 416 161 Out of hours: 03000 419191 social.services@kent.gov.uk Also: https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/about-us/safeguarding/

<p>Police</p> <p>Kent Police: 01622 690690 (24 hours) or call 101</p>
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<p>For advice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board website: https://www.kmsab.org.uk/ 2. Child Line Tel: 0800 1111 – Freephone, 24 hours 3. NSPCC Help line Tel: 0808 800 5000 - 10am–4pm Monday to Friday, Freephone Or email: help@nspcc.org.uk
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RECORD-KEEPING

All safeguarding records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.

Only the Designated Person will have access to these files.

Keep all rough notes that you may have taken, especially when someone has disclosed possible abuse.

DISCLOSURE to a KO council member

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Child Protection and Safeguarding will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Listen to the child or adult, rather than question him or her directly.
- Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what they say seriously.
- Allow the child or adult to speak without interruption,
- Accept what is said - it is not your role to investigate or question.
- Do not overreact.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event. Use the individual's words or explanations - do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child/adult was trying to say.

Contact the KO Designated Person for advice / guidance.

The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and agree the appropriate response.

If the Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the KO member with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation themselves. Record within 24 hours any discussions or actions taken.