



VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

The **Bristol Gilbert & Sullivan Operatic Society** is committed to keeping its members safe and happy throughout their time as part of the society. It recognizes its responsibility in developing practice which protects vulnerable adults from harm.

The society believes that:

- The welfare of the vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All in the society, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members and employees of the society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The society will ensure that:

- All adults will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to members will always be put first.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the society provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation.
- It will hold a register of every member involved with the society and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Committee of the society and will be subject to annual review.

Date: February 2019

VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production involving vulnerable adults the society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Engage in appointing a 'buddy' from within the society membership as a point of contact that the vulnerable adult feels comfortable in contacting and confiding for both onstage and offstage situations.
- Ensure that vulnerable adults are engaged with the societies activities at all times.

Physical Contact



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- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from each other.
 - Adults will only make physical contact when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
 - Adults will seek the consent prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing sensitive information

- The society has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the vulnerable adult for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- The society's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The society will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a vulnerable adult while in the care of the society, please make this known to a member of the committee.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any vulnerable adult in the production.
- If a member reporting suspicion on abuse is unhappy with the action taken by the an individual committee member, they are encouraged to report it to another member of the committee, or they may follow the rules set out in the constitution to call an EGM to resolve the concern.

Disclosure of abuse

If a vulnerable adult confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the individual to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with a member of the committee. Make it clear to the member that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the member that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the member what you are going to do next.



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- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the member's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society, he or she will be made aware of his rights under the society's disciplinary procedures.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.
- In criminal law the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, all members of the society will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Members will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.
- If a vulnerable adult is injured while in the care of the society, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded. This record will be countersigned by the vulnerable adult.
- During performances, individual members will make their own way to the theatre and ensure they are signed into the building.