



# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1. Aims

Danesborough Chorus is a music group open to all. It aims to treat its members, volunteers, freelancers and supporters equally regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class and socio-economic background.

## 2. Equality of opportunity

The aims of the Danesborough Chorus are:

- 1) to promote equality for its members and potential members in access to membership, musical activities and opportunities;
- 2) to ensure no member or potential member receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction; and
- 3) to ensure no individual wishing to volunteer or work on a freelance basis for Danesborough Chorus receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the aims.

## 3. Inclusion and respect

- 1) Danesborough Chorus values its members, freelancers, volunteers and supporters and, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, promises to fulfil its responsibilities to:
  - a) create a lawful and welcoming culture within the choir by treating each and every individual in a respectful manner, such that they are made to feel equally valued and included in all activities; and
  - b) provide an environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.
- 2) Accordingly, all members, freelancers, volunteers, supporters and those representing Danesborough Chorus are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure choir activities and choir culture are welcoming and inclusive for all.
- 3) Inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks will not be tolerated. These constitute bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), victimisation and unlawful discrimination and have no place in Danesborough Chorus.
- 4) Members, freelancers, volunteers and supporters are hereby notified that sexual harassment, as defined in UK law, includes:
  - a) sexual assault;
  - b) sexual innuendo and any unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile and demeaning environment for the recipient;
  - c) circulating false and malicious rumours about an individual based on gender and related to sexuality or sexual activity.
- 5) All should understand that they can be held liable for any such acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct and any appropriate action will be taken.

## 4. Accessibility

Danesborough Chorus aims to use venues that are accessible to all for rehearsals, concerts and any other activities or events it undertakes.

## 5. Dealing with complaints

- 1) If any member, volunteer, freelancer or supporter feels they have been bullied, harassed, victimised or otherwise unlawfully discriminated against within the choir or arising from their choir activities, they should in the first instance discuss it in confidence with the Safeguarding Officer in the choir who will give assistance in referring it to the wider committee.
- 2) They may also wish to seek help and support from an independent professional or experienced source available to them.
- 3) The committee promises to take seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and other unlawful discrimination by fellow members, freelancers, volunteers and supporters in the course of choir activities or arising from their choir activities.
- 4) The committee promises to recognise that its legal responsibilities are its priority over personal loyalties or concern for the reputation of the choir.
- 5) The committee will investigate any complaint, listening to all parties involved.
  - a) If the complaint is against a committee member, that member will not be involved in the investigation.
  - b) If the complaint is against an individual, that individual will have the opportunity to express their point of view in a safe environment, accompanied by a person of their choice.
  - c) The person making the complaint will have the same opportunity.
- 6) It is further advised that some harassment may amount to a criminal matter e.g. sexual assault or stalking. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence which may incur prosecution of an offending individual and of the committee that is legally responsible for ensuring compliance with law within the choir.
- 7) Particularly serious complaints such as:
  - sexual assault;
  - persistent bullying or harassment by any individual(s) towards another individual could lead to termination of membership, contract or other association with the choir without notice.
- 8) Should the complainant feel that their complaint has not been investigated fairly or should they be dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request that the committee appoint an independent third party to investigate.
- 9) If a complaint is found against Danesborough Chorus, the committee will work to ensure that such bullying, harassment, victimisation or otherwise unlawful discrimination does not occur in the future. The committee will inform the members how they propose to do this.
- 10) Furthermore, the committee promises it will not victimise nor treat any individual(s) less well because they made a complaint; nor will it allow further discrimination within choir ranks against such complainant.

## 6. Employment practices – general

- 1) Danesborough Chorus aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and will ensure that no volunteer, person engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelancer) or volunteer applicant receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the characteristics set out in the aims of this policy

- 2) Danesborough Chorus selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- 3) Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 4) Danesborough Chorus regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation, bullying of freelancers or volunteers, aggressive and intimidating behaviour, theft and fraud in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct. This list of offences is not intended to be exhaustive.

## 7. Responsibilities

The Chair of the Danesborough Chorus Committee is responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and ensuring the Equality and Diversity Policy is kept up to date.

Danesborough Chorus ensures that all those who are involved in any recruitment process:

- 1) are aware of the Danesborough Chorus Equality and Diversity Policy;
- 2) are aware of when and what type of DBS check is appropriate;
- 3) have read the DBS code of practice where applicable;
- 4) have read the Making Music guidance on safeguarding and DBS checks where applicable; and
- 5) have read any other guidance deemed appropriate by the Danesborough Chorus Committee.

This Equality and Diversity policy is fully supported by the Trustees of the Danesborough Chorus.

## 8. Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the Danesborough Chorus Committee. Members of Danesborough Chorus will be informed of any changes to the policy and invited to comment.

**Date:** June 2018

**Reviewed:** September 2020

**Reviewed and updated:** November 2021