



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy – Hart and Soul Community Choir

Introduction

Hart and Soul Community Choir is a music group open to all. We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion in our music group.

We are committed against unlawful discrimination in providing activities / services / facilities

We will not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin),
- religion or belief,
- sex
- sexual orientation

Hart and Soul Community Choir is also committed to promoting equality of opportunity regardless of class and socio-economic background.

This policy applies to everyone connected to Hart and Soul Community Choir. This includes, but is not limited to: members, volunteers, staff, individuals engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelancers), individuals applying to volunteer or work with us, supporters, members of the public accessing our services or attending our events

Aims

Hart and Soul Community Choir aims to:

- Provide and promote equality of opportunity and equitable treatment for everyone.
- Make our activities accessible and inclusive by removing barriers to entry.
- Encourage, celebrate and value diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure every member feels respected and able to give their best.
- Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Responsibilities

- The Chairperson is the EDI lead and responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, and to ensure the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is kept up to date.

General practice

Hart and Soul Community Choir will treat everyone 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.

Hart and Soul Community Choir will promote equality of access to membership and musical activities and opportunities.

We will ensure no one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction. This includes but is not limited to:

- Individuals accessing membership.
- Individuals accessing musical activities and opportunities
- Volunteers, employees or people engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelancers)
- Individuals applying to volunteer or work with (including freelancers) Hart and Soul Community Choir

We acknowledge our responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to our activity to enable access under the Equality Act 2010

We will select candidates for volunteering or paid opportunities based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

Hart and Soul Community Choir's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination, where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination, where a requirement or a condition is applied that has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.
- Associative discrimination, where direct discrimination against someone occurs because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination, where direct discrimination against someone occurs because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
- Harassment, where unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic occurs that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
- Third party harassment, which recognises potential liability for the harassment of someone connected to the group by external contacts.
- Victimisation, when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint, or it is thought that they have done so.

Inclusion and respect

- Hart and Soul Community Choir will:
 - treat everyone in a respectful manner and ensure they are made to feel equally welcome and included in all activities.
 - provide an environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.
- All members, staff, freelancers, volunteers, supporters and those representing Hart and Soul Community Choir are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure activities are welcoming and inclusive for all.
- Inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment and have no place in Hart and Soul Community Choir

Hart and Soul Community Choir will support our members, volunteers, staff, freelancers and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, colleagues, freelancers, other organisations or customers.

Removing barriers

Hart and Soul Community Choir is committed to making sure its activities are accessible and inclusive.

We recognise that there may be a range of barriers that could stop individuals accessing our activities or feeling included in them. These barriers may not always be obvious or visible and could be:

- Physical
- Practical
- Cultural

We will work to identify any such barriers and take reasonable measures to remove them.

Dealing with Complaints

- If any member, volunteer, staff, freelancer or supporter feels they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they should raise it with the chairperson. If the complaint is regarding this person, it should be raised with another committee member.
- The committee will take complaints of discrimination and harassment seriously.
- The committee will investigate the complaint, listening to all parties involved:
 - If the complaint is against a steering group member, that member will not be part of conducting the investigation.
 - If the complaint is against an individual, that individual will have the opportunity to express their point of view in a safe environment and accompanied by a friend.
 - The person making the complaint will have the same opportunity.
- If a complaint is found against Hart and Soul Community Choir, the steering group must work to ensure that such discrimination, harassment or victimisation is not repeated in future, and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.

- If a complaint is found against Hart and Soul Community Choir, the steering group should work to resolve the complaint in a manner which is acceptable to the person who was subject to discrimination.
- If a complaint is against Hart and Soul Community Choir is not upheld, the steering group might wish to address issues which might have led to the complaint in the first place, e.g. lack of communication, to prevent similar situations in future

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the board of trustees/management committee. Members of Hart and Soul Community Choir will be informed of any changes to the policy and be invited to comment.

Request for DBS checks for current and potential members, staff and volunteers – with reference to ex-offenders

General:

- In assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Hart and Soul Community Choir complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
- Hart and Soul Community Choir actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.

Request of DBS checks

- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.
- For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Hart and Soul Community Choir can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Hart and Soul Community Choir are legally entitled to know about, and where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and, where appropriate, Police Act Regulations as amended).

- Hart and Soul Community Choir makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request.

Outcome of check and selection process

- Hart and Soul Community Choir undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Hart and Soul Community Choir undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- In an interview or separate discussion Hart and Soul Community Choir will:
 - only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
 - ensure an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position.
- Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Responsibilities

Hart and Soul Community Choir ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process are:

- aware of the Hart and Soul Community Choir equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
- aware of when and what type of DBS check is appropriate.
- have read the DBS code of practice.
- have read the Making Music guidance on safeguarding and DBS checks.
- have read any other guidance deemed appropriate by the Hart and Soul Community Choir committee [guidance can be listed]