

IOF Safeguarding Policy - Overview (May 2025)

History

- V1 agreed February 2023
- V2 agreed April 24th 2024
- V3 agreed May 13th 2025
- Next review May 2026

Reviewed by board April 15th 2025 – next standard review due May 2026

The International Organ Festival (IOF) believes that vulnerable people (any child, young person or adult at risk) should never experience abuse of any sort and is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all vulnerable people we come into contact with.

This policy applies to trustees, staff (employees or contractors), volunteers, performers and anyone else working on behalf of IOF or taking part in IOF activities. It is intended to provide trustees, staff and volunteers with principles that guide our approach to the protection of all vulnerable people.

The policy recognises vulnerable people as:

- Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
- Adults aged over 18 at risk as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or reduced physical or mental capacity.

Purpose of the policy:

- Protect vulnerable people who perform at or attend IOF events of any sort.
- Protect vulnerable people who volunteer or work for the IOF.
- Ensure any staff or volunteers working with vulnerable people are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of the individuals they are interacting with.
- Ensure that safeguarding of vulnerable people is a primary consideration when the IOF undertakes any activity.

How the IOF might work with vulnerable people: We are a registered charity that runs a biennial organ competition for adults and put on a festival and concerts for the general public. We do not routinely work with children. As such our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

- Any vulnerable adults who are competitors in the organ competition
- Any vulnerable adults amongst our own staff, volunteers, performers and others helping to put on the festival
- Young people (16-18) volunteering to help put on the festival
- Any vulnerable audience members at public concerts

Level of involvement: our current assessment of the level of involvement we have with vulnerable people is 'infrequent' which is characterised by occasional, irregular or short-term contacts.

Our approach to safeguarding: the IOF seeks to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by:

- valuing, listening to, and respecting them.
- appointing a named safeguarding lead who is a trustee on the board of the IOF.
- annually reviewing its safeguarding policies and procedures to reflect best practice.
- providing a safe physical environment for activities by applying required health and safety measures.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers, through supervision, support and training.
- recruiting staff safely, ensuring necessary checks are made.
- managing any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- applying procedures to ensure that any concerns and relevant information are shared with relevant agencies.
- ensuring an effective complaints and whistleblowing process is in place.
- storing information that relates to safeguarding concerns in a professional and secure manner.
- reminding staff, trustees, contractors and volunteers that everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding.

Named safeguarding person: David Titterington has responsibility for safeguarding issues - all queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to him in the first instance.

Procedures: Ways of working and procedures described below form part of this policy.

Policy review: This policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary on an annual basis. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Safeguarding policy – ways of working and procedures

These ways of working and procedures form part of the IOF Safeguarding policy. They include:

- People management practices concerning safeguarding
- Ways of working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people
- Procedures for raising and dealing with safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

People management practices

- 1) All trustees, staff and volunteers are required to read the safeguarding policy, ways of working and procedures on appointment to their role.
- 2) If an existing or potential new staff member or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people, the appropriate level of DBS check will be made before that work is undertaken. The results of any check will be used confidentially.

Ways of Working

- 3) The IOF routinely uses performance venues managed and operated by third parties. The IOF must ensure that such venues are accessible by people with disabilities and satisfy current fire regulations and other health and safety requirements. The IOF must also check the venue has its own safeguarding policy which accepts responsibility for any vulnerable people attending events. The IOF must ensure that any IOF staff / volunteers that are working in the venue are aware of their own safeguarding responsibilities.
- 4) The IOF routinely engages organisations including choirs and orchestras to put on performances. The IOF must ensure that such organisations have their own safeguarding policy and that they accept responsibility for any vulnerable people who are part of their group. The IOF must ensure that any IOF staff / volunteers that are working with the group are aware of their own safeguarding responsibilities.
- 5) The IOF uses volunteer hosts to accommodate competitors in their homes for the duration of the organ competition. The IOF will provide a code-of-conduct to both hosts and hosted competitors to ensure that both parties are aware of their mutual safeguarding responsibilities with regard to vulnerable individuals and will establish if competitors have any vulnerabilities or specific requirements. In the case of known vulnerabilities, a risk assessment will be made together with the host before placing the competitor with the host.
- 6) The IOF recognises that participation in its prestigious competition may be stressful for competitors and as such provides competitors with contacts (currently Rev Mark Dearnley and Margaret Blake) for independent support that they may use at their own discretion.
- 7) The IOF recognises that competition jurors are in a position of power in relation to competitors. As such, jurors are required to operate to a code-of-conduct which includes routine separation from competitors.
- 8) If the IOF organises an activity where it will be responsible for vulnerable people the IOF will ensure:
 - a. Detailed planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
 - b. The event is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults including a main contact.
 - c. The main contact has an emergency contact and other relevant details for the vulnerable people
 - d. A vulnerable person is not left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked
- 9) If a vulnerable person wishes to volunteer in IOF activities, a risk assessment will be conducted and if suitable risk mitigations can be agreed, written permission (email etc.) should be obtained from parents/guardians as appropriate

in advance. Written permission should include: any specific needs of the individual, emergency contact details and any relevant pick-up arrangements.

- 10) Online Safety. Any digital communication with vulnerable individuals should be limited to matters pertaining to the organisation of IOF events. Informal contact, in the name of the IOF, through social media should be avoided.
- 11) Photographs and video recordings. No staff or volunteers should take photos or video of children or young people without written permission from the adult responsible for them.

Procedures for raising and dealing with safeguarding concerns and incidents

- 12) If any IOF trustee, staff or volunteer witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the named safeguarding person.
 - a. If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to the abuse, it should be reported to the chair (Chris Wood)
 - b. If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the named safeguarding officer or an individual they trust.
- 13) The Named person (or substitute) will decide based on the urgency of the concern and the following factors:
 - a. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger, call the emergency services.
 - b. If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time – remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.
- 14) Otherwise the named person will:
 - a. Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
 - b. Speak with board trustees to decide how to handle the reported abuse (excluding any trustees involved).
 - c. Escalate the report by either:
 - i. Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
 - ii. Requesting local authority assessment about whether a vulnerable person needs protection.
 - iii. Investigating internally – for less serious incidents where internal mediation may be successful.
- 15) Where cases are escalated to the police or local authority, the board will co-operate with them.
- 16) Where an internal investigation takes place the board will:
 - a. Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
 - b. Inform the family/guardians of the person reported as having been abused.
 - c. Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
 - i. Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative.
 - ii. Meetings will be attended by the named safeguarding officer and at least one other trustee.
 - iii. All parties will be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
 - d. Once meetings have taken place the board will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. They will be either:
 - i. Escalate the incident to the relevant authority.
 - ii. Further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - iii. A decision or resolution.
- 17) If abuse is found to have taken place any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests of the IOF and its charitable purpose.

Contacts:

Anyone who needs to discuss safeguarding matters concerning the IOF can contact the following people:

IOF lead trustee on safeguarding: David Titterington 07710352250 david.titterington@organfestival.com

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) has been set up so that all agencies and organisations who work with children and young people work together to keep children safe. To report abuse or mistreatment concerns at any time of day or night call 0300 123 4043

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board is a partnership of relevant agencies working with organisations to make sure adults at risk are cared for in their daily lives, free from abuse and harassment. Concerns about an at-risk adult can be reported online at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/report-a-concern-about-an-adult/report-a-concern-about-an-adult-form.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 123 4042 at any time of day or night.