

Halifax Symphony Orchestra Policy Documents

Updated 5 December 2025

The following document outlines the policies for

- A Safeguarding**
- B Health and Safety**
- C Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion**

These policies apply all members, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of the Halifax Symphony Orchestra or taking part in orchestra related activities.

They have been compiled in accordance with guidance provided by 'Making Music' and discussed and recorded in the monthly meeting minutes of Halifax Symphony Orchestra committee meetings. It is the responsibility of the whole committee in providing advice and guidance on each policy and to ensure all policies are updated every two years.

A Safeguarding

1. Halifax Symphony Orchestra believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. HSO recognises that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and adults with whom we come into contact and commit to protecting them from harm. The purpose of this policy is to provide members, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of all of those we come into contact with and in particular with regard to vulnerable people.
2. Halifax Symphony Orchestra membership is open to those over 18 years of age, though children aged 16 -18 may perform either as a member of the orchestra or soloist if accompanied by a parent or appropriate chaperone. We run regular rehearsals for members and aim to perform a minimum of three concerts per annum for the general public. As such our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:
 - Members of the group who attend rehearsals and concerts
 - Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity
 - Audience members at public concerts
 - Staff and volunteers at concert venues
3. The committee has overall responsibility for safeguarding issues and the named safeguarding officer is Richard Farrar (current Chair). All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to a committee member in the first instance. Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people will be planned with the involvement of the committee and in line with established procedures and, where necessary, in liaison with the Local Authority or other relevant agency
4. The Safeguarding policy applies to; all HSO members, staff, freelance players, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Halifax Symphony Orchestra or taking part in Halifax Symphony Orchestra activities. A member of the committee has been identified as having an enhanced DBS check and this will be reviewed regularly.

5. When Halifax Symphony Orchestra organises an activity or event where they will be responsible for vulnerable people they will ensure:

Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.

- The event is attended by an appropriate DBS checked adult.
- There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been DBS checked (currently Heidi Stevens).
- The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking up arrangements for vulnerable people).
- That if vulnerable people of a different gender will be taking part in activities, adults of different gender will be in attendance too.
- A vulnerable person is not be left alone with an non-associated adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity or is specifically approved by the parent/guardian or appropriate chaperone of that child or vulnerable person.
- Two adults (where possible one to be DBS checked) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will be responsible for ensuring that any remaining vulnerable people get home safely. It is noted that the adult/guardian or chaperone initially accompanying the vulnerable person/child to the event retains responsibility for all persons in their care and if that duty of care is breached the Committee will consider whether further action is necessary such as making reports to the LAA, police or other agency.

6. **Working with parents/guardians:** If a vulnerable person or person under 18 years of age wishes to take part in Halifax Symphony Orchestra activities, written permission (email permissible subject to identity being confirmed) should be obtained from parents/guardians in all circumstances and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: emergency contact details and any medical issues which the Committee should be aware of. Halifax Symphony Orchestra Committee will liaise with parents /guardians/carers and the Local authority and will require parents /guardians/ carers or appropriate chaperone to accompany the vulnerable person or child throughout the rehearsal or event and accompanying them to and from the rehearsal or event venue.

7. **Raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse**

- If any member, staff or volunteer in Halifax Symphony Orchestra witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse during the course of any rehearsal or orchestral event, they should immediately report it to the named safeguarding officer; (Richard Farrar and / or Heidi Stevens) or in their absence any available Committee Member Where appropriate a referral will be made to the LAA, police or other relevant agency. The Committee will consider the termination or suspension of any member, staff or volunteer suspected of inappropriate behaviour.
- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse, whilst participating in orchestral activities, against themselves they should report it to the named safeguarding officer or an individual they trust.

For further guidance see Appendix i

B: Health and Safety

1. Halifax Orchestral Society is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all those involved in the activities it organises and includes, but is not limited to; members, (freelancers), volunteers and members of the public within rehearsals, performances and other events.
2. The Halifax Symphony Orchestra committee will seek to prevent accidents and cases of ill-health by managing the health and safety at events and activities it organises and will liaise with venue coordinators to ensure compliance. As such, relevant risk assessments will be completed for events and activities. Where regular venues are used the risk assessment will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if required.
3. The Halifax Symphony Orchestra committee will aim to provide clear instructions and information to all members and participants to ensure that members, staff and volunteers are competent to do their work/activities in a healthy and safe manner. As such, tasks performed by members, staff and volunteers are to be risk assessed and appropriate instruction is to be provided (e.g. preparing and serving hot drinks, erecting staging, moving heavy equipment or any other associated activity).
4. Halifax Symphony Orchestra will engage and consult with members, staff and volunteers on health and safety conditions. Therefore, members, staff and volunteers will be briefed on health and safety risk assessments for new venues/activities and updated on any changes in risk assessment for regular venues/activities.
5. Halifax Symphony Orchestra committee will establish clear lines of communication for members, staff and volunteers to raise health and safety concerns and will have procedures in place to ensure concerns raised are investigated and acted upon where appropriate.
6. Halifax Symphony Orchestra will implement emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident and will ensure at least one individual is responsible for knowing fire procedures for hired venues and for communicating them to those present.
7. Halifax Symphony Orchestra will maintain safe and healthy conditions for the safe storage of equipment and will ensure satisfactory health and safety conditions at hired venues and for hired equipment. HSO will ensure that any equipment owned by Halifax Symphony Orchestra will be stored safely.
8. Halifax Symphony Orchestra will ensure they are aware of **First Aid** procedures, kits and equipment at hired venues. Where practical Halifax Symphony Orchestra may recruit members and volunteers with First Aid experience.
9. Halifax Symphony Orchestra takes the responsibility of **Sound Safety** and in protecting the hearing of members, staff, volunteers and audience members seriously. It will:
 - Ensure there are open lines of communication for individuals to raise concerns about hearing and sound issues;
 - Take concerns seriously; the Committee and Music Leaders will work with the individuals to find ways to minimise risk;
 - Take into account the protection of our audience's hearing when designing stage and audience layout for performances.

Also see Appendix ii

C: Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion

1. Halifax Symphony Orchestra is a music group open to all and is committed to encouraging **equality, diversity, and inclusion** within the society. As such, it is committed against unlawful discrimination in providing its activities and will not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics, these being; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and / or sexual orientation.
2. Halifax Symphony Orchestra / Halifax Orchestral Society is also committed to promoting **equality of opportunity** to all regardless of class and socio-economic background.
3. This policy applies to everyone connected to Halifax Symphony Orchestra, including members, volunteers, individuals engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelancers), supporters, members of the public accessing our services or attending our events.
4. Halifax Symphony Orchestra aims to:
 - Provide and promote equality of opportunity and equitable treatment for everyone.
 - Make our activities accessible and inclusive by removing unnecessary 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.
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5. Halifax Symphony Orchestra will treat everyone equally and will promote equality of access to members within musical activities and opportunities provided.
6. Halifax Symphony Orchestra will ensure no one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria which includes but is not limited to:
 - Individuals accessing membership within the membership criteria.
 - Individuals accessing musical activities and opportunities
 - Volunteers, employees or people engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelancers).
7. Halifax Symphony Orchestra acknowledges its responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to our activity to enable access under the Equality Act 2010.
8. Halifax Symphony Orchestra is committed to anti-discriminatory practice including:
 - 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.
9. Halifax Symphony Orchestra will treat everyone in a respectful manner and ensure they are made to feel equally welcome and included in all activities and will provide an environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised. All members, freelancers, volunteers, supporters and those representing Halifax Symphony Orchestra 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 Halifax Symphony Orchestra. As such, Halifax Symphony Orchestra will support our members, volunteers, freelancers and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, colleagues, freelancers, other organisations or customers.
10. Halifax Symphony Orchestra is committed to making sure its activities are accessible and inclusive. As such it is recognised that there may be a range of barriers which may not always be obvious or visible (physical, practical or cultural) that could stop individuals accessing our activities or feeling included in them. Halifax Symphony Orchestra committee will work to identify any such barriers and take reasonable measures to remove them.
11. If any member, volunteer, freelancer or supporter feels they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they should raise a **complaint** with the Chair or, if it is that person, another committee member. All complaints of discrimination and harassment will be taken seriously and will be investigated by the committee, listening to all parties involved:
- If the complaint is against a committee 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.
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If a complaint is found against Halifax Symphony Orchestra, the committee 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 Halifax Symphony Orchestra, the committee 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 Halifax Symphony is not upheld, the committee might address issues which might have led to the complaint in the first place, e.g. lack of communication, to prevent similar situations in future.

Documents to be reviewed December 2027

Heath Community Church Halifax information and policy documents:
<https://heathchurchhalifax.org.uk/documents-and-policies/>

Victoria Theatre information and documents: <https://www.victoriatheatre.co.uk/hire>

Halifax Minster information and documents: <https://halifaxminster.org.uk/>

Appendix i: Safeguarding Policy actions and guidance

- This 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, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity. This policy also recognises risk is determined by the activity an adult is taking part in and not solely on the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult, as such any adult can be at risk, and the risk can be temporary.
- This policy aims to:
 - Protect children, young people and adults at risk who are; members of, receive services from, or volunteer for, the Halifax Symphony Orchestra.
 - Ensure members, staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they are interacting with.
 - Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk is a primary consideration when Halifax Symphony Orchestra undertakes any activity, event or project.

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

Richard Farrar or Heidi Stevens (or any Committee member if reported in their absence) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.
2. 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.

If none of the above applies the named person will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Speak with committee members to decide how to handle the reported abuse. Excluding any committee members who is alleged to be involved in the incident.
- Escalate the report by either:
 - Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
 - Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection.
 - An internal investigation – for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful.
- Where cases are escalated the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident.
- Where an internal investigation takes place the committee will:
 - Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
 - Inform the family/guardians of the person reported as being abused of the incident.

- Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
 - Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
 - Meetings will be attended by the named safeguarding officer and at least one other committee member.
 - All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
- Once meetings have taken place the committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. They will be either:
 - Escalate the incident to the relevant authority.
 - Further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - A decision or resolution.

Resolution and disciplinary action

- 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 the Halifax Symphony Orchestra.
- Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the Halifax Symphony Orchestra constitution.

Appendix ii: Halifax Symphony Orchestra Health and Safety notes for playing members

Health and Safety is the responsibility of all playing members but the following is guidance for all members to consider during rehearsals. The Halifax Symphony Orchestra committee has developed policies for Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Equal Opportunities and these can be provided to members on request via email at contact@halifaxorchestra.org

Fire

- Register of attendance is taken at all rehearsals and retained by the chair.
- Provide the personnel secretary with your emergency contact details.
- Fire exits are located through both entrances and via the staircase town to the basement and are signposted with green fire exit signs. Please become familiar with these exits.
- Please keep fire exits clear and ensure easy routes out of the building.

Slips and trips

- Ensure bags and cases are stored safely to avoid trips and for ease of exit in case of emergency evacuation.
- If using equipment with leads please tape these down or cover loose cables.

Manual Handling (e.g. moving equipment and furniture)

- Please consider your own capabilities when moving chairs, furniture, instruments and to desist if you have medical conditions. Please be read the HSE resource [HSE - Good handling technique](#)

First Aid and Defibrillator

- First Aid kits are located in the kitchen and main entrance to the rehearsal venue.
- If you are a first aider or a medical practitioner, please inform a committee member.
- Please ensure you have provided the committee with your emergency contact numbers and that these are updated annually.
- A defibrillator are located
 - For rehearsals at
 - Heath Pharmacy; Accessible outside the pharmacy on 96 Free School Lane / Clover Hill Road, Halifax, HX1 2YF (up towards the church)
 - In the downstairs hall of the Heath Reformed Church, on top of the cupboards on the right hand side at the far end of the hall.
 - For concerts
 - the Piece Hall complex
 - Railway station
 - Calderdale Industrial Museum
 - PIB group on Charles St

Physiological damage

- Please be aware that poor posture could lead to short or long term injury and we ask that performers are given enough space to sit or stand correctly and comfortably. We advise that you read : [Fit to play: exercises for instrumentalists - from BAPAM](#)

Damage to ears/hearing

Please note that exposure to prolonged or sudden loud noise can cause hearing loss

- Members to be encouraged to raise hearing concerns related to playing with the orchestra with the committee;
- We may need to adjust the orchestra lay-out to minimise impact, depending on band/repertoire (e.g. brass, Wagner);
- Brass and Percussion players are to ensure that screens are used;
- The following are useful articles related to this issue
 - [Protecting your hearing \(Making Music resource\)](#)
 - [The Musician's Guide to Understanding Decibels](#)
 - [Hearing Health Foundation](#)
 - [HSE - Noise at work](#)

Electrical Equipment

- If using electrical equipment, please make a visual inspection of electrical equipment to be used checking for loose plugs, damaged cables, overheating, anything else that looks wrong. If in doubt, do not use and **please report any issues with a committee member**. Electrical equipment is PAT tested regularly.
- Please ensure that cables for equipment are secured and are not trailing across pathways.

Safeguarding

Members of the committee have responsibility for safeguarding issues and queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to a committee member. A member of the committee has a current enhanced DBS check.

The orchestra committee would welcome young players to rehearse with the orchestra. If a child / person under 18 is present, there must be a named chaperone present or a parent / carer. If chaperoned, parents / carers must give permission, emergency contact details and provide drop-off and pick-up times to the committee and parents / carers must bring the performer into the venue and collect them at the end.

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