

# Fareham Philharmonic Choir - Diversity and Equality Policy

## 1. Statement of intent and objectives

Fareham Philharmonic Choir exists to enjoy singing.

We are a friendly group of like-minded people.

We typically perform three or four times per year, in local churches.

Fareham Philharmonic Choir respects and values the unique characteristics and individuality of each of its stakeholders (for example; Choir members, Musical Director, Accompanist).

We aim to involve everyone regardless of their age, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, disability, marital status, health, pregnancy and maternity or gender re-assignment (together the 'Protected Characteristics').

We also strive to ensure that no unnecessary barriers are present which deny access to individuals who could otherwise participate in the Choir's activities.

In addition, the Choir will endeavour to ensure that all stakeholders are given the same opportunities regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

This Policy has been produced to try to prevent and address any unlawful discrimination or other unfair treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, against Stakeholders that may preclude them from participating fully in the Choir's activities.

## 3. Legal Requirements

The Choir is required by law not to unlawfully discriminate against stakeholders and recognises its legal obligations under, and will abide by the requirements of, the Equality Act 2010, as it applies to the Choir.

## 4. Discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation

Fareham Philharmonic Choir recognises the following as being unacceptable:

*Unlawful discrimination:* that can take the following forms:

*Direct Discrimination:* treating someone less favourably than you would treat others because of a Protected Characteristic.

*Indirect Discrimination:* applying a provision, criterion or practice which, on the face of it, applies equally to all but which, in practice can disadvantage individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic. Such requirements or conditions are lawful only if they can be objectively justified.

*Harassment:* The Choir is committed to ensuring that its stakeholders are able to conduct their activities free from harassment.

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*Bullying:* The Choir finds unacceptable the misuse of power or position to criticise persistently or to humiliate or undermine an individual's confidence.

*Victimisation:* subjecting someone to a detriment because he or she has, in good faith, taken action under the Equality Act 2010 (or equivalent legislation) by bringing proceedings.

The Choir regards discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, as described above, as unacceptable. All complaints will be taken seriously and appropriate measures may be brought against any stakeholder who unlawfully discriminates against, harasses, bullies or victimises any other person.

### **5. Barriers to participation in the Choir's activities**

The barriers to involvement in the Fareham Philharmonic Choir are identified as follows:

*Financial Status:* Individuals who, because of their economic circumstances, may be unable to take part in Choir activities and events.

*Disability:* Individuals who, because of a physical, sensory or cognitive impairment, may be unable to take part in Choir activities and events.

*Religious:* Individuals who, because of their religious or cultural beliefs and traditions, may be unable to take part in Choir activities and events.

*Age:* Individuals who, because of their age, may be unable to take part in Choir activities and events.

*Gender:* Individuals who, because of their gender, may be unable to take part in Choir activities and events.

At present Fareham Philharmonic Choir mitigates against these barriers in the following ways:

*Financial:* All fees and payments are set at a level that is considered to be the minimum possible, given the need to ensure the long-term financial stability of the Choir. However, the Choir may choose to waive fees where financial need is able to be demonstrated.

*Disability:* The Choir will make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled stakeholders to participate as fully as possible in Choir activities whilst taking into consideration health and safety requirements and the specific physical demands of the performance of large scale and long duration choral works. We will endeavour to ensure that our activities take place in venues that are accessible.

*Religious:* The Choir will be mindful of religious and cultural beliefs and traditions and will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments in response to specific requests whilst taking into consideration health and safety requirements.

*Age:* Whilst the Choir will be mindful of the health and safety of all stakeholders, it will endeavour to include people of all ages in its activities, noting that this Choir is founded for adult voices.

*Gender:* The Choir welcomes involvement of all individuals regardless of gender and sexual orientation.

### **6. Recruitment and employment**

The activities of Fareham Philharmonic Choir are managed by its Committee. It employs one part-time conductor and one part-time accompanist and, at concert time, may contract additional musicians to perform with the choir.

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As an employer, Fareham Philharmonic Choir will adhere to the principles of this policy in respect of vacancy advertising and recruitment.

### **7. Responsibility, implementation and communication**

The following responsibilities will apply:

The Committee is responsible for ensuring that this Diversity and Equality Policy is implemented, followed, and reviewed when appropriate.

At its first publication, all choir members will be asked to read the Policy and will be given the opportunity to seek clarification.

The Chair of the Committee has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this Policy and will ensure that equality is included as an agenda item at Committee meetings when appropriate.

All Stakeholders have the responsibility to respect, follow and promote the spirit and intentions of this Policy.

Implementation of the Policy will involve the following actions:

Periodic review of the Choir's employment practices to ensure continuing compliance with relevant legislation.

All information publicising employment opportunities will contain a statement similar to the following: *Fareham Philharmonic Choir is committed to providing equal opportunities for all. For further information please consult the Diversity and Equality Policy on [www.FarehamPhilharmonic.org.uk](http://www.FarehamPhilharmonic.org.uk).*

This Policy will be communicated in the following ways:

The Policy will be included in any information distributed to anyone employed by the Choir. This Policy is for guidance only and will not form part of any contract of employment.

A copy of this Policy will be publicly available on the Choir's website and copies in other formats from the Choir's Choir Secretary. All members will be made aware of the Policy when they join.

Each time this Policy is reviewed, Choir stakeholders will be consulted. Following consultation, a notice of the changes being made will be publicly available and a direct communication will be sent to all those who contributed to the consultation process (subject to Data Protection provisions).

### **8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This Policy will remain in force until it is amended, replaced or withdrawn. The Policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Selected members of the Choir Committee will be responsible for dealing with any case of discrimination brought against a stakeholder.

The Choir Chair will be responsible for selecting the committee members deciding on the case.

The co-operation of all stakeholders is essential for the effective implementation of this Policy.

### **9. Complaints Procedure**

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Any stakeholders who believe they have suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of this Policy may raise the matter through the "Procedure for making complaints" set out below.

Appropriate action will be taken against any Choir stakeholder who is judged to have violated this Policy.

An individual raising such a matter will not be penalised for doing so unless it is untrue and not made in good faith.

The final point of appeal relating to this Policy is the Committee.

### **10. Confidentiality**

Fareham Philharmonic Choir will respect the confidentiality of stakeholders and will only disclose information with consent.

### **11. Procedure for making comment**

Fareham Philharmonic Choir welcomes views and ideas that will assist in improving its operation. These may be provided by email or in writing to the Choir Secretary.

### **12. Procedure for making complaints**

Should any stakeholder believe they have suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of this policy, he /she should put his/her case, in writing, to the Chair of the Choir together with supporting evidence. Receipt of this complaint will be acknowledged within 1 week.

The Chair will inform the person against whom the complaint has been made of the details and will request a response in writing within 2 weeks of receipt of the request, where possible.

A letter will be forwarded to the complainant within 1 week of receipt of this response.

The complainant will receive a resolution within a month of the receipt of the complaint.

### **13. Voice Assessments and the Diversity and Equality policy**

#### **Intent**

It is the intent of the Choir fully to apply this Policy to voice assessments.

The Voice Assessment panel comprises the Musical Director and The Assistant Musical Director. The decisions made by the panel are final and not subject to review on musical grounds.

#### **Procedures for complaints**

If a choir member believes that in making the voice assessment the panel contravened this Policy then the member is able to make a complaint under the "Complaints Procedure" above.