

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy</b>
<b>Effective Date</b>	1 April 2017
<b>Date Last Reviewed</b>	June 2024
<b>Authorised by</b>	Trustees by e-mail
<b>Scheduled Review Date</b>	June 2026
<b>Supersedes</b>	All previous Policies and/or Statements

## 1. Introduction

Harrogate Choral Society 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

Harrogate Choral Society is also committed to promoting equality of opportunity regardless of class and socio-economic background.

This policy applies to everyone connected to Harrogate Choral Society. 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

## 2. Aims

Harrogate Choral Society 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.

### **3. Responsibilities**

- The Chair is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (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.

### **4. General practice**

Harrogate Choral Society 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.

Harrogate Choral Society 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) Harrogate Choral Society

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.

Harrogate Choral Society'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.

### **5. Inclusion and respect**

- Harrogate Choral Society 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 Harrogate Choral Society 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 Harrogate Choral Society.

Harrogate Choral Society 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.

## **6. Removing barriers**

Harrogate Choral Society 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.

## **7. Dealing with Complaints**

- If any member, volunteer, staff or supporter feels they have been discriminated against or harassed they should raise it with the Chair. 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 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.
- If a complaint is found against Harrogate Choral Society, the committee must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.
- If a complaint is found against Harrogate Choral Society 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 against Harrogate Choral Society is not upheld, the committee 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

## **8. Employment practices – general**

- Harrogate Choral Society aims to promote equality and inclusivity as an employer and shall ensure that no volunteer, employee, person engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelance), or job/volunteer applicant receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the characteristics set out in the aims of this policy
- Harrogate Choral Society selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Harrogate Choral Society regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff or volunteers in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

## **9. 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), Harrogate Choral Society complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
- Harrogate Choral Society 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.

## **10. 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 certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Harrogate Choral Society can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Harrogate Choral Society 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).

- Harrogate Choral Society 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.

**11. Outcome of check and selection process**

- Harrogate Choral Society undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Harrogate Choral Society undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- In an interview or separate discussion Harrogate Choral Society 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.

**12. Responsibilities**

Harrogate Choral Society ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process are:

- aware of the Harrogate Choral Society 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 Harrogate Choral Society committee

**13. Policy Review**

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the board of trustees/management committee unless there is any significant change in legislation which triggers review before then.

**Change Control History**

Date of Change	Summary of Revisions Made
March 2018	No changes required
March 2019	Considerable re-write to encompass all diversity issues
March 2020	No changes needed

June 2021	No changes needed
May 2022	No changes made
Nov 2022	Policy significantly revised to align fully with Making Music Equal Opportunities policy guidance. This includes policy on employment practices and DBS checking. This includes freelancers. Some changes aligned to changing roles and responsibilities within HCS Management Committee.
June 2024	Significant changes to align with Making Music Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and planning guidance