

Chetham's School of Music
Report of the Independent Safeguarding Commission
for the School Year 2021-22

Introduction

An Independent Safeguarding Commission was established by the Feoffees and what was then the School Committee (now the Governing Body) of Chetham's School of Music in June 2013. The Commission's full Terms of Reference are available for inspection on the School's web-site. These require the Commission to prepare a report to the Feoffees and Governing Body at least once during each academic year. The Commission's current policy is to prepare a report towards the end of each such year, incorporating a summary of its meetings during that year, and to make the report available on the School's website. This is the ninth such report.

Composition

The Commission's members are appointed by the Feoffees and by the Governing Body. Each member serves for three years, subject to possible reappointment.

During the academic year 2021-22, the Commission comprised five members, namely:

Lindsey Kushner KC who has been a member of the Commission since May 2017, and Chair since the meeting held on 26 September 2019. Lindsey Kushner is a retired Circuit Judge who, as a practising barrister and Queen's Counsel, and then as a judge, specialised in cases involving the care, welfare and protection of children;

Ms Marie Corran who has been a member of the Commission since April 2021 and is currently Learning and Assurance Lead with Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (MSP). From 2011-2019, she was Assistant Director of Children's Services Merseyside and Cheshire Locality for Barnardos. Prior to that, she was Head of Strategy Engagement and Commissioning with Stockport Council (2004-2011);

Mr Mike Devlin who has been a member of the Commission since June 2020 and has over thirty-five years' experience as a solicitor specialising in the law relating to children. He is also Chair of the Safeguarding Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Salford, a position which he has held since 2005;

Ms Roz Hamilton CBE, who has been a member of the Commission since its inaugural meeting in August 2013. She gained very considerable experience of child safety issues during her long career with the Probation Service, ultimately serving as Probation Deputy Director Courts in Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service from April 2019, retiring from that role in December 2021; and

Mr Paul Lee who has been a member of the Commission since December 2013 and is Chairman of the Feoffees of the Hospital and Library in Manchester, founded by Humphrey Chetham. For approximately forty years, until his retirement in 2013, he was a partner and ultimately Senior Partner in the law firm of Addleshaw Goddard. From 2014 to 2015, he served as the High Sheriff of Greater Manchester.

During the academic year 2021-22, the Commission met twice: the meeting on 11 October 2021 was held by Zoom in light of the Covid 19 restrictions in place at that time, and the meeting held on 25 April 2022 was a hybrid meeting with some members attending in person and others attending by Zoom. Lindsey Kushner KC, Ms Corran and Ms Hamilton attended both meetings but Mr Lee and Mr Devlin were unable to attend either meeting.

To ensure the independence of the Commission, its Terms of Reference provide that no member of the Governing Body may be a member of the Commission. However, it is obviously important that the Commission should maintain channels of communication with the School,

to which end, the Terms of Reference also provide that the Commission may invite any non-member to attend its meetings. Joint Principals, Ms Nicola Smith and Mr Tom Redmond, attended both meetings, as did Karen Sinclair (secretary to the Commission). Mr Nigel Shepherd (Chair of the Safeguarding Committee) attended one meeting.

As in previous years, Mrs Barbara Owen, the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), accepted a standing invitation to attend the meetings of the Commission to respond to questions from members of the Commission. Mrs Owen attended both of the Commission's meetings referred to above.

The Commission regards itself as fortunate to be able to draw on the combined wealth of experience of safeguarding matters at the School which Mr Redmond, Miss Smith, Mr Shepherd and Mrs Owen are able to offer. However, the Commission reserves the right to ask any other member of staff to attend any of its future meetings to answer any questions that may arise about safeguarding issues within that member of staff's particular area of responsibility.

Aims and Objectives

The Commission's Terms of Reference provide that the Commission must meet at least twice during each academic year.

The Commission's central aims are to advise, scrutinise, question, monitor, challenge, oversee and provide quality assurance to the School in matters relating to child protection and the safeguarding of children in its care. It should be noted, however, that the Commission is not a decision-making body and takes no part in the management and running of the School. In this regard it differs from, for example, the Governing Body and the Safeguarding Committee of the School.

The Commission is well aware of the need for the School to maintain the highest standards of safeguarding for its students, not least because many of the students are boarders and/or receive individual tuition. The Commission is also well aware of the parental and public concern that would arise in the event of any shortcomings in this regard. It therefore aims to ensure that the School has in place, and properly implements, appropriate and effective policies for the care of its students.

Actions of the Commission

The steps taken by the Commission to achieve its aims and objectives prior to its meeting on 11 October 2021 are set out in detail in the Commission's first eight reports, and it is not proposed to repeat them here. Since then, the following further steps have been taken.

1. The Commission has been provided with substantial documentation bearing on safeguarding matters in general and at the School in particular. The Commission's first eight reports referred to the documentation with which it had been provided prior to 11 October 2021. Since then, the Commission has received and considered further such documentation, including the following:
 - final report and recommendations from the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published on 1 March 2022, together with notes and slides from the Extraordinary Meeting of the Feoffees Governors and Leadership Team held on 10 March 2022;
 - updated versions of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, as reviewed and approved by the Governing Body on 28 September 2021 and updated on 18 October 2021;

- new, updated or draft policies in progress as reviewed by the Safeguarding Committee during 2021-22 including:
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
 - Peer On Peer Abuse
 - Student Acceptable Use (AUP) Policy
 - e-Safety Policy (incorporating Staff and Student Acceptable use Policies)
 - e-Safety Policy: Student Version
 - Privacy Policy – Students & Parents
 - Privacy Policy – Staff
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Educational Recommendations Policy
 - Guardianship Policy
 - Policy for the Care and Supervision of Choristers
 - RHSE Policy
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
 - Off-Site Music Tuition Policy
- revised regulatory requirements, including:
 - check-lists, updates and forms of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI);
 - updates to Statutory Guidance for Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2021 and draft for consultation 2022;
- the minutes of the meetings of the School's Safeguarding Committee held by Zoom on 21 June 2021 and 30 November 2021, and of the hybrid meeting held on 17 March 2022 together with a selection of the papers considered at those meetings, including:
 - regular update report outlining Recent Reviews and Good Practice;
 - arrangements for Chetham's International Piano Summer School (CIPSS) 2021;
 - DSL's reports to the Safeguarding Committee, June 2021, November 2021 and March 2022 containing minutes of meetings of the e-Safety Committee, minutes of the joint meetings of the safeguarding links from the School and Manchester Cathedral, and the Policy for the Care and Supervision of Choristers, October 2021;

- regular status updates concerning staff safeguarding update training across the School during academic year 2021-22;
 - Bursar's Reports, June 2021, November 2021 and March 2022, including governance matters, recruitment, DBS checks, Central Register of Appointments, supervision of visitors;
 - Topics for focused discussion at Safeguarding Committee meetings during 2021-22, which included:
 - Guardianship and related matters, including a draft policy concerning Guardianship;
 - vicarious liability and related matters, covering the treatment inactive staff and various drafts of a policy concerning Educational Recommendations;
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing at Chetham's covering:
 - RHSE Policy;
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy;
 - Student Mental Health Support at Chetham's;
 - reports generated through the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS), including behaviour statistics, incident reports and neutral notifications to June 2021, November 2021 and March 2022;
 - Off-Site, One-to-One and Home Tuition Reports March 2021 – June 2021, June 2021 – November 2021 (including Off-Site Music Tuition Policy) and November 2021 – March 2022;
 - NMS Health Checks and Inspection Preparation reports November 2021 and March 2022 including Boarding Self-Evaluation Tool Kits and Boarding House Compliance Checklists;
 - Updates concerning Student Mental Health and Wellbeing June 2021, November 2021 and February 2022;
 - Student Forum Minutes, 2 March 2021, 29 April 2021 and 1 February 2022.
2. Having studied these minutes and documents, the members of the Commission have had the opportunity of questioning Mr Shepherd, Mr Redmond, Miss Smith and Mrs Owen about them, and about a variety of other safeguarding issues. The matters covered have included:
- the publication in March 2022 of the Final Report and Recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and any actions arising from that;
 - the School's partnership with the National Association of People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC);
 - the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, signed off by the Governing Body on 28 September 2021 and updated on 18 October 2021;
 - Guardianship and related matters;

- progress in relation to the refurbishment of boarding facilities (Millgate Building);
- progress in relation to the reinstatement of the Whiteley Hall following the very substantial fire and water damage sustained in June 2021;
- safeguarding arrangements for public concerts, as demonstrated during Commission Members' tour of the School in advance of their meeting on 25 April 2022;
- oral updates in relation to Covid-19 following relaxation of regulations;
- ensuring accurate information is made available in relation to new joiners;
- reporting generated by the Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS);
- communication within in the School around the policy concerning Peer on Peer Abuse;
- ongoing and evolving discussions around vicarious liability and related matters, including progress in relation to the treatment of inactive staff and a draft policy concerning Educational Recommendations;
- Mental Health provision within the School;
- Off-Site Music Tuition;
- the School's continuing rigorous efforts in relation to:
 - the provision to all members of staff, visiting tutors, Governors and Feoffees of induction and refresher training concerning matters relating to student safeguarding, including reports on the status of staff Safeguarding Update Training across the School during the academic year 2021-22;
 - the safeguarding of its choristers through close cooperation and regular meetings with safeguarding leads at Manchester Cathedral;
 - through ongoing discussions with Manchester City Council and Greater Manchester Police, the protection of its students from, amongst other things, anti-social behaviour in close proximity to the School;
 - the challenging of plans for the siting of a vending kiosk close to Chetham's site;
 - ensuring student mental health and wellbeing.

Detailed accounts of the Commission's proceedings in relation to these matters and generally can be found in the minutes of its meetings.

The Commission regards the answers it has received to its extensive enquiries as being of a consistently high and reassuring standard.

Conclusion

The Commission appreciates the need to remain strictly independent and vigilant, and to avoid complacency. That said, it is right to add that the Commission has continued to be highly impressed by the School's attitude and approach to student safeguarding matters. The number and nature of the School's safeguarding policies and the manner in which they are implemented indicate clearly how importantly the School regards the safeguarding of its students. As last year, the Commission's enquiries and observations have detected a thoughtful, thorough and caring approach on the School's part. There is every reason to expect that the current very high standards will be maintained.

Lindsey Kushner KC

Marie Corran

Mike Devlin

Roz Hamilton CBE

Paul Lee OBE

23 November 2022