

**Chetham's School of Music**  
**Report of the Independent Safeguarding Commission**  
**for the School Year 2022-23**

**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 tenth 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 2022-23, 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 MSP Project Manager Grade 3, Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (MSP). Before that, she was Learning and Assurance Lead with Manchester Safeguarding Partnership and, from 2011-2019, she was Assistant Director of Children's Services Merseyside and Cheshire Locality for Barnardo's. 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 2022-23, the Commission met twice. The first of those meetings, held on 23 November 2022, was a hybrid meeting with some members attending in person and others attending by Zoom. The second meeting, held on 26 April 2023, was held in person at Chetham's School of Music. Lindsey Kushner KC and Ms Hamilton attended both meetings while Ms Corran, Mr Devlin and Mr Lee each attended one 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. Mr Nigel Shepherd (Chair of the Safeguarding Committee) attended both meetings, as did Miss Nicola Smith and Mr Tom Redmond (Joint Principals). Ms Karen Sinclair (secretary to the Commission) 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 Shepherd, Miss Smith, Mr Redmond 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 23 November 2022 are set out in detail in the Commission's first nine 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 nine reports referred to the documentation with which it had been provided prior to 23 November 2022. Since then, the Commission has received and considered further such documentation, including the following:
  - updated versions of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, as reviewed and approved by the Governing Body on 26 September 2022 and subsequent updates;

- new, updated or draft policies in progress as reviewed by the Safeguarding Committee during 2022-23 including:
  - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures (and updates since Governor approval on 26 September 2022)
  - Safer Recruitment Policy
  - Child on Child Abuse Policy
  - Off-site Music Tuition Policy
  - Good Behaviour Manual
  - School Visitor Policy
  - Accessibility Plan 2022-25
  - A-Z of Chetham's (including Student Complaints Procedure and contact details for external pastoral support such as Childline and the Children's Commission)
  - Educational Visits Policy
  - First Aid Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Nudes and Semi-nudes Policy
  - Educational Recommendations Policy
  - MDS Schools Safeguarding Agreement
  
- revised regulatory requirements, including:
  - ISI Proposed framework for the inspection of association independent schools, including residential (boarding) schools and registered early years settings;
  - National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools from 5 September 2022;
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2022
  
- the minutes of the meetings of the School's Safeguarding Committee held by Zoom on 20 June 2022 and the hybrid meetings held on 30 November 2022 and 16 March 2023 together with a selection of the papers considered at those meetings, including:
  - update reports detailing Recent Safeguarding Reviews and Good Practice June 2022, November 2022 and March 2023 ;

- DSL's reports to the Safeguarding Committee June 2022, November 2022 and March 2023 containing minutes of meetings of the e-Safety Committee, minutes of the joint meetings of the safeguarding links from the School and Manchester Cathedral;
  - regular status updates concerning staff safeguarding update training across the School during academic year 2022-23;
  - Bursar's Reports June 2022 and November 2022, and the Finance Director's Report March 2023, including governance matters, recruitment, DBS checks, Central Register of Appointments, supervision of visitors;
  - Topics for focused discussion at Safeguarding Committee meetings during 2022-23, which included:
    - the School's actions arising from publication of the final report and recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), including a review of all policies and procedures and the formulation, in conjunction with other Music and Dance Scheme (MDS) schools, of a safeguarding agreement in November 2022;
    - Governor specific safeguarding training;
    - inspection preparedness;
    - reports generated through the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS), including behaviour statistics, incident reports, neutral notifications and low level concerns to June 2022, November 2022 and March 2023;
    - Off-Site, One-to-One and Home Tuition Reports March 2022 – June 2022 and June 2022 – November 2022. The period November 2022 – March 2023 was covered in an oral report;
    - NMS Health Checks and Inspection Preparation reports November 2022 and March 2023;
    - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) reports June 2022 and November 2022, with an oral update provided to the Safeguarding Committee for the period to March 2023;
    - Updates concerning Student Mental Health and Wellbeing June 2022, November 2022 and March 2023;
    - Student Forum Minutes, 15 March 2022, 17 May 2022, 15 November 2022 and 24 January 2023.
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 School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
  - the School's Safer Recruitment Policy;

- progress in relation to the formulation of a Safeguarding Agreement between Manchester Cathedral and Chetham’s School of Music;
- progress on the continuing refurbishment of boarding facilities in the Millgate Building;
- progress on the reinstatement of the Whiteley Hall following significant fire and water damage in June 2021;
- the School’s response to the final recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), including the cross-referencing those actions with recommendations arising from IICSA;
- the School’s Educational Recommendations policy;
- the School’s approach to inactive staff;
- oral updates as the Covid emergency receded and the School returned to normal;
- ensuring accurate information is made available in relation to new joiners;
- the potential effects on Chetham’s parents of the cost of living crisis;
- 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 bespoke training for Governors and reports on the status of staff Safeguarding Update Training across the School during the academic year 2022-23;
  - the safeguarding of its choristers through close cooperation and regular meetings with safeguarding leads at Manchester Cathedral and work towards the establishment of a formal safeguarding agreement between Manchester Cathedral and Chetham’s School of Music;
  - through ongoing discussions with Manchester City Council and Greater Manchester Police, the protection of Chetham’s students from, amongst other things, anti-social behaviour in close proximity to the School;
  - progress on challenging plans for the siting of a vending kiosk close to Chetham’s site;
  - hindrance in access to the School’s site arising from Local Authority landscaping, Christmas Markets and other festivals / events in Cathedral Gardens, and the commissioning of an independent assessment of emergency vehicle access.

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 in previous years, 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.

As noted at the start of this report, the 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.

As the tenth anniversary of the Commission's inaugural meeting approached, it was agreed that it would be an appropriate time to review the Commission's role and operation with a view to ensuring that the key objective of providing effective oversight of safeguarding at Chetham's School of Music continues to be met.

The review will take the form of an evaluation of the Commission's purpose and mission, and how its work is structured in order to ensure delivery. The outcome of that evaluation will be reported in the Commission's Annual Report 2023/24.

**Lindsey Kushner KC**

**Marie Corran**

**Mike Devlin**

**Roz Hamilton CBE**

**Paul Lee OBE**

**27 November 2023**