

Shoreham Oratorio Choir Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Aims

Shoreham Oratorio is a music group open to all. We aim to treat our members, volunteers, staff and supporters 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.

The Chair of the committee is responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and to ensure the Equality and Diversity Policy is kept up to date.

2. Equality of opportunity - Shoreham Oratorio Choir aims to:

- promote equality for its members and potential members in access to membership and musical activities and opportunities.
- ensure no member or potential member will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction.
- ensure no individual wishing to volunteer or work for (including on a freelance basis) Shoreham Oratorio Choir will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the aims.

3. Inclusion and respect;

- Shoreham Oratorio Choir values its members, staff, volunteers and supporters and will do all it can to:
 - treat them 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.
- Accordingly all members, staff volunteers, supporters and those representing Shoreham Oratorio Choir 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 Shoreham Oratorio Choir.
- Shoreham Oratorio Choir will support our members, volunteers, staff and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, colleagues, other organisations or customers.

4. Accessibility

Shoreham Oratorio Choir aims to use venues that are accessible to all for rehearsals, concerts and any other activities or events it undertakes.

4. Dealing with Complaints

- If any member, volunteer, staff or supporter feels they have been discriminated against or harassed they should raise it with the committee.
- 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 Shoreham Oratorio Choir, 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.

5. Employment practices – general

- Shoreham Oratorio Choir 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
- Shoreham Oratorio Choir 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.
- Shoreham Oratorio Choir 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.

6. 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), Shoreham Oratorio Choir complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

- Shoreham Oratorio Choir actively 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.

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.
- Shoreham Oratorio Choir can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Shoreham Oratorio Choir 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).
- Shoreham Oratorio Choir 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.

Outcome of check and selection process

- Shoreham Oratorio Choir undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Shoreham Oratorio Choir 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 Shoreham Oratorio Choir 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.

Responsibilities

Shoreham Oratorio Choir ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process are:

- aware of the Shoreham Oratorio Choir's Equal Opportunities 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 Shoreham Oratorio Choir committee.

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the committee. Members of Shoreham Oratorio Choir will be informed of any changes to the policy and be invited to comment.