

Chetham's School of Music

Report of the Independent Safeguarding Commission for the School Year 2014 - 2015

An Independent Safeguarding Commission was established by the Feoffees and School Committee of Chetham's School of Music in June, 2013. Its 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 Committee of the School 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 web-site. This is the second such report. The first was dated 7th July, 2014.

The Commission's central tasks 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 the School's 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 School Committee and the Safeguarding Sub-Committee.

The Commission's members are appointed by the School's Feoffees and Committee. Each member serves for three years, subject to possible re-appointment. There are presently five members of the Commission.

Ms. Roz Hamilton was until recently the Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Manchester Probation Trust, gaining considerable experience of child safety issues during her career with the Probation Service. On 1st April, 2014 she was appointed as a Deputy Director of the National Probation Service, responsible for the North West division.

Ms. Gillian Irving is a Queen's Counsel, practising mainly in the North West. She specialises in family law and child protection cases.

Mr. John Kelly served in the Greater Manchester Police for over thirty years, retiring in 2013 with the rank of Detective Chief Superintendent. His work included the investigation and prevention of major crime, including homicide and kidnap, and he worked extensively in safeguarding and dealing with suspected child abuse.

Mr. Paul Lee is Chairman of the Feoffees of the Hospital and Library in Manchester, founded by Humphrey Chetham. Until his retirement in 2013 he was a partner in the Solicitors' firm of Addleshaw Goddard. From 2014 to 2015 he was the High Sheriff of Greater Manchester,

Sir David Maddison is the Chair of the Commission. He was the Recorder of Manchester from 2003 to 2008, and a High Court Judge from 2008 until his retirement in 2013. As a barrister and then as a judge he was concerned in many cases involving the abuse of children, both familial and institutional.

The Commission's Terms of Reference provide that the Commission must meet at least twice during each academic year. During the current year the Commission has met on 22nd September, 2014 and 28th April, 2015.

To ensure the independence of the Commission, its Terms of Reference provide that no member of the School Committee 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. Dame Sandra Burslem DBE DL, the Chair of the School Committee, Mrs Claire Moreland DL MA, the Head of School and Mrs Karen Sinclair, the Commission's Secretary, have received standing invitations to attend the Commission's meetings. Dame Sandra and Mrs. Sinclair have attended both of the Commission's meetings referred to above. Mrs. Moreland, though unable to attend the first meeting, attended the second. In addition, Mr. Jonathan Runswick-Cole, the Head of Boys' House, attended the first meeting; and Mr. Ian Mayer, the Deputy Child Protection Officer for the Music Department, attended the second.

The Commission is well aware of the need for the School to maintain the highest standards of safeguarding for its students, not least given that 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. The steps taken by the Commission in that regard prior to 7th July, 2014 are set out in detail in the Commission's first report, and it is not proposed to repeat them here. Since that date, 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 report dated 7th July, 2014 listed the documentation with which it had been provided up to that date. Since then, the Commission has received and considered further such documentation, including the following:
 - Up-dated versions of the School's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and Procedures; Eating Disorders Policy; School Visitor Policy; and Quality Assurance Framework in relation to safeguarding issues.
 - The School's Educational Visits Policy; Policy for Mental Wellbeing; and Off-Site Music Tuition Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
 - The Boarding Schools Association's Self-Assessment Tool-kit.
 - The report of the Independent Schools Inspectorate ('ISI') following its inspection of the School from 19th to 22nd May, 2014. This was a highly favourable report. The quality of academic and other achievements, the quality of the pupils' personal development, and the effectiveness of governance, leadership and management were repeatedly described as 'excellent'. The report made three recommendations for further improvement, which were comparatively modest in scope. The Commission has satisfied itself that these have been properly addressed.

- A letter dated 29th October 2014 confirming acceptance by the ISI of the School's actions to comply with the three recommendations referred to above.
 - The agendas and minutes of the meetings of the School's Safeguarding Sub-Committee since 7th July, 2014.
2. Having studied these documents, the members of the Commission have had the opportunity of questioning Dame Sandra, Mrs Moreland, Mr. Runswick-Cole and Mr. Mayer about them and about a variety of other safeguarding issues. The matters investigated have included the steps taken by the School in response to the three recommendations for further improvement made in the ISI report referred to above; the contents, purposes and practical use of the BSA's Self-Assessment Tool-kit; the nature and frequency of inspections by external bodies of different parts of the School; safeguarding arrangements in relation to boarders staying out of the School overnight, for example when attending conferences or visiting a friend; safeguarding arrangements for off-site tuition, tuition during holiday periods, one-to-one tuition and school trips; and the methods by which those responsible for safeguarding keep up to date with changes in regulatory requirements and best practice. The Commission regards the answers it has received to these extensive enquiries as being of a consistently high and re-assuring standard.
 3. David Maddison, the Chair of the Commission, attended a one-day seminar on 21st November organised by and held at the School, entitled 'Safeguarding Music Education'. The seminar was extremely successful in its aims of encouraging debate and sharing best practice in relation to safe guarding issues, including the use of touch for the purposes of education and communication. The speakers were lively and informative, and the contributions from those attending were thoughtful and valuable. It was pleasing to see the School taking the lead in this area. The Commission has congratulated the School, and Mrs. Moreland in particular, on having taken this initiative.

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. The School is to be warmly congratulated on the ISI report referred to above. It is to be hoped, and there is good reason to expect, that the current very high standards will be maintained.

Roz Hamilton. Gillian Irving. John Kelly. Paul Lee. David Maddison.

6th July, 2015.

