

## **Chetham's School of Music**

### **Report of the Independent Safeguarding Commission for the School Year 2016 - 2017**

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 website. 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 fourth such report.

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 Governing Body and the Safeguarding Committee of the School.

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

Ms Roz Hamilton was formerly the Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Manchester Probation Trust, gaining considerable experience of child safety issues during her career with the Probation Service. She is now the Probation Divisional Director of the National Probation Service for the North West.

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 kidnapping, and he worked extensively in safeguarding and dealing with suspected child abuse.

Her Honour Lindsey Kushner QC is a recently retired Circuit Judge. As a practising Barrister and Queen's Counsel, and then as a judge, she specialised in cases involving the care, welfare and protection of children, and thus brings to the Commission a wealth of relevant experience. She

replaces Ms Gillian Irving QC who stepped down from the Commission in May 2017, and for whose contributions to its work the Commission would like to express its gratitude and appreciation.

Mr Paul Lee is Chairman of the Feoffees of the Hospital and Library in Manchester, founded by Humphrey Chetham. For about forty years until his retirement in 2013 he was a partner and senior 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 29 September 2016 and 2 May 2017. Sir David Maddison and Ms Hamilton attended both meetings; Ms Irving QC, Her Honour Lindsey Kushner QC and Mr Kelly each attended one; and Mr Lee was unable to attend either.

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. Dame Sandra Burslem DBE DL, the Chair of the Governing Body, Mr Alun Jones LTCL LWCMD, the Head of School and Ms Karen Sinclair, the Commission's Secretary, have received and accepted standing invitations to attend the Commission's meetings, and all attended each of the meetings referred to above. In addition, Mrs Pauline Newman, the Chair of the School's Safeguarding Committee, attended the second meeting.

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 8 July 2016 are set out in detail in the Commission's first three reports, 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 three reports referred to the documentation with which it had been provided up to 8 July 2016. Since then, the Commission has received and considered further such documentation, including the following:
  - Updated versions of the School's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and Procedures; Guidelines for the Accommodation of Chetham's Students with Host Families; the Home Stay Policy; NMS Health-checks; Off-Site, One-to-One and Home Tuition Reports; the Quality Assurance Framework; the Safer Recruitment Policy; and the School Visitor Policy.
  - The Manchester Schools Safeguarding Audit Tool.
  - Revised regulatory requirements, checklists and forms of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), and the revised ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools.
  - The agendas and minutes of the meetings of the School's Safeguarding Sub-Committee since 9 July 2016, and a selection of the papers considered at those meetings.
2. Having studied these documents, the members of the Commission have had the opportunity of questioning Dame Sandra, Mr Jones and Mrs Newman about them and about a variety of other safeguarding issues. The matters investigated have included the extent to which students at the School might be affected by high parental expectations; the School's approach in the event of any student's self-harming; the School's response to the practice of 'sexting' and other unacceptable uses of IT; the possible appointment of a Regulatory Compliance Officer; the means by which parents and guardians could best be informed about the safeguarding policies and procedures in place at the School; the provision to members of staff, visiting tutors, governors and feoffees of refresher training in relation to student safeguarding matters; and the entirely favourable outcomes of the unannounced ISI inspection of the School in February 2016 and the ISI

Regulatory Compliance Inspection in March 2017. 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 re-assuring standard.

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.

Roz Hamilton. John Kelly. Lindsey Kushner. Paul Lee. David Maddison.

10 July 2017