

Chetham's School of Music

Report of the Independent Safeguarding Commission for the School Year 2017 - 2018

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 web-site. This is the fifth such report. Its late publication is attributable to the recent indisposition through illness of the Commission's Chair.

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 CBE 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.

Judge Lindsey Kushner Q.C. is a 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.

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 last school year the Commission met on 25th September, 2017 and 30th April, 2018. Sir David Maddison, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Lee attended both meetings. Ms Hamilton and Judge Lindsey Kushner Q.C. each attended one.

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. 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 both attended each of the meetings referred to above.

Dame Sandra Burslem, DBE DL also received and accepted such an invitation upon the setting up of the Commission in 2013, and attended every meeting of the Commission in that capacity between then and the meeting of 2nd May, 2017. She subsequently announced her retirement as Chair of the School's Governing Body with effect from 31st August 2017, and her wish to stand down from her involvement with the Commission. She did, however, attend at the beginning of the Commission's meeting of 25th September to allow the Commission to say farewell and to thank her for the outstanding contributions that she had made to the safeguarding of the School's pupils, not the least of which was her significant role in the establishment of the Commission itself. The Commission would like to repeat these sentiments in this report, and to wish Dame Sandra a happy and fulfilling retirement.

With the approval of the new chair of the Governing Body, Mr. Malcolm Edge, of the Head of the School Mr. Alun Jones and of Dame Sandra herself a standing invitation was then extended to Mrs. Pauline Newman, the Chair of the School's Safeguarding Committee, to attend the meetings of the Commission in Dame Sandra's stead. The Commission was delighted when Mrs. Newman accepted the invitation, and she attended both of the Commission's meetings referred to above.

The Commission has also decided to invite Mrs. Barbara Owen, the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, to attend at the beginning of the Commission's meetings to answer any questions that the members of the Commission may have of her, before then withdrawing for the remainder of the meeting, and Mrs. Owen attended each of the Commission's meetings referred to above in that capacity. 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. Jones, Mrs. Newman 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.

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 10th July, 2017 are set out in detail in the Commission's first four 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 four reports referred to the documentation with which it had been provided up to 10th July 2017. 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; Guidelines for the Accommodation of Chetham's Students with Host Families; NMS Health-checks; Off-Site, One-to-One and Home Tuition Reports and Policies; the Boarding Self-Evaluation Toolkit; the Quality Assurance Framework; the School Visitor Policy; and the Manchester Schools Safeguarding Audit tool.
 - Guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety.
 - Revised regulatory requirements, check-lists and forms of the Independent Schools Inspectorate ('ISI'), and the revised ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools.
 - The report issued in May, 2017 of the ISI Regulatory Compliance Inspection of the School carried out in March, 2017, which found the School to be compliant in all regulatory areas.
 - The agendas and minutes of the meetings of the School's Safeguarding Committee since 23rd June 2017, and a selection of the papers considered at those meetings, including the DSL's Reports to the Committee.
2. Having studied these documents, the members of the Commission have had the opportunity of questioning Mr. Jones, Mrs. Newman and Mrs. Owen about them and about a variety of other safeguarding issues. The matters investigated have included how to protect pupils at the School from anti-social behaviour by certain members of the public in close proximity to the School; the School's response to the practice of 'sexting' and other unacceptable uses of IT; the possible appointment of a Regulatory Compliance Officer, following which the Head of the School decided instead to employ a safeguarding toolkit prepared by the School's Solicitors Veale, Wasbrough, Vizards; the development of a

policy on how to react to any terrorist incident that might occur in close proximity to the School; the provision to members of staff, visiting tutors, Governors and Feoffees of induction and refresher training in relation to student safeguarding matters; the outcome of the ISI Regulatory Compliance Inspection in March, 2017; comments made by Ms Gillian Irving QC before her resignation from the Commission about certain aspects of the School's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and Procedures; and the School's submission to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Detailed accounts of the Commission's proceedings in relation to these matters and generally can be found in the minutes of its meetings.

3. The Commission regards the answers it has received to its extensive enquiries as being of a consistently high and re-assuring standard. For example, the Commission was impressed to learn that the ISI Inspectors who attended the School in March 2017 had said that the School's policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding were the most impeccable they had seen; and that Feoffees and Governors of the School who had not completed their induction or refresher safeguarding training were rigorously pursued and were treated as visitors to the school until they had done so.

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.

27th September, 2018.