

Homechoir Volunteer Policy

This policy sets out the principles for voluntary involvement in Homechoir.

This policy will continue to be kept under annual review to ensure that it remains a live document; appropriate to the needs of Homechoir and its volunteers, and in line with relevant legislation, good practice advice and case law.

Values and Commitment

Homechoir seeks to involve volunteers to:

- Offer opportunities for participation
- Contribute to the delivery of our services
- Increase contact with our community
- Provide new skills and perspective
- Support the aims and values of Homechoir

Homechoir celebrates the contribution and support of its volunteers and aims to provide positive and fulfilling volunteering opportunities that satisfy individuals' motivations and aspirations.

Defining Volunteers and Homechoir's Relationship with them

Homechoir defines volunteers as: individuals who are willing to give their time and service of their own free will for no financial gain.

Homechoir recognises that the volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. Volunteers add value to the work of Homechoir by performing a range of roles, contributing their time, flexibility, experience and skills.

Homechoir values the diversity of volunteers, the experiences they bring and acknowledge that our volunteers contribute towards a diverse and dynamic organisation.

Recruitment and Selection

Homechoir is committed to operating a fair and consistent recruitment process for volunteers.

Prospective volunteers will be provided with a role description. Should their application be successful they may, in appropriate circumstances, be invited for an informal interview to explore their skills, experience and suitability as well as their

motivation for the role and to allow them to meet the team and ask any questions they may have. Amendments may be made to recruitment methods to suit particular access requirements of applicants.

Equal Opportunities

Homechoir recognises the importance of encouraging diversity and achieving equality amongst volunteers as well as employees.

It is Homechoir policy to promote an environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, where everyone will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (“protected characteristics”).

Any volunteer who fails to comply with this Homechoir policy may be asked to stop volunteering for Homechoir.

Homechoir does not specify a volunteer age limit. However we would be irresponsible if we were to permit volunteers to undertake roles that were not age-appropriate, or to continue beyond a point where volunteering was detrimental to their own or to other people’s health and safety.

Safeguarding Policy, Procedures & Code of Conduct

Homechoir believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse or neglect. We take our responsibility for the welfare of children and young people very seriously and we are committed to practice at all times in a way which protects them. The Safeguarding Policy applies to staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone else working on behalf of Homechoir wherever that work is being undertaken.

The volunteer Safeguarding Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of Homechoir for all volunteers who work for or represent the organisation in their contact with children, young people and adults at risk. Failure by any volunteer to comply with this Safeguarding Code of Conduct may result in the volunteer being dealt with according to the relevant procedures.

Volunteers at Homechoir should receive the full Safeguarding Policy, reporting procedures and Code of Conduct as part of their induction and training. Volunteers are required to read and understand the Policy before taking up their role.

Support and Training

When a volunteer joins Homechoir they will be offered an induction which should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Welcome to and aims of Homechoir
- Why volunteers are involved and discussion of their role description • Meet relevant staff and other volunteers
 - Safeguarding Policy and reporting procedures
 - Importance of confidentiality, Privacy Policy and Homechoir Digital Policy
 - Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
 - Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Agreement
 - Any other appropriate policies and their location

Where appropriate Homechoir will offer further training for volunteers. Training will only be offered if it is relevant to the role a volunteer is undertaking.

Problem Solving Procedure

At Homechoir we value and respect our volunteers. To ensure that volunteers are treated fairly and consistently should a problem arise we have put together a problem solving procedure.

This procedure ensures consistency, and demonstrates our commitment to volunteering good practice at Homechoir.

All complaints should be resolved openly, fairly and quickly to:

- protect volunteers
- minimise any disruption to staff, service users and other volunteers • demonstrate that Homechoir respects its volunteers
- protect the reputation of Homechoir

The full problem solving procedure can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Insurance

Homechoir insurance is in place to cover loss or damage to equipment provided by Homechoir for the use of volunteers. Homechoir's Employers Insurance includes the activities of volunteers when acting in their roles at 'face to face' events, and liability towards them. Homechoir does not insure the personal possessions of volunteers against loss or damage.

Appendices

1. Problem Solving Procedure
2. Volunteer Agreement
3. Digital Policy

Appendix 1: Problem Solving Procedure

Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure

At Homechoir we value and respect our volunteers. To ensure that volunteers are treated fairly and consistently should a problem arise we have put together the following guidelines.

If a complaint is made about a volunteer

The first step will be an informal discussion about the complaint or issue between you and your manager. This is an opportunity for you to hear about the complaint or issue and offer your comment. It may also seek to identify some solutions at this informal stage, if required and appropriate.

Depending on the nature of the complaint or the concerns, further objectives may be set or offered or you may be asked to discontinue volunteering.

Exceptions: In some cases volunteers will have their volunteering suspended immediately while the matter is explored. For example, if the volunteer is suspected of gross misconduct in their role, such as, but not limited to: harassment, theft, aggressive, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour towards any persons at Homechoir or its online community, ignoring a request from a supervising staff member or where Homechoir is notified that the volunteer is the subject of a safeguarding investigation.

The decision to ask you to stop volunteering will be confirmed in writing.

We will investigate and take the necessary action to resolve fairly to all parties any complaints about you received by fellow volunteers, members of the public and staff. Depending upon the seriousness of the complaint, our action may include, if the investigation proves that it is warranted, the suspension or termination of your capacity to volunteer at Homechoir.

Appendix 2: Volunteer Agreement

Our Volunteer opportunities are vital to our business operation and we welcome volunteers from a variety of professions and backgrounds with a wide-ranging level of skills. We aim to match your commitment as a volunteer by working towards an environment of mutual respect between all parties, which recognises the invaluable contribution our volunteers make to the work of Homechoir.

In order to do this, we have created an environment where we aim to listen to you, hear your points of view and, where practicable, make changes that will allow us to remain a dynamic organisation for the attraction of volunteers.

This Volunteer Agreement is a description of the arrangement between Homechoir, and you in relation to your voluntary role. The intention of this agreement is to assure you that we appreciate your volunteering with us and to indicate our commitment to do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us a positive and rewarding one.

This agreement is binding in honour only, it is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us. It may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

This agreement sets out what support you can expect from us when you volunteer and what we expect from you as a volunteer. Whilst your time is contributed freely, mutual support and reliability are expected.

As a volunteer, you can expect the following from Homechoir:

- To have a written description of your role detailing expectations, the expected time commitment involved, the skills you need and the training you can expect to support you to carry out your duties.
- Safe working conditions. Homechoir Employers Insurance covers the activities of volunteers when involved in a 'face to face' event and liability towards them.
- An induction and individual training where appropriate.
- To be treated fairly and with respect.
- To be able to ask for a reference during or at the end of your period of volunteering.
- Confidentiality. Your records and references will remain confidential and all records, whether held on paper or electronically are subject to the Data Protection Act 2018.
- You can withdraw from volunteering at any time. We expect you to inform us of your decision to leave.
- Meet and work with staff and other volunteers where possible and appropriate.

As a volunteer we ask that you:

- Perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability.
- Adhere to all reasonable management instructions given in the course of, and whilst undertaking, the volunteering you have chosen.
- Be honest if you may not be suitable to take on certain volunteer roles or duties, this includes making your manager aware of illness, injury or disability so that reasonable adjustments can be considered.
- Behave appropriately and courteously in the course of your role.
- Act as a good ambassador for Homechoir by being positive about and supporting its work.
- Commit to the principles of equality, diversity and anti-racism and demonstrate this in your role.
- Follow and operate within the policies and procedures of Homechoir including our Digital and Safeguarding policies.
- Ask for information or guidance if you are unsure of any aspect of your volunteering role.
- Uphold the agreement.

Appendix 3: Digital Policy

Guidelines for all Volunteers on Twitter and other public social media

We encourage interaction with Homechoir and its followers from our volunteers but as representatives of Homechoir in the wider world, we ask volunteers to be courteous, non-defamatory and to respect confidentiality at all times. These points are expanded upon below.

- **General courtesy:** When referring to Homechoir and events by/connected to Homechoir we expect general courtesy. Diverse opinions are welcomed but posters must refrain from swearing, or using defamatory, negative or salacious language regarding Homechoir, associated peoples or organisations.
- **Connections to Homechoir:** If a personal social media account biography references that a person is a Homechoir volunteer or contracted in any way by Homechoir, it must be made clear that despite a connection to Homechoir, opinions given by the poster are entirely their own and are not endorsed by the Homechoir social media account, or Homechoir itself.
- **Homechoir handle:** When relevant please add **@Homechoir** to your posts so that we can, if relevant interact with you and develop a conversation.
- **Spread of information:** Please bear in mind that the various social media sites have a very large reach. Posts including the handle **@Homechoir** can be seen by those following Homechoir, in addition to the followers of the person tweeting. Information spreads very quickly on social media and it can be difficult to successfully retract information once it has been posted.
- **Confidential information:** Posters must not repeat information they know or believe to be confidential unless express permission has been given.
- **Interpretation:** If you think a post could be misinterpreted, please think about how you could rephrase it so that your meaning is clear. Please also make sure that any information you give out concerning Homechoir is factually correct and your intention is clear.
- **Audience:** Your account (if public) will be visible to everyone including young people, Homechoir choristers and your peers. Please bear in mind the need to be professional and organisationally sensitive with what information you share.
- **Hate speech (including: racism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism, gender discrimination, economic discrimination etc):** It goes without saying that we do not tolerate hate speech and will ask anyone associated with Homechoir found posting such content on their channels to remove it.
- **Other channels:** The same rules apply to all of Homechoir's social media platforms on other channels including Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Contact details

Homechoir volunteer coordinator

Dr Ana-Marie S England

ana@homechoir.org

This policy was last reviewed on

.....27 July 2023.....(date)

Signed.....

Date27 July 2023.....