NMA Safeguarding Policy

Nov 5, 2026 · @Ryan Sargent

1. Policy statement

The Northern Majorette Association (NMA) believes every dancer, from our youngest Novice at age 3 to our adult Seniors, has the right to take part in majorettes safely, happily and free from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at every NMA competition, workshop, presentation and online space.

Who this policy applies to

- NMA committee members, judges, scorers, stewards and volunteers.
- Troupe leaders, coaches and chaperones of every troupe affiliated to the NMA, while at NMA events or acting on NMA business.
- Parents, carers and spectators attending NMA events.
- Anyone working at an NMA event, including photographers, venue staff we brief, and suppliers.

Each affiliated troupe must also have its own safeguarding policy and named safeguarding lead. This policy covers NMA events and activities; a troupe's own policy covers its weekly training.

Our principles

- The welfare of the child is always the first consideration.
- All children and young people have an equal right to protection, whatever their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.
- Some children are more vulnerable, for example very young dancers, disabled dancers, or children with communication needs, and we take extra care.
- We listen to children and take what they say seriously.
- We work with parents, carers, troupes and statutory agencies (children's social care and the police) to protect children.

In this policy, **child** means anyone under 18. **Adult at risk** means an adult over 18 who has care and support needs and cannot protect themselves from harm.

2. Key roles and contacts

The NMA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) leads on all safeguarding matters. A deputy covers when the DSO is unavailable, and one of them is on duty at every NMA event, wearing an identifiable lanyard or badge.

Role	Name	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Officer	[Name]	[Mobile] · northernmajorettes@gmail.com
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	[Name]	[Mobile]
NMA Chair	[Name]	[Mobile]
NSPCC Helpline (adults worried about a child)	–	0808 800 5000 · help@nspcc.org.uk
Childline (for children and young people)	–	0800 1111

The children's social care and LADO to contact are those for the area where the child lives. As NMA competitions take place in Wakefield, the Wakefield numbers above are used for incidents at events if the child's home area is not known.

What the DSO does

- Receives and records all safeguarding concerns and decides on next steps.
- Refers concerns to children's social care, the LADO or the police when needed.
- Checks that NMA officials, judges and volunteers have the right DBS check and safeguarding training.
- Keeps a list of each affiliated troupe's safeguarding lead.
- Reviews this policy every year and after any serious incident.

3. Safe practice at NMA events

Safer recruitment and DBS checks

- Every NMA committee member, judge, scorer and regular volunteer who works with or around children holds an enhanced DBS check, renewed at least every 3 years or kept current through the DBS Update Service.
- Troupe leaders must confirm on their affiliation form that their coaches and chaperones are DBS checked through their troupe.

- New officials provide two references and complete basic safeguarding training (for example, an NSPCC or local authority course) before they start.
- Anyone without a check never has unsupervised access to children.

Supervision

- Each troupe is responsible for its own dancers throughout an event, including breaks.
- Troupes bring enough adult chaperones for the number and age of their dancers. As a guide: 1 adult to every 6 dancers aged 3–7, and 1 adult to every 10 dancers aged 8 and over, with at least 2 adults per troupe.
- No adult should be alone with a child out of sight of others. If it can't be avoided, tell another adult and keep doors open.
- Children under 16 must not leave the venue without their troupe leader or parent knowing.
- The DSO keeps a lost-child procedure at the registration desk. A missing child is reported straight away to the DSO and the venue.

Changing areas and toilets

- Changing areas are for dancers, their troupe chaperones and parents only. They are clearly signed.
- Phones and cameras must not be used in changing areas or toilets, by anyone.
- Male and female changing is kept separate where the venue allows. Adults do not get changed in the same space as children.
- Help with costumes, hair and make-up is given by the dancer's own troupe chaperones or parents, with the child's agreement.

Photography and filming

- Parents and spectators may photograph and film only their own child's troupe, from the audience seating, for personal use.
- Filming or photographing other troupes, or posting images of other people's children online, is not allowed without their troupe's permission.
- The NMA only uses images of dancers on its website or social media with written parental consent, collected by troupe leaders each season. We never publish a child's full name with their picture.
- Any official photographer must be approved by the NMA, wear identification, and follow this policy.

Online and social media

- NMA communication with under-18s goes through their troupe leader or parent, never through private messages.
- The NMA Facebook group is moderated. Comments that are abusive, unkind or identify a child's personal details are removed.
- Adults must not add, follow or privately message dancers under 18 they know only through the NMA.

First aid and medical needs

- A qualified first aider is on duty at every NMA competition.
- Troupes hold their dancers' emergency contacts and medical information (such as inhalers and allergies) and bring them to every event.
- Accidents and injuries are recorded in the event accident book.

4. Recognising abuse and neglect

You don't need to be sure abuse is happening to raise a concern. If something doesn't feel right, tell the DSO. These are the main types of abuse set out in national guidance:

Type	What it means
Physical abuse	Deliberately hurting a child, for example hitting, shaking or burning. In dance, this can include forcing a child to stretch or train beyond safe limits as punishment.
Emotional abuse	Persistent behaviour that harms a child's sense of worth, such as shouting, humiliating, threatening or constantly criticising their body, weight or performance.
Sexual abuse	Involving a child in sexual activity of any kind, in person or online, whether or not the child seems aware of it.
Neglect	Failing to meet a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, warmth, medical care or supervision.
Bullying and child-on-child abuse	Repeated hurtful behaviour between children, including name-calling, exclusion, physical harm and online messages.

Type	What it means
Online abuse	Abuse that happens through phones, social media or messaging, including grooming and sharing images.

Signs that may cause concern

- Unexplained injuries, or explanations that don't fit the injury.
- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn, anxious or aggressive.
- A child seeming afraid of a particular adult, or reluctant to go home or to training.
- An adult giving one child special attention, gifts or secrets, or wanting time alone with them.
- Extreme dieting, weight loss or distress about body image.
- Persistent hunger, poor hygiene or clothing unsuitable for the weather.

These signs don't prove abuse. They are a reason to pass on what you have seen.

5. What to do if you are worried

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999 first, then tell the DSO.

If a child tells you something

- Stay calm and listen. Let them speak in their own words.
- Reassure them they were right to tell you and it is not their fault.
- Don't ask leading questions or press for details. Use open questions such as "Can you tell me more?"
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Explain that you need to tell someone whose job is to help keep them safe.
- Don't confront the person the child has talked about.

Reporting steps

1. **Tell the DSO (or deputy) straight away,** the same day. At an event, go to the registration desk or find the person wearing the safeguarding lanyard.
2. **Write down what you saw or heard** as soon as you can, using the child's own words. Include the date, time, place, who was there, and sign it. Stick to facts, not opinions.

3. **The DSO decides on next steps.** This may mean contacting children's social care, the police or the LADO, and the child's troupe safeguarding lead. The DSO will usually talk to parents or carers, unless doing so could put the child at greater risk.
4. **Keep it confidential.** Only share information with the people who need to know.
5. **If you can't reach the DSO or deputy,** or you are not happy with the response, contact children's social care or the NSPCC Helpline directly. Anyone can make a referral.

Never delay acting on a concern because you are unsure, or because the person involved is a respected coach, volunteer or family friend.

6. Concerns about an adult, whistleblowing and adults at risk

If the concern is about an adult in a position of trust

This includes NMA officials, judges, volunteers, troupe leaders and coaches.

1. Report it to the DSO. If the concern is about the DSO, report it to the NMA Chair.
2. The DSO contacts the LADO within one working day for advice before taking any other action.
3. The NMA may ask the person to step back from NMA events while the concern is looked into. This is a neutral act to protect everyone and is not a judgement.
4. The NMA follows the advice of the LADO and police, and refers to the DBS anyone removed from their role because they harmed, or posed a risk of harm to, a child.

Whistleblowing

Anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith will be supported, even if it turns out to be unfounded. If you feel unable to raise a concern within the NMA, you can contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or children's social care directly.

Adults at risk

Some adult dancers and volunteers may have care and support needs. If you are worried an adult is being abused or neglected, report it to the DSO in the same way. The DSO will refer to Wakefield adult social care where needed, and will usually seek the adult's consent first unless they are in danger.

7. Records, confidentiality and review

Records

- The DSO keeps safeguarding records securely: paper records locked away, digital records password-protected and shared only with those who need them.
- Records are factual, dated and signed, and kept in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Safeguarding information is shared with statutory agencies when it is needed to protect a child. Data protection law does not stop this.

Legislation and guidance this policy follows

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (DBS checks)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003, including the position of trust offence extended to sports and activity coaches in 2022
- Care Act 2014 (adults at risk)
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit guidance

Review

The NMA committee reviews this policy every year before the competition season, or sooner if the law changes or after a serious incident. A copy is given to every affiliated troupe and is available on the NMA website.

Adopted by the NMA committee on	05/11/2026
Signed (Chair)	*D Sargent*
Signed (Designated Safeguarding Officer)	*D Sargent*
Next review due	05/11/2027