



# MORRIS RING SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## S1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing vulnerable people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the Morris Ring.

The Morris Ring, within its activities, will ensure that vulnerable people are kept safe.

The Morris Ring is committed to promoting policies so that everyone involved in morris dancing is aware of their responsibilities to safeguard vulnerable people from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect vulnerable people and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

For the purpose of this document a “vulnerable person” includes any child, young person and any individual who is considered to be vulnerable, whatever their age.

A child or young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (section 105(1), Children Act 1989). The terms “child” and “young person” are used interchangeably in this document.

For vulnerable adults, the terms “adult at risk” or “adult at risk of harm” are also used and can be described as “an adult who requires assistance in the conduct of their own affairs”.

References to “elected officers” are to the officers of the Morris Ring.

## S1.2 POLICY STATEMENT

The Morris Ring is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the vulnerable person is paramount
- all people, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender (notwithstanding constitutional restrictions), language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in morris dancing in an enjoyable and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect vulnerable people from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- working in partnership with parents, guardians, carers and vulnerable people is essential for the protection of vulnerable people.

## S1.3 MONITOR AND REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Bagman of the Morris Ring should regularly report to the Squire and other officers about progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements, gaps and areas where changes are required.

The policy should be reviewed every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

## S2. PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

### S2.1 INTRODUCTION

To provide vulnerable people with the best possible experience and opportunities in morris dancing everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of participants in morris dancing to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. However, it is their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse, and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the vulnerable person as explained in section 4.

This section will assist in identifying what is meant by good practice.



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### S2.2 GOOD PRACTICE

The Morris Ring should adhere to the following principles and action:

- Ensure member clubs are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding their members attending events
- work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations) and encouraging open communication with no secrets
- make the experience of morris dancing enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all vulnerable people with respect and dignity
- be mindful of the welfare needs of vulnerable people present
- avoid unnecessary physical contact. Where any form of manual or physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with consent.
- aim to give positive, constructive feedback
- keep a written record of any incident or injury that occurs, along with details of any outcomes

Involvement of parents/carers

- Involve parents or carers wherever possible, so that they know where the person in their care is, who they are with and what they are doing.
- secure parental or carers' consent for the club to act *in loco parentis*, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if required

## S3. DEFINING ABUSE

### S3.1 INTRODUCTION

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional, financial or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to physical or psychological injury or harm. Abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

### S3.2 INDICATORS OF ABUSE

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place.

Indications that someone is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- an injury on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the vulnerable person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- someone expresses concern about the welfare of a third party
- unexplained changes in behaviour including but not limited to: becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn, displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness in minors
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adults by children, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected

The above list is not exhaustive; the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place.

It is **NOT** the responsibility of the Morris Ring to decide that abuse is occurring. It **IS** everybody's responsibility to act on any concerns.

### S3.3 Use of Photography or Filming Equipment at Events

Performances and events may be used as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of vulnerable people. Any concerns should be reported to an Elected Officer.



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### S4. RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

#### S4.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a responsibility to act on any concerns raised through contact with the appropriate authorities. This applies to allegations or suspicions of abuse occurring within the Morris Ring, and to allegations or suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations or suspicions.

#### S4.2 RECEIVING EVIDENCE OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

Awareness of possible abuse may arise in various ways. It may be reported to the Morris Ring by someone else or directly by the vulnerable person affected.

If a vulnerable person says or indicates that they are being abused, the individual should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the vulnerable person
- **reassure** the vulnerable person that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the vulnerable person, showing that they are being taken seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and vulnerable person abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the vulnerable person has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **inform** the vulnerable person that other people must be informed about what they have said. Tell the vulnerable person this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the vulnerable person is paramount.** If the vulnerable person needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a vulnerable person protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to an elected officer immediately

#### S4.3 RECORDING INFORMATION

A detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or concern. The individual recording the incident should confine themselves to the facts and distinguish between personal knowledge and other sources. The individual should not include their own opinions.

Information should include the following where possible:

- the vulnerable person's name, age, date of birth and contact details
- the details of the allegation or disclosure, including dates, times and any other relevant information (including details of any witnesses)
- the date and time the incident was disclosed

#### S4.4 REPORTING THE CONCERN

The elected officers of the Morris Ring will take responsibility for Safeguarding as part of their role. If they are not available, the individual concerned should take responsibility and seek appropriate advice.

In the event of an incident being reported, the elected officers will:

- refer the matter to the appropriate authorities
- decide who will deal with any media enquiries
- take any other appropriate action

In the event of an elected officer being the subject of a disclosure or allegation, a report must be made to the Chairman of the Morris Ring Advisory Council, who will follow the above steps



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### **S4.5 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every effort should be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained without compromising the safety of those concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

All information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

### **S5. DECLARATION**

On behalf of the Morris Ring, we will oversee the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to. This safeguarding policy supersedes all previous versions.

**Signed on behalf of the officers of the Morris Ring:**

**Name**

**Date**