

Planning and delivering a performance for children and young people: Support Guide



Introduction

This support resource aims to help with the planning and delivering of a dance performance or event, and acts as a guide for all the important steps and factors that need to be considered, when planning for a safe and inclusive event for children and young people.

Essentials to consider

- The event should be GDPR compliant.
- The event should have a thorough risk assessment for both the event and venue is in place.
- A robust safeguarding policy in place and all staff/volunteers follow the procedures and a code of conduct.
- The event should be inclusive both for participants and audience.
- The correct adult to child supervision with appropriate safer recruitment checks should be in place.
- The creative content of the event should be appropriate for its target audience.
- Appropriate first aid and evacuation procedures must be in place.
- The event should be covered by appropriate levels of insurance.

Safeguarding

As identified above, you must have robust safeguarding procedures in place, demonstrating high standards of practice:

- All events should include a comprehensive safeguarding policy for the safe delivery and management of your performance.
- Check the venue's safeguarding policy, as well as having your own.
- Check if the event requires child performance licences and check if you need to notify the local authorities, the local education authority, the Licensing Authority or the Local Education and Library Board, depending on whether you are based in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, or Wales.
- You should have a designated Safeguarding Lead for the event, who should be the point of contact for any concerns.
- What is your child to adult ratio? Ensure you have enough adults to look after groups of children safely.

Safeguarding and Supervision

Ensuring that your performance or event has robust safeguarding procedures and adequate and safe supervision arrangements of all children and young people in place, is essential for the safe and smooth running of the event. All measures should be considered and taken to keep children and young people safe at your performance or event.

Below, you will find links to official government and expert guidance on all areas that should be considered when planning and organising a performance or event for children and young people.

EFFECTIVE SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE

Out of school settings guidance

- England: [Keeping Children Safe in out of School Settings Code of Practice](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)
- Scotland: [Getting it Right for Every Child](#)
- Wales: [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#)

In school safeguarding guidance

- England: [Keeping Children Safe in Schools](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Protecting and Safeguarding our Children](#)
- Scotland: [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Education Scotland](#)
- Wales: [Keeping Learners Safe](#)

Further Information and resources about effective safeguarding and safeguarding training can be found here:

NSPCC information

- [Keeping Children Safe Away from Home Guidance](#)
- [Safeguarding in the Performing Arts](#)
- [Photography and Sharing Images Guidance](#)

Safer Dance information about effective safeguarding practice

- [Safer Dance](#)

Safeguarding Training

- [One Dance UK, Safer Dance and High Speed Training free course](#)

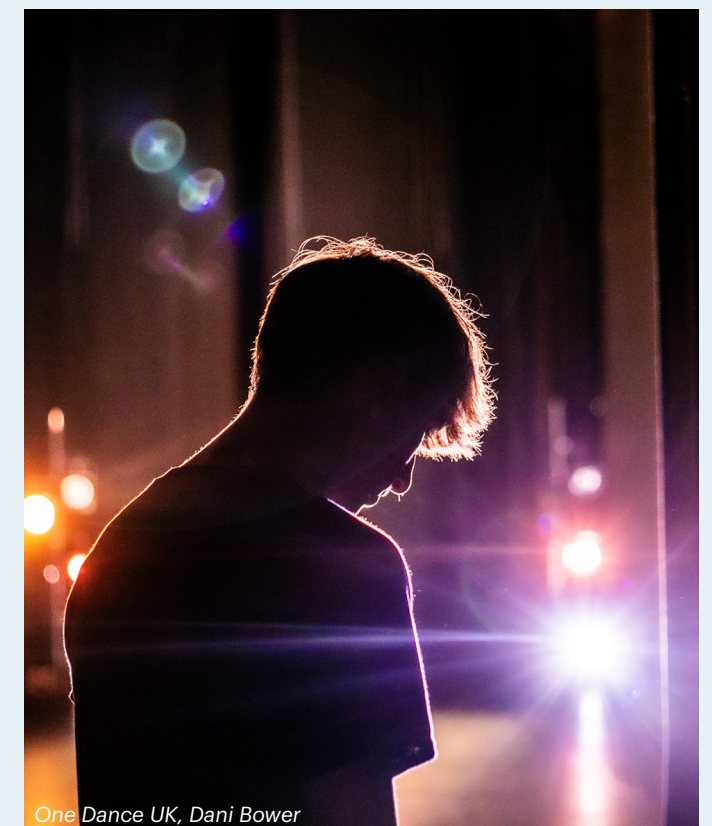
SAFER RECRUITMENT

Safer recruitment should be put in place when recruiting any person to work at or support your event. This might be in a paid role, as a volunteer, or as a supervising adult. You can find guidance below on all areas of safer recruitment.

- [NSPCC Safer recruitment](#)

Disclosure and Barring (and equivalent) procedures

- [England](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)



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CHILD LICENCING AND BOPA APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Depending on whether your performance or event takes place in, or out of school, and the age of the participants involved, you may be required to apply for Child Licencing and a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA). Below you will find links to official guidance for the area that your event takes place in.

Child Performance Licence

- [England](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)

Chaperone licenses

You may need to request any supervising adult that will be supporting your performance or event to apply for a chaperone licence. You can find links to guidance about the criteria for requiring chaperone licence and how to apply for a chaperone licence below.

- [England](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)



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Considerations for planning and delivering an excellent performance or event

We have outlined areas to consider for best practice when planning and delivering a performance or event. This will help you ensure that your event is safe, accessible and gives the opportunity for children and young people to be at their best.

DEVELOPING YOUR PERFORMANCE OR EVENT

Pre-planning

Check what's going on in the local area on your planned dates to make sure your event does not clash with any other events that may exclude your participants.

Consider how you want your event to run, aim for variety to keep an audience engaged but balanced with equal opportunity for everyone to perform and shine.

Recruiting and engaging participants

Use words in the promotional material that emphasise the potential impact of taking part (as opposed to competition), e.g. 'inspiring' and 'celebration'.

Ensure you have fully explained your event to potential applicants, so they know exactly what they're applying for. What's the aim or theme of your event? What are you looking for in each performance piece? Where will this explanation be viewed? Website? Social media? Emails?

Consider how many people can apply. If you are low on applications, how are you going to increase engagement? Alternatively, if you have too many applications, what is the selection process? Consider the diversity of groups involved – which groups may not have other performance opportunities?

Consider quality over quantity if application numbers are low. It might be better to have a smaller event if a high quality will be maintained.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application format

The application process should be accessible, quick and easy; will it be an online form, an email, a video or something else? Make sure that adults applying to bring a group know exactly what is required of them and clearly outline how to submit the information. Ensure deadlines are clear. Also think about how applicants will access the application. Will they be directed to it from a website/social media page or will you directly target groups?

Think about the language being used in the application process. All information should be accessible to everyone.

How and when will participants be notified of the success of their application?



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VENUE

Choosing a venue

Make sure you organise a visit to the venue where you propose to hold your event.

Is the venue appropriate for a dance performance? The stage floor must be suitable for each dance style involved and there should be a safe space for performers to warm up and cool down.

Consider the venue's rules around footwear; for example, some venues do not allow tap shoes or ballroom heels on their floors.

Health and Safety in the venue

What is the fire escape procedure of the venue? Communicate this with everyone using the building.

It is important to complete a risk assessment of the venue and plan emergency procedures.

You should also view and check the venue's risk assessments.

Check what music licensing the venue holds. This may affect what music licensing you may require if the venue does not hold one.

Facilities in the venue

The venue should have secure areas for performers, which can't be accessed by the public, to maintain safeguarding regulations. Likewise, is there an appropriate space for audience members to wait before and after the event?

There should be private changing spaces, inclusive of sex and all gender identities, so that young people feel comfortable in their changing space.

Check if there are areas for quiet zones / time out areas for participants that may require them.

Collecting data from applicants

The information collected from your applicants must be stored securely, following all GDPR regulations.

It is important for all applicants to have the appropriate information regarding GDPR regulations. The submission of personal information (such as contact details) must follow these regulations.

Send out all forms with a deadline for their return (e.g. media consent, technical requirement requests, music etc).

Consider creating a timeline of the lead up to your event. What will be required from groups and how far in advance will you need it? For example, music will need to be sent in and checked in advance. Avoid asking for the same information multiple times – keep forms as clear and straight forward to complete as possible.

Does the venue provide facilities outside of the performance space, for example a bar? Consider the payment and use of these facilities, in line with the venue's policy. Will you require an alcohol policy?

Accessibility of the venue

Be mindful of access for both disabled performers and audience members. For example, door and corridor widths and room sizes, especially where electric wheelchair users and other mobility aids will be waiting or travelling. Is access to the stage accessible for all participants; are there stairs leading to the wings?

Communicate parking arrangements to performers, staff and audience members.

Align your language with that of the venue, to avoid confusion.

Ensure your signage for the participants is inclusive; consider using tactile, Makaton images, large text etc. You might also consider having simplified resources, or easier-to-read resources if possible.



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Consider ease of access in the backstage area. Some performers may have not experienced this type of venue before. Do you need to schedule time for a tour?

Can you provide a virtual tour or images of the spaces ahead of the event to help attendees feel familiar with the space(s).

Staff

Who will be working at the event? Does the venue provide staff, or are you required to organise this? This may include front of house staff, backstage runners etc. Alongside this, what is the payment plan for staff involved? Remember that anyone with backstage access or in a supervision role with the young people would need to be subject to safer recruitment.

Rehearsals

Dress rehearsals and technical runs should be booked prior to your event; check the venue's requirements with this. Sometimes they must be completed on the same day, or they may require more than one day to complete. Identify who will be managing the technical elements of the event.

Some groups or individuals may benefit from additional rehearsal time.

Safeguarding performers

There needs to be a clear system in place for signing performers in and out. How will this happen? Who is responsible for signing performers in and out – will parents/guardians be responsible for signing in/out individual students or is it part of the adult supervising the group's responsibility? Is there stage door access or is there another entrance procedure for those involved in the event?

Sales and Tickets

Check the venue's Box Office management. How will people buy tickets? Will it be directly through the venue, or through you as the event organiser?

Outline the sales procedure of your tickets. Will there be an open sale, will you allocate a certain number per performer, or will there be a different system? Think about the number you aim to sell and how best to fulfil this.

When pricing the tickets, consider the affordability of ticket prices and how to make this accessible for all.

Consider priority booking for those who require accessible seating (e.g. Wheelchair users).

Will there be concession rates for specific groups and would you like proof of ID when purchasing?

Communicate whether there will be allocated seating, or a first come first served system.

Think about the format of tickets; will they be paper or digital?

Will you have comp tickets? Consider who may get these and why and how they will be distributed.



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AUDIENCE MANAGEMENT

Organisation

Communicate clear drop off/pick up procedures to those looking after performers (allocate clear timings for this, to avoid disruption during the performance).

Reinforce emergency exit procedures to audience members.

Are the performers allowed to watch the pieces they are not in? If so, how will this be organised to minimise disruption in the audience?

Supportive environment

Have clear guidance of expectations during the interval (if applicable). Consider length of the break and how audience members access refreshments and toilets.

Notify audience members of theatre etiquette and safeguarding requirements (no inappropriate noise, no use of mobile phones, no use of cameras, no disruption during the performance etc.) Ensure you have a policy in place on admitting latecomers and allowing audience members to re-enter if they leave. Audience members should not be moving around whilst children are performing.

Create an ethos of support and respect in the audience. Communicate with audience members to be equally respectful and supportive of all groups involved.

Consider how front of house staff will challenge inappropriate behaviour or those not following rules? Set a policy on this.

MUSIC

Content

Groups may be using the same track. Be sure to check each group's entry if you wish to avoid duplication.

Remind groups that music can be creative; it doesn't have to be a pop song or even have lyrics. If a group is using music with lyrics, they must check the appropriateness of the content – even 'clean' versions can be suggestive, inappropriate or adult in theme.

Format

Check what format the venue requires the music to be in and communicate this to all groups involved (CD/USB/file type).

PROPS

Safety and storage

Storage of props must be considered. Who will look after them before and after the event? How will they be stored safely backstage?

If using chairs, consider who is providing them. Young people must be able to rehearse with the same chairs as they use in the performance. They also need to be checked for stability and cohesion with the piece.

Appropriate use and rehearsal

Remind groups using props to rehearse with them before the day of the event and have a plan if any malfunctions happen on stage.



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Consider how they are set backstage. If the performance doesn't require props for the entire duration, how will they be picked up/put down by performers safely?

TECH / STAGE FEATURES

Planning content

Collect all relevant technical information from all groups in advance (e.g. Lighting preferences).

Safety & Accessibility

Prepare equal time slots for all groups to complete a dress/technical rehearsal in the performance space. Consider planning for blackouts between pieces and if they are necessary/safe for all groups – allow time for each group to become familiar with this process.

Check if tap dance groups require microphones at floor level.

Create a shared language; not all participants will be familiar with stage/technical language.

Plan for safe execution of technical elements (e.g. strobe lighting).

Brief backstage runners with what is required from them. Have a clear schedule of group orders and timings, to allow for a smooth transition between groups.

Will you need to prepare backstage cues for performers? Who will carry these out?

Do any pieces involve dancers switching sides of the stage behind the scenes? Is this accessible?

Do props need to be set on or off stage?

Rehearse bows – keep it the same style for each piece.

REHEARSALS

Schedules

Encourage all adults leading a group to prepare a rehearsal schedule; all pieces should be finished well before the event, as well as maintaining quality throughout the piece.

INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY

Performance or event content

Consider if your event includes a range of dance genres and is accessible to all young people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, social background etc.

Be proactive when recruiting groups; consider all groups within the community.

Remind group leaders to choreograph appropriately for/with disabled dancers. Be creative with movements and enable them to feel empowered and not limited by the piece.



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Events are a great opportunity for children to meet other group members and to learn from each other! If your schedule allows, build in opportunity for groups to come together for some activities, or even informally at break times.

Inclusion and comfort

You should advocate for diverse bodies in dance and remove every possible barrier that may prevent participation.

Aim to collect as much information as possible about the participants who will be attending your performance or event. Consider what procedures you have in place for receiving and responding to any access riders, that may be shared with you by a supervising adult of a dance group.

Make sure every group is comfortable in the performance venue. Not all groups will have performance experience, so may require extra time for dress rehearsals or backstage briefing. This may include asking for and responding to any access riders, to help with making participants feel comfortable, as mentioned above.

Set an ethos between groups to support each other, regardless of ability.

Adjust language to enable an inclusive environment (e.g., not using “judges” or “scores”) Also consider the language and ability used in your marketing material; are the role models diverse and are resources easily accessible?

Accessibility

When considering the accessibility of your performance or event, taking the social model of disability approach will help in working towards removing barriers, and making appropriate adjustments, thus improving accessibility.

For further details about the social model of disability see [One Dance UK's Considering Difference resource found here](#). You can also find out more information on the [Sense website here](#) (Sense is a leading disability charity).

Always speak to leaders of groups including disabled dancers about their particular access requirements as early as possible. Where possible, invite leaders of inclusive groups into venues prior to the event to assess likely access issues for their particular youth company.

When assessing venues, be mindful of journeys between venues / spaces as well as within the venues themselves.

Is the venue accessible to disabled dancers and audience members?

Does the venue have a quiet room for neurodivergent dancers, and anyone else who may need it?

Would a touch tour for groups be possible of the venue to be able to explore props, venue spaces, equipment and facilities?

Consider the impact of any technical elements of pieces on the health of performers and audience members (e.g., Epilepsy and asthma, flashing lights, loud noises, on stage blackouts, houselights going up and down).

Communicate with participants to be equally respectful and supportive of all groups involved. If groups are able to watch each other during the dress rehearsal, groups should be equally applauded and celebrated.

Support integration between groups. Consider simple ways of facilitating coming together of groups, e.g. a simple ‘high-five’ motivational meeting before / after performances or using a welcome activity/speech to give groups an opportunity to share something / get to know each other.

Lastly, for audiences, is there a possibility for any relaxed performances to take place, as this is something particularly helpful for neurodivergent people or those with any sensory sensitivities.

FIRST AID

Responsibility

Who is responsible for first aid procedures? Check the policy of the venue and plan accordingly.

Ensure you have the appropriate number of adults trained in first aid, check first aid kits are updated and the contents are in date and create an accident record book.



Point of View Photography

Injury prevention should be put in place (e.g. Warm up and cool down).

Consider whether the nature, size and scale of your event requires additional support from Medics.

Staff

Communicate with staff and performers what they should do if an incident occurs. They should know which adults to turn to; these adults could have a coloured lanyard to make themselves known to participants.

Data

Who holds the medical information of performers and adult helpers? This information should follow all relevant GDPR regulations and remain confidential.

Behaviour

Create a code of conduct for everyone involved, so that everyone is aware of rules and behaviour requirements on and off stage.

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Legal requirements

Gather permission and consent from all the participants’ parents/carers. Make it clear what will be filmed/photographed and what the purpose is.

Young people who do not have permission to be photographed should not be left out of opportunities. Filmed footage featuring these young people cannot be shared publicly but may be delivered to the group directly so that the performers involved can see their final work.

For any dancers who do not have permission to be photographed, consider identifying them with a subtle costume addition – such as wrist band or sticker, when/if any professional photographs of the groups are being captured.



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Ensure no personal information can be seen in the background of photos/films.

Have a clear policy which outlines to audience members and supervising adults that they must not take any photos or video footage on personal devices for safeguarding reasons and ensure this policy is enforced. This should include prohibiting the use of personal cameras backstage or in the audience.

Behaviour

Create a policy on the use of social media that can be shared with participants and group leaders. The policy must clearly outline that anything shared on social media should be in line with the safeguarding policy and GDPR rules. It should underline the importance of being respectful on social media.

Professional input

Would you like a professional photographer at your event? Will audience members be able to purchase these photos?

PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Marketing Content

In order to promote your performance or event, you need to identify your target audience. Will the event be public or reserved for relations of each participant or group? This will change how you promote it and will need to be shared with all participants/groups.

Will participating groups be involved in how their pieces are promoted? Do you need to collect information, imagery or other assets from them? If so make sure to follow GDPR and safeguarding policies.

What are the key pieces of information you need people to know? Make sure things like dates, times, duration, cost and locations are clear.

How are you going to promote your event to your target audience? Will you need to make posters or content for social media? Will emailing people directly work best?

GDPR

If you use social media to promote your event, ensure imagery is copyright compliant and follows all GDPR and safeguarding regulations.

SCREEN DANCE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Recorded works

If you promote your event on-line, ensure imagery is copyright compliant. Any imagery or information about the people participating or attending your performance or event must follow GDPR and safeguarding regulations.



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Overall

Thank you for choosing to showcase youth dance and for taking time to make sure your event is safe, accessible and a positive, inclusive celebration of children and young people's dance. We wish you all the best with your event! Not everything covered in this support guide will be relevant to your performance or event, especially if you are planning a small performance within just one setting, eg, your primary school. However, many of the areas covered will guide you in planning for a safe and inclusive performance/event. We hope that you find the information useful.

If you have any queries about anything in this support guide then please do not hesitate to contact us on info@onedanceuk.org.



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