

## **Guidelines for Teachers re Dancers who have movement impairments**

### **Considerations related to dancers whose dancing abilities have lessened and who, therefore, are less able to safely participate in Scottish set dancing.**

These considerations do not apply to individuals who are in the process of developing dancing skills and may not have reached a level of competence that enables them to participate in the full range of Scottish Country dances.

#### **Introduction**

As dancers age or become less agile it is inevitable that their ability to dance the full range of Country set dances will decrease.

Loss of agility has implication both for the individual dancer as well as for other members of a dancing set.

It is reasonable to expect that as dancers become less agile and particularly when they develop some impairment, they will be aware of their limitations and participate accordingly by

- sitting out

- dancing in a set with dancers of a similar level of agility/impairment (difficult to achieve with reduced numbers of sets as currently occurs)

#### **Commentary and specific examples for consideration**

In quick-time dances (jigs and reels) it is important and may be critical for the conduct of the dance, that dancers are able to adequately complete figures.

Inability to complete figures predisposes impaired dancers to injury to themselves and other members of the set, particularly through a collision or a fall as a result of the impaired dancer not arriving in the expected figure position on time.

Specific examples of figures in quick-time dances which may be difficult to achieve safely include – circle round and back, any reel (including reels of three or more but also more 'specialised' reels, for example inveran reels), figures of eight, various chain figures, setting and casting, promenade, allemande, set and link, set and rotate.

It is likely that dancers who are limited in their ability to dance in quick-time will be more able to adequately complete the figures in Strathspey time dances.

#### **The role of teachers**

A teacher has the primary responsibility of recognising a lessening of agility and the development of a level of physical impairment in a dancer.

A teacher should confidentially speak to such dancers and with them review their dancing capabilities, and hopefully come to an agreement regarding what are appropriate and inappropriate dances in which the individual can participate.

Teachers plan and run their classes according to the experience and ability of the dances they expect to attend. However, it is not always possible or even advisable to try and accommodate varying levels of agility in every dance.

Teachers should be encouraged to tell, and supported in telling, dancers to sit out the dance if they believe they are not capable of safely dancing a particular figure.

A teacher may be prepared for a particular dancer with lessened agility to step out of a particular figure, for example circle round and back, and then resume the dance, when no further limiting figures are present. Such an intention should be requested of the teacher by the dancer before the commencement of the dance.

A teacher will be aware of dancers in their class with agility problems and therefore should remind them of the specific figures in each dance that they consider inappropriate for the dancer(s) to undertake.

The expectation of teachers is that restricting the participation of impaired dancers in particular dances will be accepted and respected by the dancer.

If the request to not participate in a particular dance is ignored by the dancer, then the teacher will be encouraged to abandon the dance or consider abandoning the class until the dancer agrees to abide by the teacher's request.

### **Concerns of dancers regarding others with impairment.**

Dancers should be supported to confidentially speak to teachers about their concerns regarding fellow dancers. In such situations the teacher will need to make an independent assessment of the complaint and perhaps have it reviewed by other members of the teacher's panel.

Consideration will need to be given as to how and when the complaint will be raised with the dancer against whom it was made.

Teachers, in such situations, may be prepared to act as above (The Role of Teachers) but in some situations, if they anticipate the likelihood of conflict with the dancer a mechanism should be developed for the Branch Committee to take responsibility for informing the dancer of the teacher's/teacher's panel decision.

Feedback should also be given, confidentially to the complainant. If the complainant disagrees then they should be encouraged to report their concerns to the Branch Committee for review.

### **The management of dancers who are considered by teachers to have a significant and unsafe impairment.**

It is anticipated that such dancers will accept the opinion and guidance of teachers and the Branch Committee when they have a significant and unsafe impairment.

If the opinion and advice of the teachers' panel and the Branch Committee is challenged by the dancer then the Teachers' Panel and Branch Committee will require the conduct of a formal assessment by an appropriate Branch nominated health professional.

The assessment will be done at the dancer's own expense.

When a dancer has been assessed, the report of the assessment will provide guidance to the Branch Committee as to whether or not the individual will be permitted to continue dancing and, if so, what the dancing limitations will be necessary.