

# The Social Value of Movement and Dance to the UK



**SPORT+  
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ALLIANCE**

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## MOVEMENT & DANCE D I V I S I O N

*Estimates, information and forecasts contained within this report are based on the data obtained at that time and the accuracy of resultant findings and recommendations is dependent on the quality of that data.*

*The author(s) will not be held liable for any data or information provided within this document. The document has been created in collaboration with the project steering group. While the data and recommendations have been continuously reviewed throughout the process, it has not been possible for the author to independently review and verify every element of data provided by third parties.*

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## Acknowledgement

The development of this report has been driven by Tracy Levy, Chair of the Alliance's Movement and Dance Division. Tracy's vision for the work was to deliver a step-change in how the members of the Movement and Dance Division articulate the value of the activity they work so hard to facilitate. As with any project of this scale, the work has not been achieved in isolation. 38 individuals, each highly experienced in the delivery of movement and dance, lent their expertise and knowledge to a series of workshops and consultations. From these consultations a wealth of first-hand evidence was gathered, testifying to the value movement and dance delivers to its participants, its communities, and society as a whole. Through the time effort and vision of Tracy Levy and her fellow colleagues within the division, the collation of testimonials of the power and value of movement and dance will boost the appreciation of its contribution to the physical activity eco-system; both today, and into the future.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Movement, dance and exercise as physical activity is widely understood to have significant benefits for individual and community wellbeing. However, when individuals are advised to increase their physical activity, taking up movement and dance classes is often overlooked as a recommended activity.
- 1.1.2 This document seeks to 'state the case' for the movement and dance organisations that make up the Movement and Dance Division (M&D) of the Sport and Recreation Alliance (the Alliance). The attributes of the M&D division members are outlined in accordance with the UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport's (DCMS) key outcomes for sport and physical activity as defined in 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation' (2015)<sup>1</sup>; Health and Wellbeing, Mental Wellbeing, Individual Development, Social and Community Development, and Economic Development (economic development is not featured as part of this report).

## 1.2 Changing Perceptions

- 1.2.1 Movement and dance falls between the arts and sports (Portas, n.d.). Within the physical activity sector the creativity, strength and performance of movement and dance are not always as well appreciated as a footballer who scores a perfect goal, or the hand-eye coordination of a hockey player or nimbleness of a boxer's footwork. We can term this phenomenon as a 'recognition deficit' of the current and potential future contribution of movement and dance to the physical activity sector.
- 1.2.2 According to Sport England's Active Lives Survey (November 2018-19) 3.66 million adults in England participated in a dance class at least twice over a 28 day period<sup>2</sup>. With the physicality of innovative dance styles being shared across social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and other social media platforms, more people, especially boys and young men, who may previously have shied away from the traditional image of dance, are choosing their own styles from around the world, while the traditional routes are as popular as ever.
- 1.2.3 The recognition deficit for movement and dance is not as prevalent in other sectors; such as childhood education, learning and development; the arts and television; and, leisure and tourism. 'Dance' is often seen as something children 'do in school', or 'they put on a performance' for guests at family gatherings. Adults 'dance' at a party, children stand on the toes of adults to learn the steps and at the other end of the spectrum the dancers on the West End stage receive standing ovations. The celebrity 'Strictly' dancers have nothing but praise and admiration for their teachers.
- 1.2.4 The changes being made to traditional sport and activities (including dance) in order to sustain appeal to young audiences could be interpreted as creating a fragmentation of the sector. A product of this process is that organisations delivering sport and activity become focused on ever smaller substrata of the population rather than the sector acting as a cohesive network of organisations that are focused on delivering high quality movement for physical and mental wellbeing, as well as performing and the joy of 'moving the body'.
- 1.2.5 Within recreational classes it is not just the muscle groups that are worked but mental faculties of listening, understanding and implementing; and social skills of working with a partner, group, or competitor. Furthermore, through the regular participation in classes, attendees can grow a strong sense of community, friendship and sense of place. Finally, participation in classes, employment of teachers, the purchasing of clothing, footwear, equipment, the travelling, refreshments and staying overnight for events are all significant contributors to the UK economy.

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<sup>1</sup> UK Government, Department of Digital, Media, Culture and Sport, 2015, *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486622/Sporting\\_Future\\_ACCESSIBLE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Sport England, 2019, *Active Lives Data*, <https://activelives.sportengland.org/Result?queryId=50940>

1.2.6 This document seeks to contribute to changing the perceptions of those within the sport and activity sector as to the current and potential future contribution of movement and dance to society.

### 1.3 The Movement and Dance Division of the Sport and Recreation Alliance

1.3.1 The Sport and Recreation Alliance (the Alliance) is a not-for-profit membership organisation comprised of over 300 organisations involved in the delivery of sport and physical activity. The Alliance exists to facilitate and promote the contribution of its membership to society, and to act as the voice for the sector.

1.3.2 The Alliance divides its membership into five distinct divisions; Major Spectator Sport; Games and Sports; Outdoor Recreation, Water Sports, and Movement and Dance. The M&D division is comprised of 28 different organisations, national governing bodies and 'schools' related to the teaching of movement and dance. Together, these organisations represent the sector and give voice to its pressing concerns.

## 2 Methodology

2.1.1 This report has been inspired by social impact reports undertaken by other sporting organisations to demonstrate the value of their activity, following a Sport England recognised methodology. An initial investigation into the feasibility of such a study for movement and dance indicated that the division lacked the resources, capacity and sufficient data required. As a result, a qualitative research methodology, focused on in-depth consultation with experienced members of the dance and movement community was devised for the work. The approach is laid out below.

### *Sample Recruitment*

2.1.2 Each of the division's associated members was asked to nominate one teacher to work on the project. This person was specified as someone currently delivering a class who can contribute to a discussion with the intention of bringing new voices to the group. In total 38 respondents participated in the research process. Together, our research group represents decades of experience and interaction with tens of thousands of dancers.

### *Data Gathering*

2.1.3 The research gathering phase of the project was conducted over a series of online workshops. These consultations were originally planned as 'in-person' sessions. Due to restrictions brought in place by COVID-19 the format was changed to online.

2.1.4 Attendees were sent a document pack containing information pertinent to the discussion but were asked to wait until the session had begun to open these packs. This was with the intention of allowing the group to progress their thoughts and interpretations of the pack collectively as the session progressed. This approach was successful in avoiding entrenchment of views and fostering a collaborative tone to the sessions. However, individuals joining the call late did create some issues.

2.1.5 The first portion of each workshop was defined as a 'levelling out' session. This was to ensure all members were talking as teachers and practitioners, and not as the organisations from which they had been recruited. This portion of the workshop was considered to be successful as contributions were provided from the perspective of teachers and consumers of movement and dance.

2.1.6 The second portion of the workshops looked at the Sport England statement on social value. The group then discussed how the statement related to movement and dance as teachers and consumers. In each session, contributions and discussions were grouped. From these discussions a set of 4 or 5 questions were developed and tailored. From these questions, further contributions were recorded to produce a bank of quotations and contributions formed around thematic areas. Contributors were encouraged to send any additional thoughts or reflection on the topics discussed to the workshop facilitators.

### *Data Processing*

2.1.7 Once the deadline for post-workshop contributions had closed, replies and quotations were grouped by theme along the lines of DCMS's Sporting Future Strategy and aligned to Sport England's measuring social and economic value methodology paper. Where contributions were considered to allow for personal identification of the contributor, the statements were amended to reflect the substance of the statement, rather than as a direct quotation. Where possible, Sport England Active Lives Data has been applied to the figures related to social value figures of participation as stated in Sport England's Social Return on Investment (based on All Dance Classes).

### *Research Presentation*

2.1.8 The collection of quotations and statements, grouped by thematic area of health and wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, and social and community development are aligned to Sport England's methodology for the production of a social value report.

## 3 Physical and Mental Health

3.1.1 This section of the report focuses on the contribution of the Movement and Dance Division's members in delivering physical and mental health benefits to participants in the activities facilitated by its members.

### 3.2 What does 'Physical and Mental Health' mean?

3.2.1 The social value of any activity can be measured in terms of its contribution towards reducing a participant's risk of developing specific health conditions. The following health conditions are considered to be reduced (to some degree) through participation in 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity once per week<sup>3</sup>. These figures refer to people aged 16+ in England.

#### *Physical Health*

- Reduced risk of CHD / stroke by 35%
- Reduced risk of breast cancer (female participants) by 20%
- Reduced risk of colon cancer by 20%
- Reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes by 40%
- Reduced risk of hip fracture (participants 65+) by 53%
- Reduced risk of back pain by 25%
- Improved good health by 14.1%

#### *Mental Health*

- Reduced risk of dementia by 30%
- Reduced risk of depression by 30%

3.2.2 It is important to note that according to Sport England's Active Lives survey, up to 3.66 million people could derive this benefit from dance classes in England.

### 3.3 Improved Physical Health

3.3.1 As detailed above there are many aspects to someone's physical and mental health. This section will focus on the areas in which dance and dance related exercise and movement classes can help to improve physical health. These are presented across a number of themes to best illustrate how our research indicated that movement and dance helps to contribute towards physical health.

#### *Improved physical fitness*

3.3.2 A substantial contribution of the health benefits of sport and physical activity is its ability to raise participant's heart rate, stretch and strengthen muscles, and challenge the body physically. This contribution is very well understood and broadly unchallenged in medical research.

3.3.3 Figure 3.1, below, provides a summary of selected statements gathered during the consultations that reflect the ways in which dance has helped, or been understood to have helped, our research sample. These statements have been selected because they reflect a broad consensus gathered during the workshops of the ways in which dance can contribute towards physical fitness.

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<sup>3</sup> Sport England, 2020, *Social Return on Investment*: <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-09/Social%20return%20on%20investment.pdf?5BqvLn09jwpTesBJ4BXhVfRhV4TYqm9E>



Figure 3.1: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped to improve physical fitness (Source: Primary Research)

# PHYSICAL FITNESS

Improved balance and spatial awareness: I can manoeuvre myself round obstacles and when I trip, I can steady myself.

Increased physical confidence: I feel less inhibited and more able to try new things.

Stamina: I can dance 10,000 steps at a party without feeling tired

Increased muscular strength, endurance and motor fitness: I know how my body feels when I have not danced. I do not feel as fit and healthy as when I regularly dance.

It gets me out in the evenings instead of sitting indoors watching television.

Increased aerobic fitness: Tap dancing really does help with my fitness.

Improved muscle strength: I am able to do more before my muscle aches.

Improved posture and body awareness, I feel in control of each and every muscle.

Weight management: I have the correct BMI for my height and hopefully continue to keep well.

Improved condition of the heart and lungs: I can go for the duration of the class now without feeling out of breath so my respiration has also improved.

Gardening without getting achy muscles.

Better flexibility: I am able to bend to pull the plug out of the bath. I don't know when this became a problem but now it is something I can do without thinking about.

Stronger bones and reduced risk of osteoporosis: Last year I tripped, and the x-ray showed that everything was fine, I do believe teaching my classes has helped my bone strength.

3.3.4 Figure 3.1 presents qualitative evidence that movement and dance classes can aid physical health in the following ways:

- Increased physical confidence
- Increased cardiovascular fitness and stamina
- Improved balance
- Increased muscular strength and endurance
- Improved body posture and awareness
- Improved flexibility
- Improved bone strength and resistance to injury
- Improved weight management
- Increased physical activity

3.3.5 It must be reiterated that these benefits are obtained disproportionately by people in an age group which are traditionally harder to reach by other forms of sport and physical activity. Therefore, the health contribution towards physical health of participants of movement and dance should be considered to be potentially higher than those stated for the entire adult population.

#### *Recovery from injury and management of existing ailments*

3.3.6 A common thread of the workshop consultations was that, along with being a preventative measure against the development of physical health conditions, participation in movement and dance classes is also an effective intervention for individuals recovering from and living with pre-existing conditions.

3.3.7 Figure 3.2, below, shows a selection of statements given by our sample on their experiences of how individuals have benefited from movement and dance when dealing with underlying or pre-existing conditions.

3.3.8 From only the statements selected, figure 3.2 shows that research subjects had seen a greater ability to manage pre-existing ailments including arthritis, scoliosis, diabetes, and joint pain.

3.3.9 Research subjects were consistent in reporting the motivation of class attendees to continue exercising because of the classes themselves. The creation of this 'habit' should not be underestimated. A contributing factor to this is the sense of camaraderie fostered in the classes by virtue of shared interest and regular contact with class-mates. This feature will be explored in later sections of this report; however, it is an important note for physical health because this sense of belonging and habit helps individuals to continue to exercise when they otherwise might not.

3.3.10 A final point evidenced in figure 3.2 is the fact that the environment of a movement and dance class, with structured movement and smooth floors creates a confidence in movement that is not possible with other forms of exercise or in everyday life. The environment of dance classes are, therefore, enabling individuals to access the physical health benefits (along with other benefits) of exercise that would otherwise not be realised. This level of accessibility is evidenced by the 'older' age demographic who have found movement and dance in later life as a substitute for other activities in which they no longer feel comfortable taking part.

Figure 3.2: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped people manage underlying or pre-existing conditions (Source: Primary Research)

# MANAGEMENT OF UNDERLYING OR PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

I want to walk quickly but the pavement scares me, here the dance floor is smooth and flat, I can travel in all directions without worrying.

The physiotherapist gave me a sheet of exercises but they are everything we do in class.

Without this class I would not be able to move, it oils my spine and keeps me mobile.

My new knee needs exercise which I wouldn't do at home..

I come to class to get out of a disabled environment, here I am me and not my condition.

My class helps to keep my body from getting old and stiff and keeps my arthritis at bay.

One student with type two diabetes says that dance has helped her to maintain her weight loss as well as improve her stamina.

New class participants are less out of breath, so their stamina has improved.

One student has danced all her life and is now in her 40s. Recently she has had a back injury, dance has enabled a speedy recovery back to moving more freely again.

Dance has helped with leg and ankle strength and mobility; I can see they are walking faster and confident to move in all directions.

Increased stamina: after a few weeks new students can cope with the warm-up.

I have seen improvement in posture, mobility, co-ordination, balance and above all enjoyment.

They are more spatially aware.

They are more in tune with their body.

Increased range of pain free movement.

### 3.4 Improved Mental Health

- 3.4.1 When considering 'mental health', it is important to distinguish this from 'mental wellbeing'. Mental health benefits of exercise, as evidence in Sport England's Social Return on Investment Report, refer specifically to reductions in the symptoms or in the chances of developing mental health illnesses; specifically, dementia and depression. Mental wellbeing and life satisfaction will be addressed later on in this report.
- 3.4.2 Figure 3.3 below, shows a selection of statements given by research subjects on the impact of movement and dance on dementia and depression. It must be noted that the people providing the statements above are not necessarily mental health professionals. However, many of the participants in the study are highly experienced teachers of movement and dance classes. As such, they are well qualified to provide testimony as to the power of movement and dance classes to have an impact on people they know to have been diagnosed with mental health conditions.
- 3.4.3 It is clear from the statements provided above that movement and dance classes are capable of having a positive impact on participants suffering from mental health disease.

Figure 3.3: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped people living with mental health conditions (Source: Primary Research)

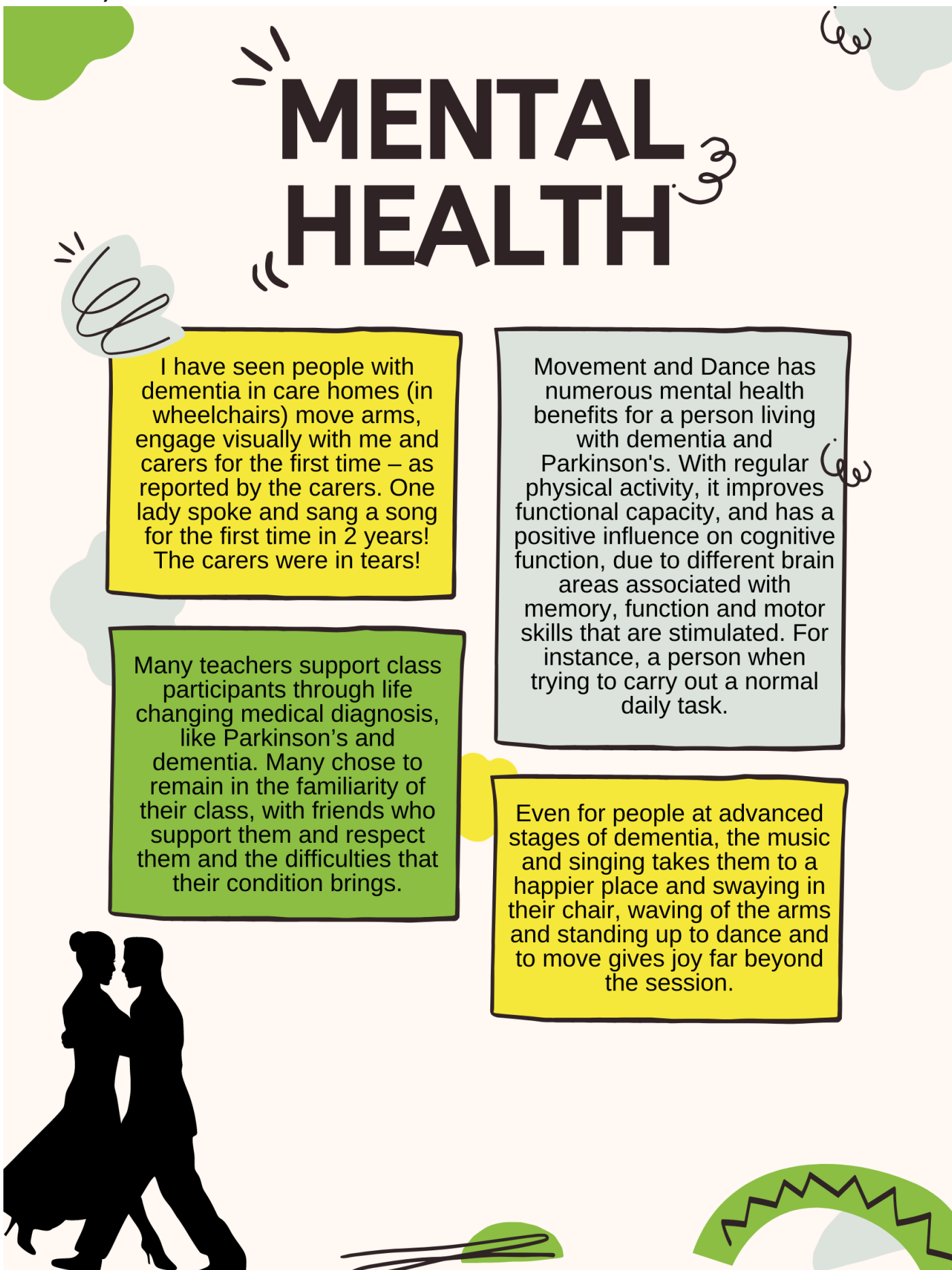

# MENTAL HEALTH

I have seen people with dementia in care homes (in wheelchairs) move arms, engage visually with me and carers for the first time – as reported by the carers. One lady spoke and sang a song for the first time in 2 years! The carers were in tears!

Many teachers support class participants through life changing medical diagnosis, like Parkinson's and dementia. Many chose to remain in the familiarity of their class, with friends who support them and respect them and the difficulties that their condition brings.

Even for people at advanced stages of dementia, the music and singing takes them to a happier place and swaying in their chair, waving of the arms and standing up to dance and to move gives joy far beyond the session.

Movement and Dance has numerous mental health benefits for a person living with dementia and Parkinson's. With regular physical activity, it improves functional capacity, and has a positive influence on cognitive function, due to different brain areas associated with memory, function and motor skills that are stimulated. For instance, a person when trying to carry out a normal daily task.



## 4 Mental Wellbeing

4.1.1 This section focuses on the mental wellbeing benefits of dance and movement classes.

### 4.2 What does 'Mental Wellbeing' mean?

4.2.1 In the context of a social value of sport and physical activity study, mental wellbeing refers specifically to 'subjective wellbeing', sometimes referred to as 'hedonic' wellbeing. Subjective Wellbeing uses the Wellbeing Valuation Approach whereby an individual's wellbeing is measured through self-reporting one's level of 'life satisfaction' on a scale of 1-10<sup>4</sup>.

4.2.2 **Satisfaction** can be defined as " *to make or do enough*". Satisfaction with one's life implies a contentment with or acceptance of one's life circumstances, or the fulfilment of one's wants and needs for life as a whole. In essence, life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of the quality of one's life. Because it is inherently an evaluation, judgements of life satisfaction have a large cognitive component"<sup>5</sup>.

4.2.3 The sources of subjective wellbeing as derived from sport and physical activity are split into two distinct areas; **participation** and **volunteering**.

4.2.4 It must be noted that this study did not have access to survey data regarding the life-satisfaction levels of movement and dance class attendees. In light of this limitation, this section will focus on relevant testimony to how our research subjects have experienced or witnessed improvements in life satisfaction through movement and dance classes.

### 4.3 Improved life satisfaction through participation

4.3.1 Figure 4.2 below presents selected quotes from the workshops related to how movement and dance classes can contribute to an individual's level of life satisfaction.

4.3.2 Broadly, these can be sub-divided into a number of different categories which are explored below.

#### *Short term improvement in life satisfaction (lasting 1-24hrs)*

4.3.3 A number of quotes focus on the ability of dance classes to improve how people are feeling at a given time they attend class. This might be stress relief, an increase in energy levels and a general sense of feeling better about one's self. This can be associated with the well documented physiological reaction of the body to exercise.

4.3.4 Movement and dance classes should also be attributed to a short term reduction in social isolation, whereby participants are amongst familiar people in a familiar setting. Statements also note the importance of physical contact with other people, which again can reduce social isolation in the short term.

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<sup>4</sup> See DCMS, 2014, Fujiwara et al, *Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport*:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/304899/Quantifying\\_and\\_valuing\\_the\\_wellbeing\\_impacts\\_of\\_sport\\_and\\_culture.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304899/Quantifying_and_valuing_the_wellbeing_impacts_of_sport_and_culture.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Sousa, L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2001). Life satisfaction. In J. Worell (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of women and gender: Sex similarities and differences and the impact of society on gender* (Vol. 2, pp. 667-676). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

### *Medium term improvement in life satisfaction (lasting 1-7 days)*

- 4.3.5 A number of quotes included in the primary data touched upon the importance of classes of in terms of 'collective support'. This was especially noted in the relieving of feelings of bereavement. These statements help to illustrate the importance of the classes and classmates in increasing a sense of social connectedness and community. This sense of community is more powerful than simply being in a room with other people, even if they are people who know one another. The differentiation between social isolation and 'loneliness' is in the way social interaction impacts upon an individual. Loneliness, and its reduction, is an articulation of how an individual is feeling, regardless of how socially isolated that individual might be. For example, someone who meets over 100 people per week might still feel 'lonely', whereas someone who meets less than 10 people per week may not feel lonely at all. The quotations in figure 4.2 show that movement and dance classes can be sources of social connections that are *meaningful*, and therefore more effective in reducing loneliness amongst participants.

### *Long term improvement in life satisfaction (lasting longer than 1 week)*

- 4.3.6 The statements contained in figure 4.2 also describe longer term benefits to life satisfaction. Firstly, the improvement to physical fitness boosting one's self-esteem. This 'sense of self' has been shown to be important to an individual's level of self-esteem, which in turn has been shown to link directly to life satisfaction.

Figure 4.2: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped to improve life satisfaction through participation (Source: Primary Research)

# IMPROVED LIFE SATISFACTION THROUGH PARTICIPATION

The feeling of accomplishment can also lead to a better state of mind, like when a dancer finally gets a difficult routine or combination perfect, or the adrenaline rush of performance creates a feeling of happiness.

Many say they are not in the mood for dancing the class but afterwards they feel totally different energized and happy. People feel better afterwards especially if they have been feeling very low on arrival.

The class is a time for inner peace, to be present with the movements of the body, even when sitting and breathing or lying in relaxation, noticing how the body changes with the breath.

For carers or those with family responsibilities it is an hour to escape and just to be themselves.

A common quote I have from many adult students who attend my late evening class is 'I was nearly falling asleep on the sofa and I thought about not coming in, but I'm so glad I did because I enjoyed myself and feel so much better'.

Because my posture is better I can breathe easier and I feel calmer and less stressed.

Bereaved class participants say they are glad to return to class as they are with people who understand what they are going through.

Tension in the body creates stress and mental tension affects the way I think, the class releases tension from my body and mind.

People come to a dance class to unwind from their stressful lives, maybe because of work, children or even day to day living.

The social aspect is extremely important for many dancers, as friendly interaction with other members of the dance school is a big incentive for many people when choosing which classes to attend. In a one on one situation, many students will talk more in depth with their instructor as there is a feeling of trust which leads to the old adage 'a problem shared is a problem halved'.

After moving to a new city, joining a class has improved my general well-being.

Physical contact and touch - so many people live alone and have no physical contact with anyone. Classes allow personal contact in a safe space.

It is a safe space in which to feel lost within dance movement and escape from day to day life.

Dance classes can be a vital part of maintaining mental wellbeing for many people. Dancing releases endorphins and dopamine which are hormones which create a feeling of happiness.

The 'collective' support from the class when someone is going through a personal trauma is unquantifiable.

Dance classes can be a vital part of maintaining mental wellbeing for many people. Dancing releases endorphins and dopamine which are hormones which create a feeling of happiness.



## 4.4 Improved life satisfaction through volunteering

4.4.1 Figure 4.3 below shows how the consultees had noted their students benefited from improved life satisfaction through volunteering.

**Figure 4.3: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped to improve life satisfaction through volunteering (Source: Primary Research)**

# IMPROVED LIFE SATISFACTION THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

One lady I can think of knew no one in the area but through helping me at class she has a wide range of friends and she helps not just at my class, but volunteers at the church as well.

For many older adults in our dance communities the opportunity to volunteer to support events creates opportunity for wider engagement in their communities, to meet new people, to have a sense of focus and to play an active and important role in the community when they have maybe retired and want to take part in projects that are of their choosing.

Over the past 50 years I have loved doing classes with excellent teachers, keeping physically fit and healthy. As a committee member [...], it has kept me mentally active too.

I teach movement and dance on a voluntary basis myself. I get enormous satisfaction from so doing. Positive feedback from my classes makes me feel that I am doing something worthwhile. It lifts my spirits and gives me a sense of purpose. This is particularly so when participants say that my classes have helped with their posture, strength and flexibility. And that the classes have made a positive contribution to their mental health.

As a volunteer administrator for a national movement and dance organisation I have kept up-to-date with modern communication technology. This has been a huge boost to my self-confidence. Unlike many people in my age group (75+), I know I will continue to welcome the new and hold my head up high in tomorrow's world and that feels just great.

- 4.4.2 Expression of gratitude and 'feel good factor' was voiced throughout the statements, as well as a sense of purpose and value. This is especially pertinent for those who can no longer participate but take on voluntary administration roles. Through the demonstration of qualities, individuals can add value to life satisfaction through their responsibilities as a volunteer.
- 4.4.3 During the Covid-19 pandemic, volunteers have become a support system for each other and their participants which, in turn has improved their life satisfaction on many different levels. The role this support network has played for those individuals, as well as others, during the pandemic is thought to have been substantial, anticipated, and immeasurable.
- 4.4.4 Friendship and socialising were other factors that had influences on a volunteer's life satisfaction. As previously stated, loneliness and social isolation within older adults is shown to be higher. There is a high percentage of elder adults participating within the movement and dance division, in comparison to other activities<sup>6</sup>. Volunteering within this demographic could therefore have a significant positive impact on the lives of older participants.

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<sup>6</sup> Sport England. 2020. *Active Lives*. <https://activelives.sportengland.org/Result?queryId=41327>

## 5 Individual Development

5.1.1 This section focuses on the individual development benefits of dance and movement classes.

### 5.2 What does 'Individual Development' mean?

5.2.1 In the context of a social value of sport and physical activity study, individual development refers to more individuals regularly and meaningfully taking part in sport and physical activity, volunteering and experiencing live sport from all backgrounds<sup>7</sup>.

5.2.2 Previous government research has demonstrated the power sport and physical activity can have in affecting an individual's development across a broad spectrum of measures<sup>8</sup>.

5.2.3 Research demonstrates that participating in physical activity and sport can improve educational behaviour and attainment, through greater self-esteem and confidence and direct cognitive benefits. Further, this can also have a positive impact on the employment opportunities available to individuals; with sport playing a positive role in supporting those not in employment, education or training (NEETS)<sup>9</sup>.

5.2.4 These individual development benefits are typically an addition to the principal reasons an individual chooses to participate or volunteer in sport (such as health, fitness and socialisation)<sup>10</sup>.

5.2.5 Increased commitment has been made by the DCMS to ensure that public investment in sport acknowledges and promotes the greater benefits of sport to the person in particular employment-related behaviours and skills, by enhancing perceived 'self-efficacy'. This has been monitored and actioned through various scales which measure self-efficacy. A high level outcome for this scale would be to see an increased level of perceived self-efficacy in individuals<sup>11</sup>.

5.2.6 Research demonstrates that sport participation leads to a 1% increase in educational attainments in those aged 11-18 years<sup>12</sup>.

5.2.7 A further study has shown that graduates who participate in sport at university earn an average of 5% more per year than their non-sporting counterparts.<sup>13</sup>

5.2.8 Sport England research on SROI found that the overall contribution of sport and physical activity to participants was worth over £282 million. It should be noted, this value may underestimate the contribution of sport and physical activity to individual development, due to a lack of evidence relating to this output.<sup>14</sup>

### 5.3 Increased educational attainment

5.3.1 Figure 5.1 presents qualitative evidence that movement and dance classes can aid educational attainment in the following ways:

- Improved confidence
- Increased self-efficacy
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved concentration

<sup>7</sup> DCMS. 2016. *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486622/Sporting\\_Future\\_ACCESSIBLE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Sport England. N.d. Social Return on Investment of Sport and Physical Activity in England. <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-09/Social%20return%20on%20investment.pdf?5BgvLn09jwpTesBJ4BXhVfRhV4TYgm9E>

<sup>13</sup> Johnes, G. 2018. A sporting change: on the impact of sports participation on subsequent earnings. *Economics Bulletin*. 38, 1 (146-151).

<sup>14</sup> See 12.

Figure 5.1: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped a participant's educational attainment (Source: Primary Research)

# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The children (aged 7-8 years) were first tested to see whether they could complete certain physical tasks and if not joined my group. The behaviour of these children and their concentration levels improved.

Another girl who had learning difficulties learned to socialise by being part of a ballet class.

One young lad said that dancing, by himself, on a stage and in an exam gave him confidence, tested his nerves so he knew how to calm down for interviews later in life.

Belonging to a dance school, pupils mix with like minded children and make lasting friendships. This encourages the shy pupil to come out of their shells and makes them grow in confidence plus they discover the joy of performing and expressing themselves through Movement and Dance.

The children's classes (run by another teacher) we watch them grow in confidence and self-assurance each week.

One teacher explained how a teacher, working with a nursery class, said that there was a child on the autistic spectrum and through movement and dance sessions the teachers were able to observe with him, see his strengths and learn how to communicate.

With dance and movement I learnt how to train physically. I was not interested in sports, either competitive or games in PE, but I had a lot of energy. Dance focused this energy!

I watched a small girl who was selective mute, learn to express herself in movement until she was ready to speak.

Where movement and dance classes have a special influence is with children with English as an additional language. These children are exposed to a wide range of terminology and use of language in an active environment.

### *Improved confidence*

- 5.3.2 The quotations above serve as evidence that movement and dance is able to have an impact on an individual's confidence. This benefit is served regardless of age, gender or ability. Improved confidence was not only observed at lessons, but in their day-to-day tasks also. This articulates a critical link between the impact confidence can have on a person's level of life satisfaction, especially in young adults.

### *Improved self-efficacy*

- 5.3.3 Increased levels of self-efficacy in young adults have been shown to help achieve developmental tasks, this is also vital for healthy development and life satisfaction<sup>15</sup>.

### *Improved self-esteem*

- 5.3.4 The statements given above clearly demonstrate that children from different abilities overcame different barriers and grew through the opportunity of participating in movement and dance classes. It could be said that for some, these may not have been achieved in an alternative game/traditional sport or other physical activity.

### *Improved concentration*

- 5.3.5 Previous studies have shown that dance incorporates skills which improve concentration levels<sup>16</sup>. A number of the quotes above identify that the focus of some students has increased through their attendance to classes. This is understood to be derived across all age groups, through the learning of choreography and practising to music. As movement and dance is one of the most participated physical activities and sports by a mixture of ages as stated previously, this quality is known to be vital at different life stages.

## **5.4 Increased earnings**

- 5.4.1 Figure 5.2 below presents selected quotes from the workshops related to how movement and dance classes can contribute to an individual's earnings and career trajectory.
- 5.4.2 The variety and inclusiveness of movement and dance allows individuals of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to complete qualifications, both in practical examination and in teaching. As shown in the primary research, these have helped many individuals with future jobs, be that within the movement and dance division or by having transferable skills to boost their career prospects.
- 5.4.3 The movement and dance division have many widely accepted qualifications by many universities and colleges, giving individuals greater access to higher education and greater opportunities in education, which in turn, are more likely to lead to employment, and a higher earning job<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Çakar, F. S. (2012). The Relationship between the Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction of Young Adults. *International Education Studies*, 5(6), 123-130.

<sup>16</sup> Bastug, G. (2020). Investigation of Balance, Attention and Concentration Characteristics of Individuals in Dance Studies According To Gender Variable. *International Journal of Applied Exercise Physiology*, 9(9), 183-189.

<sup>17</sup> Department for Education. 2017. *Graduate Labour Market Statistics*.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/701720/GLMS\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/701720/GLMS_2017.pdf)

Figure 5.2: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped to increase earnings for the participants (Source: Primary Research)

# INCREASED EARNINGS

I left school with no qualifications other than hairdressing but when I trained as an exercise teacher in my 40s and 50s I joined organisations that have given me joy, satisfaction, keeping and helping others to stay fit, mobile and independent. If I had not been taken to a class over 50 years ago I would not be teaching now.

I moved up the ladder from teacher to trainer to assessor!

Pupils have worked through their Grades passing their majors, going to Dance Colleges, or going on to University for Degrees in Dance and teacher training within our Dance School. These qualifications open a number of job opportunities in State and private Education, the performance industries and running their own business. They have the confidence to apply for jobs all over the world if they wish.

Having no idea what I wanted to do as a career, except being told I was to be a secretary and that definitely not being my wish, as a 16 year old I suddenly realised I wanted to teach PE. This was not possible, but through movement and dance I have, as near as possible, realised that dream and it has taken me further than my original goal. I did have belief in my own abilities but the challenge for me was proving that I could achieve what I wanted and can continue to meet challenges ahead of me.

I know that some young adult's CV's have benefited from having dance on them, shows determination, perseverance, resilience, adherence and dedication – stickability.

For carers or those with family responsibilities it is an hour to escape and just to be themselves.

## 6 Social & Community Development

6.1.1 This section focuses on the social and community development benefits of dance and movement classes.

### 6.2 What does 'Social & Community Development' mean?

6.2.1 In the context of a social value of sport and physical activity study, social and community development refers to a more productive, sustainable and responsible sport sector. Whilst also developing individuals, through bringing people together, frequently from different backgrounds, sport can help establish stronger communities and make them feel positive about where they live, improve community bonds and cohesion, and build social capital<sup>18</sup>.

6.2.2 Literature shows that people who volunteer in sport are more likely to feel they belong in their area. Further, people who participate in sport are likely to enjoy stronger social links with others<sup>19</sup>.

6.2.3 DCMS began measuring social capital of sport by focusing on the level of social trust within communities. With the confidence that social capital will strengthen the sport sector and make it more effective and resilient, thus, increase levels of social trust<sup>20</sup>.

6.2.4 Data identified that sport participation leads to a 1% reduction in criminal incidents of males aged 10-24 years<sup>21</sup>.

6.2.5 Individuals who participate in sport and physical activity have shown increased social capital by demonstrating 10% higher social networks, trust and reciprocity<sup>22</sup>.

6.2.6 Volunteers who give up their time to an organisation generate non-market benefits. Respectively, a volunteer's time is worth at least the equivalent value of average hourly earnings<sup>23</sup>.

6.2.7 The body of evidence indicates that sport and physical activity has a positive influence on community development elements, but the exact scale of this effect is unclear. It is believed that the contribution of sport and physical activity to social and community development is currently underestimated. Nevertheless, £19.97 billion was generated as a result of social and community development outcomes in England<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Sport England. N.d. Social Return on Investment of Sport and Physical Activity in England. <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-09/Social%20return%20on%20investment.pdf?5BgvLn09jwpTesBJ4BXhVfRhV4TYgm9E>

<sup>22</sup> Gratton, C. et al. (2018 unpublished). Economic value of community club-based sport in Australia. Australian Sports Commission and Griffith University, Queensland

<sup>23</sup> Sport England. N.d. Social Return on Investment of Sport and Physical Activity in England. <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-09/Social%20return%20on%20investment.pdf?5BgvLn09jwpTesBJ4BXhVfRhV4TYgm9E>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

6.3 Reduced Crime

6.3.1 Figure 6.1 below presents selected quotes from the workshops related to how movement and dance classes can contribute to a reduction in crime.

Figure 6.1: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped to reduce crime (Source: Primary Research)

**CRIME REDUCTION**

Over the years I have been a Dance Teacher, I have observed that the dance classes keep youngsters involved in keeping fit, keeping healthy and less likely to hang around in youth gangs as they have a hobby that fully absorbs their interest and they form strong supportive friendships. Through the fitness of Dance and Movement they value keeping their body healthy and are more aware of their diet, and what goes into their bodies, and hopefully are less likely to be tempted with drugs and smoking.

There are a number of arts projects in my city that allow adolescents / young adults to access drama, dance, art, music education schemes for free or a very low fee. They offer training and support to help young people become involved in the arts for therapeutic benefit and to teach life skills, build resilience and increase employability. Although none of these groups could directly claim they prevent crime, (this link is more subtle) they do provide the opportunities to develop skills, to seek support, to build friendship and to access vocational pathways, all of which increase opportunity for employment and increase self-esteem which may well in turn have an impact on criminal behaviour in our area as much of the low level crime in our area is often linked to poverty and unemployment which then creates illegal activity and antisocial behaviour.

The infographic features a central title "CRIME REDUCTION" in large, bold, black letters. Below the title are two text boxes: a green one on the left and a light blue one on the right. A black silhouette of a dancer is positioned at the bottom left. The background is light beige with various green and blue decorative shapes and hand-drawn scribbles.



- 6.3.2 The exact scale which movement and dance has on crime prevention is challenging to measure. However, statements above strongly assert that movement and dance can have an impact on the reduction of crime. Specific research to support this assertion has been undertaken.
- 6.3.3 A study undertaken by Ozano (2008) on female prisoners concluded that access to sport and physical activity opportunities had a substantial impact on the prisoners, not just as a means of 'relief' but also as a conduit for other areas of personal development.

*"The women reported that sport served as a coping mechanism in prison, facilitating the release of aggression, stress, and anxiety while improving confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy as well as physical fitness, body image, and motivation toward achieving a healthier lifestyle. Women described how they had developed transferable skills and knowledge through sports-based qualifications, work experience, and participation that would support their rehabilitation in terms of gaining employment, leading healthy lifestyles, and encouraging alternative and constructive uses of leisure time after release."*

**- Taken from R. Meek and G.E. Lewis, 2014<sup>25</sup>.**

- 6.3.4 Building on Ozano's work, Meek and Lewis's 2014 study reach similar conclusions of the power of sport and physical activity support criminal rehabilitation. Their study, which included a tracking the benefits of a number of activities including yoga, identified the following areas of benefits to female inmates:

- Better coping mechanisms
- Improved self-esteem and well-being
- Weight management and healthy lifestyle
- Benefits in 'resettlement'
- Developing supportive relationships with staff<sup>26</sup>

- 6.3.5 The above academic studies help to demonstrate the relationship and corresponding social impact movement and dance opportunities can have in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

- 6.3.6 In addition, movement and dance has also been shown to be an effective medium of delivery in communicating important anti-crime messages to young people. One such example was the 'Snapdance' event held in Bedford in 2019:

"We used our innovative Snapdance concept to reach more than 100 children aged 11 to 14 with preventative knife-crime messages... The youngsters in attendance mixed with police officers and staff from [Bedfordshire Police] Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit as well as youth crime charity Fearless... Some of the feedback [received] from the families of those who attended has been remarkable and made the whole event worthwhile... This demographic is notoriously hard to reach, especially for services such as the police... In this case, the power of dance proved to be a medium through which [Bedfordshire Police] could breakdown barriers and ensure these important messages were heard at a crucial time of these young people's development."

**- Jonathon Vale, Head of Communications and Engagement, Bedfordshire Police, January, 2020.**

- 6.3.7 The examples presented above help to demonstrate some of the ways in which movement and dance can contribute toward the reduction of crime and antisocial behaviours in our communities.

<sup>25</sup> R. Meek and G.E. Lewis, 2014: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/28903879.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

## 6.4 Replacement of Work by Volunteers

6.4.1 Figure 6.2 below presents selected quotes from the workshops related to how movement and dance volunteers substitute the work of those who would be employed.

**Figure 6.2: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes are impacted by replacement of work by volunteers (Source: Primary Research)**

# REPLACEMENT OF WORK BY VOLUNTEERS

Organisations do not run themselves, and every teacher needs a well-run organisation to support them.

I would struggle to pay someone to clean the hall between my exercise classes. I am fortunate my class members volunteer to help wash the floor and sanitise the building etc.

A reduction in my net profit has to be weighed with my ability to 'make a living' which in turn exposes the children and society to all the benefits above.

My volunteers include: organising my annual rally - from tea making, selling tickets, and organising raffle. Teachers and class participants help on teacher training exam days.

Our organisation is run entirely by volunteers. We would not exist if it were not for those volunteers at national, regional and local level.

Our organisation would not function without the volunteers at every level. From the chairperson, (who gives hours and hours of her time) treasurer, committee members, teachers and class members all bring passion and a true understanding of the discipline that they belong to their roles which would be difficult if not impossible to replicate in a paid employee.

I do not have volunteers in my classes as all are qualified Teachers or employees, but dancing shows and performances just could not happen without my volunteers.

It would, I imagine, be a very costly process to pay someone else to do the jobs our volunteers do. Volunteers are so important because they are often likely to be people who have grown up through, know the workings, essence and ethos behind the discipline whereas an outsider might not. Volunteers should be highly valued.

- 6.4.2 It is clear that without the presence of volunteers within the movement and dance division, the division would not be able to showcase their talent and perform to the high standard that they currently do. Without the support and assistance of volunteers, many shows, and classes would not happen.
- 6.4.3 A running theme was that without volunteers, teachers would not be able to run their classes and organisations could not put on events and for some young participants, this is their first opportunity to volunteer by showing the audience to their seats etc. The movement and dance division relies heavily on their volunteers from Trustees, support staff, show and exam day helpers and chaperones and there is an ever-growing need for more volunteers with greater demand, with more people becoming involved in movement and dance.
- 6.4.4 In this case, the division does not have the monetary support to support volunteers. As previously stated, it can be calculated that a volunteer's time is worth an average individual's wage. It is not possible to calculate this without significant work. As shown throughout the statement, it is clear how much time and assistance is given by volunteers in the division and illustrating the capacity and social value is generated by movement and dance as a result.

## 6.5 Enhanced Social Capital

- 6.5.1 Figure 6.3 below presents selected quotes from the workshops related to how movement and dance classes can contribute to enhanced social capital.
- 6.5.2 Many statements give examples of the pride of being part of a team and having the opportunity to demonstrate and perform at local events like Christmas show or church country fayre. Within the United Kingdom, a country fayre is a traditional event which brings together the community, this includes shows, games and entertainment. Local opportunities like this lead to invitations to perform at regional and national levels representing their organisation at home and abroad, fostering a sense of belonging to both their local class, the dance community and their organisation.
- 6.5.3 It was clear from the primary research that being part of a movement and dance class gave individuals a feeling of belonging to their class and their organisation. Being part of the specific club or dance society gave the individual purpose, desire to perform and a shared drive to win. Thus, having a positive impact on the individual's social capital.
- 6.5.4 This sense of belonging can be found in children's and adult classes, and when participants are unable to dance, they remain connected through volunteering and having the opportunity to still be part of the movement and dance community.

Figure 6.3: Selected statements on how movement and dance classes have helped or understood to have helped the enhancement of social capital of participants (Source: Primary Research)

# SOCIAL CAPITAL

Being able to represent their classes at local as well as National events spurs the members on to be proud of their achievements and “not to let the side down” is foremost in their thoughts.

I haven't experienced participants have a pride of belonging to their town/village etc. but do have a pride in belonging to the class in the particular area, and the organisation as a whole.

Classes are part of the local community - the local exercise group, who has been meeting there for over 50 years was invited to perform at the church 90th anniversary.

They feel part of a community of dance enthusiast.

My school is in the town hall, in the town square in the middle of our local community. The students who attend our school, both children and adults tend to go to school together, work together or are part of other local events and on local committees together. As such our school takes part in local events, we will do a dance for the summer fete, or the Christmas lights switch on or the summer market days and actively take part in the celebrations within and about our community. In addition we also host community events such as a Christmas party and dance, local performances and workshops to which members of the broader community not just the school can attend.

Our Town holds many fund raising events throughout the year and my Pupils absolutely love performing in these events.

## 7 Conclusions and Recommended Next Steps

- 7.1.1 The report demonstrates how movement and dance can have significant benefits for individual and community wellbeing.
- 7.1.2 It is especially key to note the ability of movement and dance to access older age groups, which can be harder to engage for other activities. This means that the benefits derived from movement and dance based activities are amplified above those delivered by the majority of the sport and physical activity sector. This is especially relevant when considering both physical and mental health and mental wellbeing, as older age groups are known to be especially vulnerable in these areas. This should also be considered that if movement and dance based activity were to cease, replacing or replicating the value delivered by these activities to our society would be highly challenging.
- 7.1.3 This provides clear evidence that when individuals are advised to increase their physical activity, movement and dance classes should be promoted on an equal footing with other activities.
- 7.1.4 The Sport and Recreation Alliance recommends that greater support and time is needed to change the perception of the activities represented by its Movement and Dance Division within the physical activity sector, active leisure and organised recreation. The Alliance believes that significant additional strategic support is required to achieve the changes in perceptions and understanding of movement and dance. Such changes are necessary in order for movement and dance activities to be fully appreciated and realise their potential value to the nation.
- 7.1.5 Movement and dance as a division are highly reliant on volunteers. Therefore, to attract future volunteers, highlighting the benefits brought out in this report the Alliance hopes that members of the movement and dance division will be able to recruit more volunteers. In so doing, this will help members to increase their capacity in terms of the amount of social benefit they are able to produce.
- 7.1.6 Future research is needed within the Movement and Dance Division to produce a more representative report, this includes responses across a broader and larger demographic and to use a question bank that better reflects Sport England's preferred methodology for calculating social value.

- END -

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