

Making a Move

A strategy for the development of a professional framework for community dance

Information for organisations, employers and providers in the arts, sport, health, education, voluntary and social sectors

The Foundation for Community Dance is the UK strategic development agency for community and participatory dance. It is a membership organisation representing some 4,600 professionals - both individuals and organisations - who deliver and support dance participation in arts, community, health and learning contexts.

In the spring of 2005 the Foundation embarked on 18 months' extensive consultation - with its members, dance artists, organisations and employers - to research the potential for a framework to address the current and future development needs of the profession.

Making a Move is the result of this consultation. It sets out the Foundation for Community Dance's vision and strategy for developing a Professional Framework that will enable dance artists and companies, arts and non-arts employers and support organisations at local, regional and national level to undertake their work more effectively, with greater quality, satisfaction and recognition, and with greater benefit to the communities they work for and with.

This leaflet provides an overview of the strategy: it explains what the Professional Framework is, why it is needed, how it will work, what it will offer, and how we will make it happen.

What is it?

The strategy: Making a Move will lead to the creation of a Professional Framework for Community Dance. We see this Framework as an integration of information, guidance, resources, systems, individuals, organisations and networks that together form a coherent, comprehensive and flexible model of support that will:

- Support the provision of high quality participatory dance opportunities that contribute to the artistic, social, educational and cultural development of individuals and communities
- Communicate clear messages about the community and participatory dance profession: its core values, standards and commitment to quality
- Offer information, advice and guidance for individuals and organisations, to support their work with community dance professionals
- Provide accountability and quality assurance for employers
- Establish engagement in continuing professional development (CPD) as a core entitlement and expectation of professional practice in community dance
- Facilitate an effective network of support for CPD based on market need, with targeted provision and signposting for individuals and organisations

'Workforce development is increasingly a priority area for all arts practitioners. We all recognise the training and development needs of individuals within the arts sector and the equally challenging organisational development needs for arts organisations themselves. The Foundation for Community Dance is to be congratulated on its recent work mapping out the challenges and proposing an action plan for developing and implementing a professional framework for community dance.'

Pauline Tambling, Executive Director, Development at Arts Council England

Why is it needed?

The community and participatory dance profession is diverse and vibrant. It is a success story, with an unrivalled range of dance forms and styles, contexts within which it takes place and communities that it touches. It has a skilled and committed workforce that benefits from numerous routes into the profession, with different backgrounds, training and experiences. But it has no immediately recognisable or shared mechanism for defining quality, standards or competence and few means of describing progression and professional status.

Over the last thirty years, community dance has gained recognition as a distinctive area of provision underpinned by particular values and characterised by ways of working that place people, their aspirations, rights and choices at the heart of the practice. Its profile and impact within dance and community arts, and its contribution to cultural, political, educational and social agendas has seen an increase in the diversity of settings, providers, employers, participants and models of delivery associated with community dance.

Concurrently, the implications of government and sector policies on training and skills development and issues of quality assurance and legal compliance – health and safety, insurance, child protection - have become of greater concern for employers, providers and support organisations within the dance sector and beyond, and to community dance professionals themselves.

The profession has reached a crucial stage in its development, where to achieve professional recognition in this bigger picture requires a more robust stance: a capacity to identify and implement common, agreed principles and practice around standards, conduct, competence, legalities, quality assurance and a strategic approach to progression and professional development. Making a Move places this process in the hands of the profession itself, and will protect its core values and nurture the distinctive features of the practice, supporting ownership and proactive control of future direction. The Foundation for Community Dance will lead and champion this.

How will it work?

The Professional Framework is built around the central idea that quality community dance experiences are best delivered by highly skilled and professionally developed dance practitioners. The Framework supports this by communicating clear messages around quality whilst setting in place practical measures to enable professionals to progress their practice through engagement in CPD.

It does this through two strands:

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Communicates what we do, why we do it and how we do it: setting benchmarks for quality and supporting the adoption of shared standards. It includes:

A Statement of Values

The principle features of community dance and the values underpinning the practice

A Code of Professional Conduct

Benchmarks for safe, responsible and ethical working practices in community dance

Professional Competencies

The knowledge, skills and attitudes that underpin high quality community dance practice, including additional competencies for practice in specialised contexts

Support

Artists' guidelines, briefings, information and advice; a professional membership scheme; employers' guidelines

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provides support to enable individuals and organisations to progress towards increased quality and satisfaction in their own work. It includes:

The CPD Map

An interactive web-based map of CPD opportunities for community dance professionals across the UK

CPD Descriptors

To assist potential users to determine whether a particular CPD opportunity matches what they are looking for

Information, Advice and Guidance

Support for self-appraisal, CPD planning, career progression etc.

Support

CPD providers' forum; evaluation and feedback systems for CPD; CPD kite-marking scheme

The Framework is 'open', non-linear and flexible so that ways into it, routes through it and engagement with it can be different for everyone. The Framework is not a 'career ladder' or a training course, but more of a climbing frame: supporting individuals and organisations to get to where they would like to be.

It has been initiated by the needs of professionals working in community dance and they are its primary audience, alongside their employers and the people who participate in the dance activities they provide. But wider engagement is key to success, and The Framework affords numerous points of access and engagement for a wide range of existing and potential stakeholders.

For non-dance organisations, its immediate value will be access to information about participatory dance and what it can offer, a common baseline for dialogue with dance artists and signposting towards networks and potential partnerships for collaboration. The Framework will operate within existing infrastructures for dance, community arts and other professional sectors and sit alongside existing models for training, accreditation and professional development: our intention is to recognise and build on what already exists, and maximise resources; not to re-invent the wheel.

Where will it take us?

Making a Move will lead the community dance profession to a place where it is able to define and clarify its beliefs, professionalism and good practice for the benefit of itself and others.

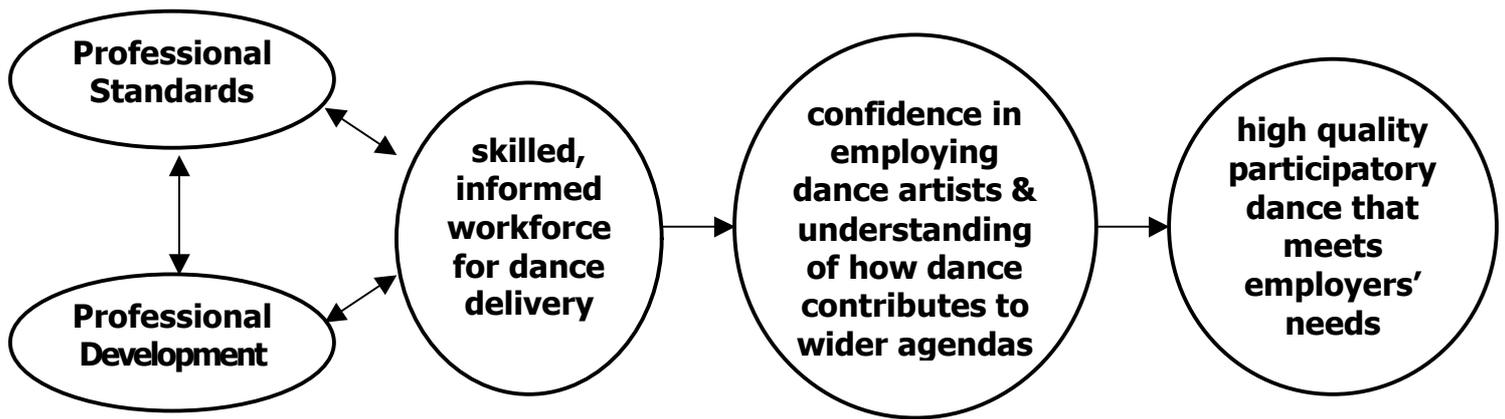
For organisations, employers and providers in the arts, sport, health, education, voluntary and social sectors, the Professional Framework offers:

Increased confidence in working with community dance professionals

- Better understanding of what community dance is and what community dance artists can offer
- Informed choices and increased confidence in selection and recruitment
- Matching of expectations between artists, employers and providers
- Accountability by community dance professionals: benchmarks for competence, conduct and legal compliance that are equivalent/comparable to those of related sectors e.g. health, education
- Stronger arguments for investment and engagement in community and participatory dance

Networks for professional support

- Guidance for employers in sourcing and acquiring quality dance provision
- Opportunities for employers to offer targeted support and guidance for artists who want to work in non-dance sectors
- Cross-sector dialogue and sharing of good practice: access to a knowledge base, transferable models of CPD, partnerships and potential markets



Making it happen

Making a Move will be implemented between 2006 and 2008 with a staged development plan of baseline research, commissioning, piloting and launch. This process will be led by the Foundation for Community Dance and will harness professional knowledge and expertise from across the dance and arts sectors.

We will work with individual artists and community dance organisations, strategic regional and national dance organisations, employers, CPD providers and non-dance sector organisations, funders and policy makers. There is a long way to go but the process is already underway, and we are working closely with Arts Council England – who have awarded us development funding - and Creative & Cultural Skills, the sector skills council for advertising, crafts, cultural heritage, design, music, performing, literary and visual arts.

'We will work with the Foundation to create a suite of professional standards on which to base community dance practice. This is not a constricting process – it creates a sound foundation on which dance practice can be built rather than a cage in which practitioners are required to operate. By defining our own standards we give a clear message to employers in the education, health, community and justice sectors, where many of our practitioners find their primary employment, on what we do and how well we do it.'

Tom Bewick, Chief Executive, Creative & Cultural Skills
Animated, Autumn 2006

Partnerships and collaboration will be central to success and it is through this process that a dynamic Professional Framework for Community Dance will come into being.

This is an exciting and important journey, and we hope you will join us and support us on the way.

A full version of Making a Move is available to download from the Foundation for Community Dance's website, together with more information about the initiative and an opportunity for you to pledge your support.

Visit www.communitydance.org.uk for more details.

Foundation for Community Dance is the UK development agency and umbrella organisation for community dance. Our vision is for a world where dance matters to everyone; our job is to embed participation in dance into society, people's lives and their communities.

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