

## **Making a Move**

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

## **Information for funding, policy and industry bodies**

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:

- Establish commonality and transferability of professional standards in community and participatory dance practice across the UK
- Support currency, compliance and progression within the profession, assuring quality of engagement for end-users
- Facilitate engagement by all stakeholders, cross-sector connectivity and rolling out of best practice and provision in training, employment and professional support

*'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 artists. 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 Continuing Professional Development (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.

The Framework 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 with The Framework is key to its success, and it is designed to meet the needs of a wide range of existing and potential stakeholders, affording numerous points of access and engagement.

By accommodating the diversity of practice, practitioners and providers within community dance, recognising a broad spectrum of employers (existing and potential) and addressing the interests of other sector professionals, non-dance sector providers, policy makers and funders, The Framework will enable the professional recognition of community dance from a position that is firmly embedded within existing cultures and infrastructures.

The Framework will sit alongside existing models for training, accreditation and professional development. It will enable dialogue between dance, arts and other professional sectors around shared agendas and concerns, establishing a greater collective voice within the arena of workforce development and employment. Our intention is to recognise, complement and build on what already exists, and maximise resources; not to re-invent the wheel.

## **Where will it take us?**

Making a Move is a dynamic response to the remit, mandated by Foundation members, and supported through consultation with other stakeholders, that will provide the community dance profession with a flexible, inclusive, integrated and robust professional framework. Its implementation will involve national and regional collaboration as well as organisational and individual commitment. Its impacts and benefits will be felt at all levels:

### **Individual:**

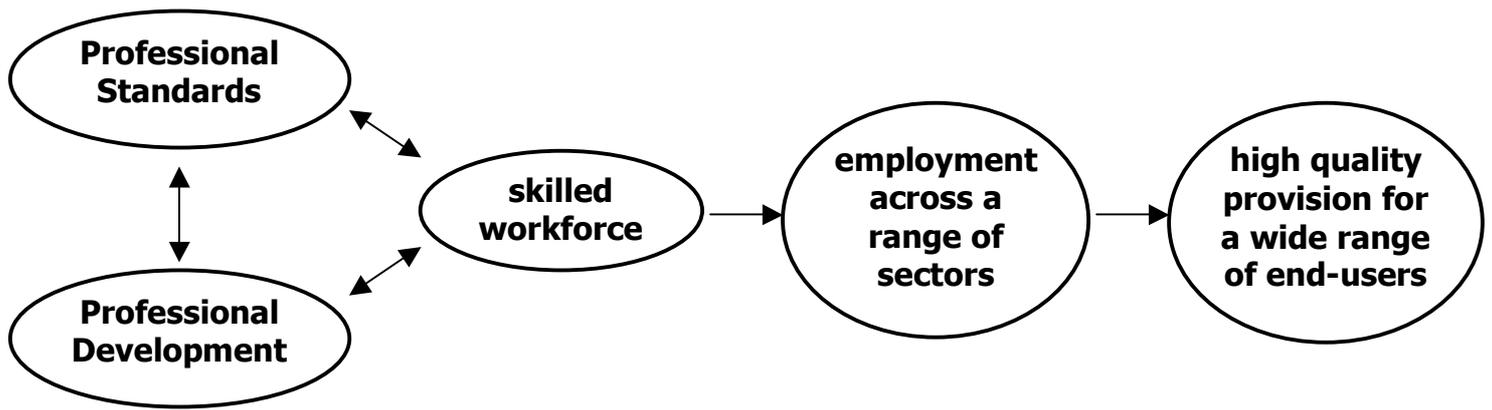
- Engagement in self-appraisal and professional development planning and evaluation against personal/professional development targets, framed by sector-wide benchmarks for professional standards
- Access to and engagement in CPD as a core entitlement and expectation of professional practice

### **Organisational:**

- Policy and infrastructure to support implementation and maintenance of professional standards in employment procedures, delivery of provision and monitoring of quality
- Policy and infrastructure for identifying needs and supporting individual and organisational progression through CPD

### **Regional / National:**

- A confident, informed, flexible, skilled, well-positioned workforce delivering high quality participatory dance experiences with and for a range of communities
- A sector-wide framework for the implementation of professional standards
- A clear positioning for sector-based standards, accreditation and CPD alongside existing national and post-qualification frameworks
- Greater co-operation between national and regional agencies: a more co-ordinated approach to workforce development and provision of CPD support appropriate to the whole range of sector needs



## 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](http://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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