Dance as an industry

It is estimated the dance economy employs around 30,000 people; dancers, teachers, choreographers, technicians and managers. In addition to this, people work in dance as community dance practitioners, promoters, producers, designers, publicists, technicians, physiotherapists, medical and alternative practitioners, therapists, writers and academics.

There are an estimated 200 dance companies in the UK. Dance also plays a central or supporting role in commercial and subsidised theatre such as West End musicals, and in opera, film, television, live music and video, corporate events, variety shows, clubs and many other industries.

The diversity of dance

There are many types of dance practiced and performed in the UK including: African, ballroom, bellydancing, Bharatha Natyam, bodypopping, breakdancing, classical ballet, contact improvisation, contemporary, Flamenco, historical / period, Irish, Kalari, Kathak, jazz, jive, Latin American, line dancing, national and folk, Raqs Sharqi, salsa, square dancing, street dance, tango and tap.

Beyond the traditional theatre context, dance artists create work for particular locations. Dance performances have been created for castles, disused factories, sports centres, shopping centres and other unusual locations across the country. Increasingly dance is being created for the screen and digital dissemination.

Dance organisations

The UK has a well-developed network of strategic support and development organisations for dance. They include:

- Dance UK
- The Foundation for Community Dance
- The Place Dance Services
- Youth Dance England
- Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD)
- The South Asian Dance Alliance
- The Council for Dance Education and Training
- National Dance Teachers Association
- Dancers’ Career Development
- Equity
• The Independent Theatre Council
• The Society of London Theatre
• The Theatrical Management Association
• The network of national dance agencies and smaller regional dance agencies in England, plus agencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which support, develop and promote dance for all and provide space, classes, performances, information and events.

Together, these agencies provide an infrastructure of support for innovation and experimentation that is the envy of much of the world, and of other art forms in the UK. Further information on and links to many of these organisations can be found on the Links and Resources section of this website.

Learning dance

Dance is part of the National Curriculum, and can be studied at further education and degree level, including MA and PhD levels.

The numbers of those taking GCSE Dance has increased from 2,752 in 1990 to 6,469 in 2000 (an increase of 235%). In June 2008, 17,855 candidates were entered into GCSE Performing Arts: Dance (source: AQA). On the other hand, those studying dance at AS and A level has increased from 352 in 1990 to 808 in 2000 (an increase of 229%).

There are around 22 dance colleges offering professional dance training courses accredited by the Council for Dance Education and Training and over 292 university courses with dance as a subject area.

An estimated 1,000 dancers graduate each year from the vocational training schools and university dance courses.

Research by the 'PE and School Sport Club links scheme' shows dance is second only to football as the most popular activity of school children (Source: PE and School Sport Club Links Scheme (PESSCL))

According to the 2007/08 HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) Student Returns, 1,220 pupils graduated with a degree in dance. (www.hesa.ac.uk)

The number of students taking GCSE dance has increased from 7,003 in 2001, 15,730 in 2005 to 18,866 in 2007. (source: The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance www.aqa.org.uk/index.php)

Six new Centres of Advanced Training (CATS) are to be opened between 2008 and 2011. They provide children with local access to the best available teaching and facilities alongside strong links with dance profession. Enabling the support of 1,500 talented young people: The current CATS are based in Newcastle (Dance City Academy), Leeds (Yorkshire Young Dancers), Ipswich (DanceEast Academy), London (Laban & The Place), Swindon (Youth Dance Academy), Birmingham (Momentum) and Nottingham (CAT East Midland).
The number of pupils choosing dance has risen 83% in four years, according to research by the Arts Council. A third of those are boys (www.theguardian.co.uk/14th March 2009)

Contemporary dance reaches millions of pupils through education programmes and visits. An example of this is Welsh contemporary dance company Earthfall who last year delivered 168 workshops in education to almost 4000 participants. (www.earthfall.org.uk)

Participation

Dance is important in education, health, social cohesion and regeneration. People dance for fun, recreation, social reasons and for health. Research undertaken by the Foundation for Community Dance identified over 73,000 participatory projects, engaging over 4.7 million people in 2000.

According to the Central Council for Physical Recreation, dance is a popular activity for 5 million participants, or 10 percent of the UK population. • Over 4.8 million people participate in community dance each year (Foundation for Community Dance).

ACW (Arts Council Wales) show that dance is the most popular participatory art form in Wales with around 200,00 people getting involved with ACW funded activity each year (Arts Council Wales www.artswales.org.uk)

Over 2005-2008 234,817 young people aged between 5 and 14 participated in Scottish Youth Dances’ Dance in Schools Initiative Program (www.ydance.org)

Youth Dance England’s new initiative U.Dance: the national dance performance scheme that gives every child and young person the chance to take part in a dance performance each year, was launched on April 2 as part of Youth Dance England’s Conference. U.Dance currently has approximately 27,257 children and young people from over 1,170 schools, taking part in over 140 dance performances across the country. (Youth Dance England www.yde.org.uk)

19,000 over 3 days (up from 12,000 in 2006) travelled to Move it! Dance London 2009 Britain’s only dedicated dance exhibition. (www.moveitdance.co.uk)

Research commissioned by Barclays shows that 76% of men now think dancing is a great way to keep fit and one in ten have actually taken up dance as a direct result of the ‘Darren Gough effect’.

The number of participants taking part in an English National Ballet Learning activity during 2007/2008 totalled 12,700. (English National Ballet www.ballet.org.uk)

Dance 4s (Nottingham) platform ‘Episodes’ is an opportunity for educational and community groups between the ages of 11-19 years to present their dance work to the public. Staged over two nights: it involved 298 performers and 1021 audience members. (www.dance4.co.uk)
Dance events and festivals

• Hip-Hop goes from strength to strength: Breakin' Convention is an International Festival of Hip Hop Dance Theatre. Originating in 2004 held at Sadlers Wells for two days, 3,600 tickets sold, 250 dancers performed. 2008 saw 300 dancers performing to 4,800 people over three days at Sadlers Wells, as well as a National Tour. (www.breakinconvention.com)

Dance Umbrella: dedicated to young British dancers and informing potential audiences about contemporary dance. 5,000 people attended the first Dance Umbrella festival in 1978. 33,000 people attended the 30th festival in 2008. With 13,000 tuning in on Youtube.com. (www.danceumbrella.co.uk)

Males in Dance

Dancer is third most popular profession choice for young boys

**Date Wed 21 August 2013**

To mark the launch of its ‘Born To’ range, which raises money for Save the Children, Mothercare asked over 1,000 UK children of between two and 12 years of age what they dream of becoming when they grow up.

Due to the popularity of dance shows like ‘Got to Dance’ and Strictly Come Dancing’, today’s children are twice as likely to want to be a dancer than their parents, with ‘dancer’ now featuring in the top four most popular jobs for children. Boys are dreaming of becoming the next Billy Elliot, with dance ranking in the tops three for boys – over fireman or policeman.

Despite the rise in popularity of celebrities and reality TV stars, children would rather become a doctor or a teacher (17%) than a celebrity and reality TV star (1%). When asked what was the most important aspect of a job the majority of children (34%) stated ‘having fun’ and ‘helping others’ (20%) was more important than being rich (18%) or famous (3%).

**Top five jobs for boys:**

- Doctor (11%)
- Footballer (10%)
- Dancer (8%)
- Teacher (6%)
- Police officer (6%)

**Top five jobs for girls:**

- Doctor (8%)
- Teacher (8%)
- Footballer (7%)
- Dancer (5%)
- Police officer (5%)