



**DANCE UNSTUCK SYMPOSIUM, 22 SEPTEMBER 2017**  
**SUMMARY NOTES OF AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS at Royal Academy of Dance**

**Workshop 1: What support is needed to enable examining / teacher training bodies to find their own teacher training model(s) and/or exam or progression procedures and guidelines to widen inclusion and access?**

Answers to this question (in order of the points/suggestions made most frequently across the 4 groups) were:

- 1. Support a review and carefully consider access within examination / progression routes, including:**
  - analysis of, and drawing on, what might be useful from other progression routes for disabled dancers/athletes: e.g. the German model (which doesn't include examiner assessment), dispensations in sport, Contemporary dance sector progression routes
  - Review of 'reasonable adjustment', including learning from how it's used in academia
  - Retraining of examiners
  - Review (open) assessment criteria; explore ways of ensuring we are not examining what cannot be assessed
  
- 2. Take time, a considered approach and partner with specialists to build cross-departmental internal staff expertise, confidence and understanding around disability inclusion, including:**
  - Developing more confidence in, and understanding of, Universal Design of Instruction as well as disability equality
  - Signposting to and interfacing with companies and mentors with expertise, information and experience
  - Courses/advice to clearly understand corporate responsibility
  - Considering a Change Agent model
  
- 3. Brokerage of cross-sector/organisation communications to support shared learning and solution-finding as well as stakeholder understanding, which could / should include:**
  - Open and transparent dialogue
  - Developing understanding of each other's different contexts and what impact improved inclusion in the private sector might have on business models, funding distribution, etc.
  - Use of social media platforms and website(s), e.g. Dance Unstuck
  - Addressing (mis)perceptions and appreciating the future potential of both ballet and/or disability/ability
  
- 4. Review and develop teacher training, building/drawing on existing good practice/models, for example:**
  - Learning from, and building on, any existing good inclusive practice, e.g. PGCE, DDTAL

- Considering compulsory CPD / work experience in inclusive dance, potentially utilising what's already available in the broader sector

**5. Support and reward/credit existing and new/emerging teachers to build confidence around access & inclusion, including:**

- Signposting to disability awareness training and sources of information / advice around disability inclusion
- Brokering connections (e.g. peer learning) to help overcome anxieties and build confidence
- Consider awarding credits for teachers who engage / progress their expertise and confidence

**6. Provide / source subsidy to support disabled dancer access, potentially exploring:**

- A bursary fund (through charity status of awarding body and/or sponsors)
- Applications to ACW / ACE for dance to establish chains of expertise and subsidised training

**7. Devise an access and inclusion improvement plan, set clear targets and report against them**

**8. Review use of language**

**Workshop 2: What might an inspiring, thought-provoking advocacy campaign look like; to raise a sense of excitement around how a greater diversity of dancers could enrich perceptions of what ballet 'is' or could be?**

Each group considered the target audiences, key messages, the elements of (and tools that could be used for) a potential campaign, and which organisations might play a role in delivering it:

**Target audiences:**

- Dance teachers
- General society, children (all)
- Families with disabled children and their networks, e.g. physios
- Funders, charities, sponsors, investors (who could assist with access costs)
- Disabled and non-disabled artists
- Schools - mainstream & private
- Youth and professional ballet companies
- Dance development teams
- Teacher training providers
- Theatres / programmers

**Key messages:**

- Ballet is inclusive / for all (use inclusive language and realistic images)
- Join / work with us to help progress towards improved inclusion (honest acknowledgement that things are not perfect but can be improved if we work together; maintain open dialogue)

- There are exceptionally able disabled dancers (and the sector needs to be training more)

#### **Ideas for potential delivery partners:**

- Safe in Dance International
- OneDance UK
- Ballet Cymru
- Scottish Ballet
- English National Ballet
- English Federation of Disability Sport
- London Studio Centre
- Royal Academy of Dance
- ISTD
- CDET
- Vocational course providers
- Disability Arts International
- People dancing
- Candoco

#### **Campaign elements:**

- Role Models (disabled and non-disabled) - visible diversity
- Workshops led by role models in schools (mainstream and private) evidencing what is possible (combatting charity model of disability)
- Training / guidance for institutions (to prepare for campaign)
- Pot of funding to support those who react positively/ want to learn/engage
- PR/Marketing - e.g. articles in RAD Dance Gazette, Dancing Times, etc.
- Advertising, including piggy back on related high profile initiatives / TV programmes, e.g. [Marc Brew](#) on panel of [BBC Young Dancer](#), [This Girl Can](#), etc.
- Advocate through living it and doing it (support and profile inclusive companies)
- Pairing young dancers with older children and/or professionals
- Be open and honest about current provision and knowledge
- Social Media: on line forum, digital strategy, online mentoring
- Audience development: programming / raising awareness of quality work, e.g. [Unlimited](#), inclusive companies, [Stopgap IRIS](#)
- Story telling: through visual media (film, collection of videos, case studies), raising understanding of what the journeys were
- Physical - research study with physios (safe practice, [Safe in Dance International](#)) & work with teachers, boosting confidence around working within different ranges of movement
- Change perceptions through strapline, e.g. 'Every body can dance'

### Workshop 3: What training and / or support do you think dance teachers need to enable more confident engagement with the Disability community?

Answers to this question (in order of the points/suggestions made most frequently across the 4 groups) were:

**1. Teacher training:**

*a. CPD in both inclusive teaching practice and around disability for existing, qualified teachers, with clarity as to how this might be administrated / provided and promoted, with careful consideration of:*

- whether the teaching CPD should be pitched as disability inclusion specific (as it's just good teaching practice)
- utilising / building on existing provision
- whether it should be compulsory or not
- how to support development of more disabled teachers as role models

*b. Inclusive teaching approach(es) embedded in initial teacher training (that acknowledges language and sub-conscious bias)*

**2. Support teachers through any apprehension and promote the broader benefits of good inclusive teaching practice and disability inclusion, e.g. through use of case studies**

**3. Disability and access guidance around recruitment, enrolment and local infrastructure and support, e.g:**

- Providing guidelines / templates
- Giving information on local disability charities / inclusive dance organisations through which to reach the target market'
- Information on local funds and sources of support for access

**4. Clear, distilled guidance around inclusion and access legal requirements and expected quality standards, through:**

- joint working / consistency across examining/teacher training bodies including around what minimum requirements should be
- considering where the best online platform(s) may be for centralised information, signposting, etc

**5. Buddies system, supporting sharing of knowledge and experience between teachers, different dance schools, assistants/Dance Support Workers and students**

**6. Support with communications and language (around disability but also teaching language that improves access), including in promotional material**

**7. Support to explore (or guidance on what has worked in other schools/studios) an accessible class structure which doesn't destabilise functioning business models**

**8. Positive recognition for flagship inclusive schools, building on systems already in place where possible (e.g. Dance for Change Network inclusion & access self-evaluation tool)**

**9. Support and guidance around safe practice**

**10. Broader inclusion of dance schools / stakeholders in the process of improvement**

**Workshop 4: What funding model(s) and local infrastructure is needed to enable improved access to private and/or community dance classes at grassroots level?**

Each group considered where subsidy/financial support is required and, subsequently, what funding model(s) might work well. They also noted where more information / research is needed to inform a robust proposal as to which model(s) are likely to meet need effectively.

The summary (across the 4 groups) of points/suggestions made is below:

**Where the money is needed:**

1. Directly by disabled children / their families (built around individual need) to support with transport, dance support workers and/or additional support staff, potential extra coaching class costs, etc.
2. By central organisation(s) to get the sector ready; to drive and support sectoral change and cross-sector development, including:
  - To provide advocacy, training and CPD and/or signposting services
  - To continue to research and build skills and understanding, as well as an evidence base
3. By examining / teacher training bodies, including:
  - To buy capacity / time to undertake internal review and development work
  - To review teacher training and examination models and qualifications
4. By organisations providing specialist dance services / localised support:
  - To ensure balance between support for the private sector and subsidised organisations providing specialist, disability-specific services (which will still be needed)
  - Potentially buying capacity / expertise to submit applications with / for private sector partners
5. By teachers to support their professional development, including building confidence around disability awareness / equality and in inclusive teaching approaches
6. By private dance schools to help improve access, including physical access (capital / technology / equipment grants) and to access audits, expert consultancy, support workers and/or to subsidise extra coaching classes / disabled dancer induction

## Potential sources of funds / ideas for models:

### *At a local level for parents/disabled children:*

- PE + Sports premium (through schools)
- Individual budgets
- Distributed funds (via ACE / DfE...?): pocket of money at local level (held by LA or community trust / arts charity..?) to which parents could apply to support access costs
- A bursary fund raised / held by the relevant examining body?
- Centralised, locally available information on what funding / support is available and what people are entitled to, with clear guidance about what each fund can be used for (currently it can be confusing and many people don't know what they're entitled to, so miss out)

### *At local level for dance schools / centres:*

- (as above) centralised, locally available source of information re. funding / support
- A fund (or better distributed information regarding existing capital funds) to support physical access improvements; also consider incentives for dance schools to make improvements (e.g. in Canada, you can't get business licence if not physically accessible)
- Parent/ community funding
- Online fundraising (e.g. Just Giving)
- Local business sponsorship
- Via grants secured by a local subsidised arts/dance charity partner (e.g: who can then provide subsidised/free consultancy, training, sharing of practice, etc.)
- Loan/ investment schemes

### *For review / development:*

- Examining bodies themselves (are there existing funds &/or could they build the necessary work into usual review and development processes?)
- Trusts / foundations / arts councils

### *For teacher training:*

- Public/private funders may invest in time-limited initiative to support inclusive practice development cross-sector (private & subsidised sector teachers/leaders)
- Subsidy to the training provider(s) so training free or more affordable to private sector teachers, and/or
- Bursaries for private sector teachers, or
- Teachers could pay for the CPD in the way they usually would but provide incentives, e.g. if they complete training/mentoring, they can access free consultancy and/or a grant to improve access at their school (NB. monitoring would be needed in this model)
- PE + Sports premium (can be used for teacher training; could it be used to benefit both in-school and private/charity sector teachers)?

### Further information / research required:

- Analyse how the lack of sustained subsidy at grassroots level (most project-funded) has impacted on disabled children's access to / progression routes through dance (and the number able to train consistently)
- Campaign for funders to think differently regarding the apparent value imbalance between 'community' / participatory + professional dance; as the former helps artists sustain careers and creates tomorrow's artists as well as audiences. (it was noted that ACW is already shifting these values: an example to draw on)
- Explore with funders how re-thinking how/where funds are distributed and finding ways of aligning with the private sector infrastructure could multiply the number and diversity of dancers (and, amongst them, future artists) gaining access to the arts (it was noted that, currently, ACE funds are distributed mainly to a finite group of organisations resulting in geographic inequity in disabled dancers' access to the sector)
- Explore / develop a central agency to look cross-sector / cross-region: establish what is already available and build on and respond to that
- Be mindful in reviewing/changing funding systems that monitoring (checking money is being spent in the 'right' places / ways) is a consideration
- Do more research around what the market is, as funding follows demand
- Carry out further research to find what the needs are; then, propose to funders what the split should be between existing funded organisations and to support access through the private sector
- Explore how to capitalise on the remaining infrastructure of subsidised dance/cross-arts organisations or wider local charity infrastructure to address the fact that private businesses would struggle to access funds (they're not registered charities, funding is burdensome requiring specialist skills / capacity + trusts/foundations won't fund private businesses)
- Explore if there's a way of managing treasury vs lottery funds in a different way (as latter has more restrictions)