



Jan Burkhardt

Strategic Lead for Dance in Health & Wellbeing

# Objectives

Outline the case for dance in reducing gender, age and disability inequalities.

Summarise the evidence base and research on the health benefits of dance across the life-course.

Present case studies of dance programmes meeting health and wellbeing outcomes.

Introduce relevant data and tools demonstrating how these can be used to evidence the contribution of dance to physical activity



# Dance in Health & Wellbeing

One Dance UK and People Dancing Partnership



Our vision: Reducing health inequalities and  
tackling inactivity through dance

# Our membership



@onedanceuk

# Tackling Inactivity

“Epidemic of physical inactivity”

Fourth greatest risk factor for poor health in England

Contributes to 1 in 10 deaths in the UK equal to smoking



# Public Health England: Everybody Active Every Day (2014)

## DCMS: Sporting Future Strategy (2015)

Physical activity defined as: sports, dance, walking, cycling

WHO: Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (2018) “walking, cycling, active recreation, sports, dance and play”

Sport England: Towards an Active Nation (2016 -2021) Funding “wide and varied dance forms”



# Sports and Dance...cultural forms of physical activity

Football  
Badminton  
Boxing  
Baseball  
Cricket  
Cycling  
Golf  
Hockey  
Netball  
Tennis  
Running  
Swimming  
Ultimate Frisbee  
And many more...

Hip Hop dance  
Ballroom & Latin  
Contemporary dance  
Jazz dance  
Creative dance  
African dance  
Cheer dance  
Ballet  
South Asian Dance  
Jive & Lindy Hop  
Folk Dance  
And many more...

# Engaging girls

Only 16% of girls compared to 24% of boys meet physical activity guidelines (HSE)

41 % of girls aged 5 – 10 years old took part in dance outside of school. (DCMS 15/16)

Survey of over 50,000 Year 9 pupils - dance most popular activity for girls outside school





Gender inequality...



# Early years

Dance can improve cognitive, physical development and social skills.

Activities can include:

Parents and toddlers dance sessions

Pre school dance classes and performances

Promoting dancing as fun indoors activity



Bradford Early Years Dance Pilot Evaluation

<https://www.danceinhealthandwellbeing.uk/early-years-under-5-s>

# Review of Effects of Dance Interventions on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People (Burkhardt & Brennan, 2012)

Evidence of health improvements in:

- Cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, improved bone mass content, reduced obesity
- Psychological - reduced anxiety levels, enhanced self esteem and self concept

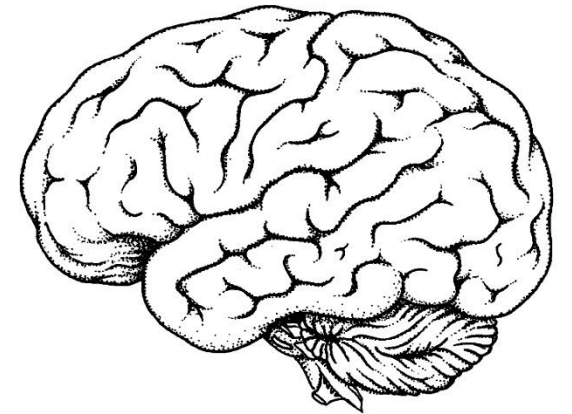
## Evidence for Dance

Dance therapy improved quality of life, self-esteem, or coping with a disease

*Strassel, JK. Cherkin, DC. et al. A systematic review of the evidence for the effectiveness of dance therapy.*

Dance promotes vital skills for learning such as attention, memory and cognitive flexibility

*Hanna, J.L. Dancing to Learn; The Brains Cognition, Emotion and Movement. 2015*



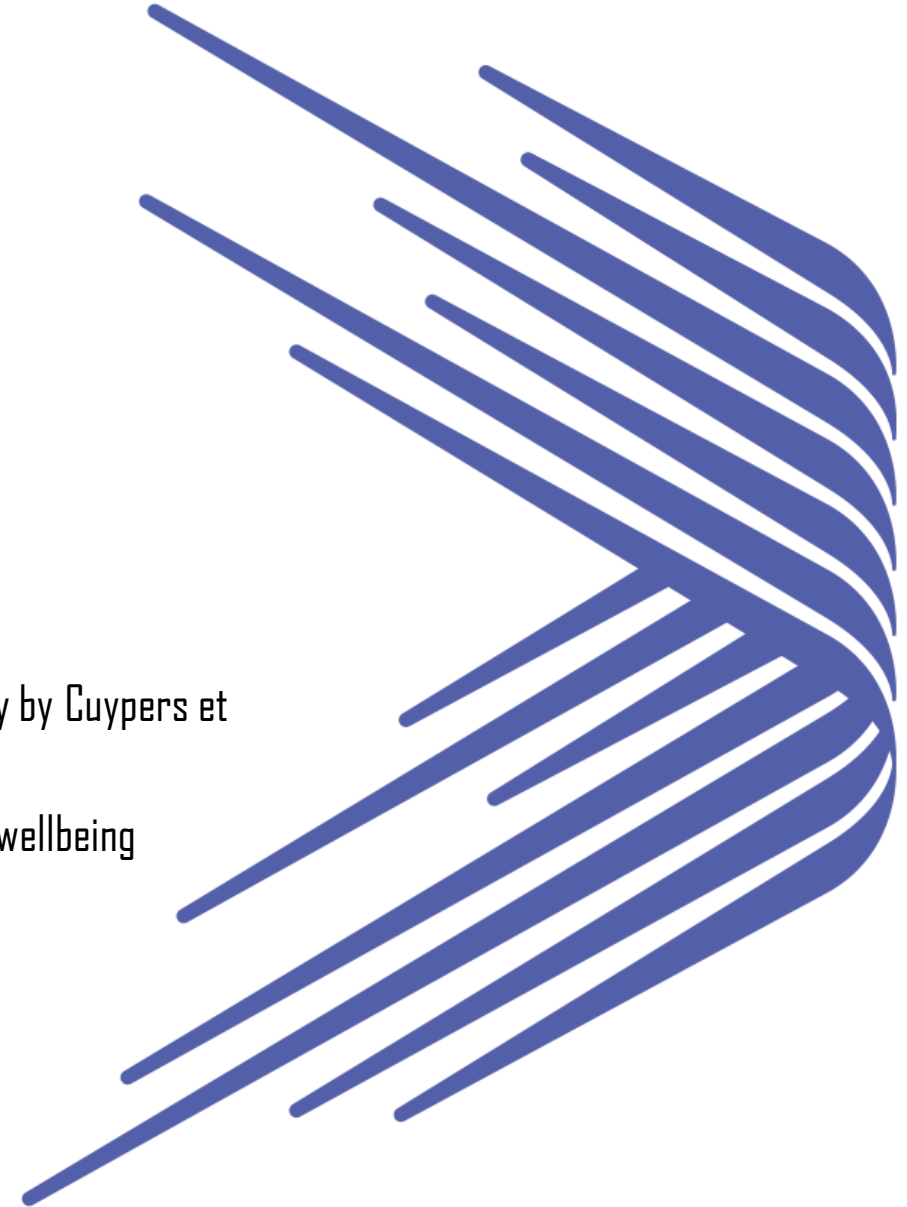
# Creative and cultural engagement and health

## Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing

*APPG on Arts and Health and Wellbeing, 2017*

Cultural participation has been associated with perceived positive health and wellbeing in a study by Cuypers et al. (2010)

Leisure activities, including learning arts and creative activities can increase mental health and wellbeing (Caldwell, 2005).



## PE & School Sport Premium doubles 2017/18

“introduce new sports, dance or other activities to encourage more pupils to take up sport and physical activities” DfE guidance



# Dance Action Zone Leeds (DAZL)

Reducing inequalities through dance

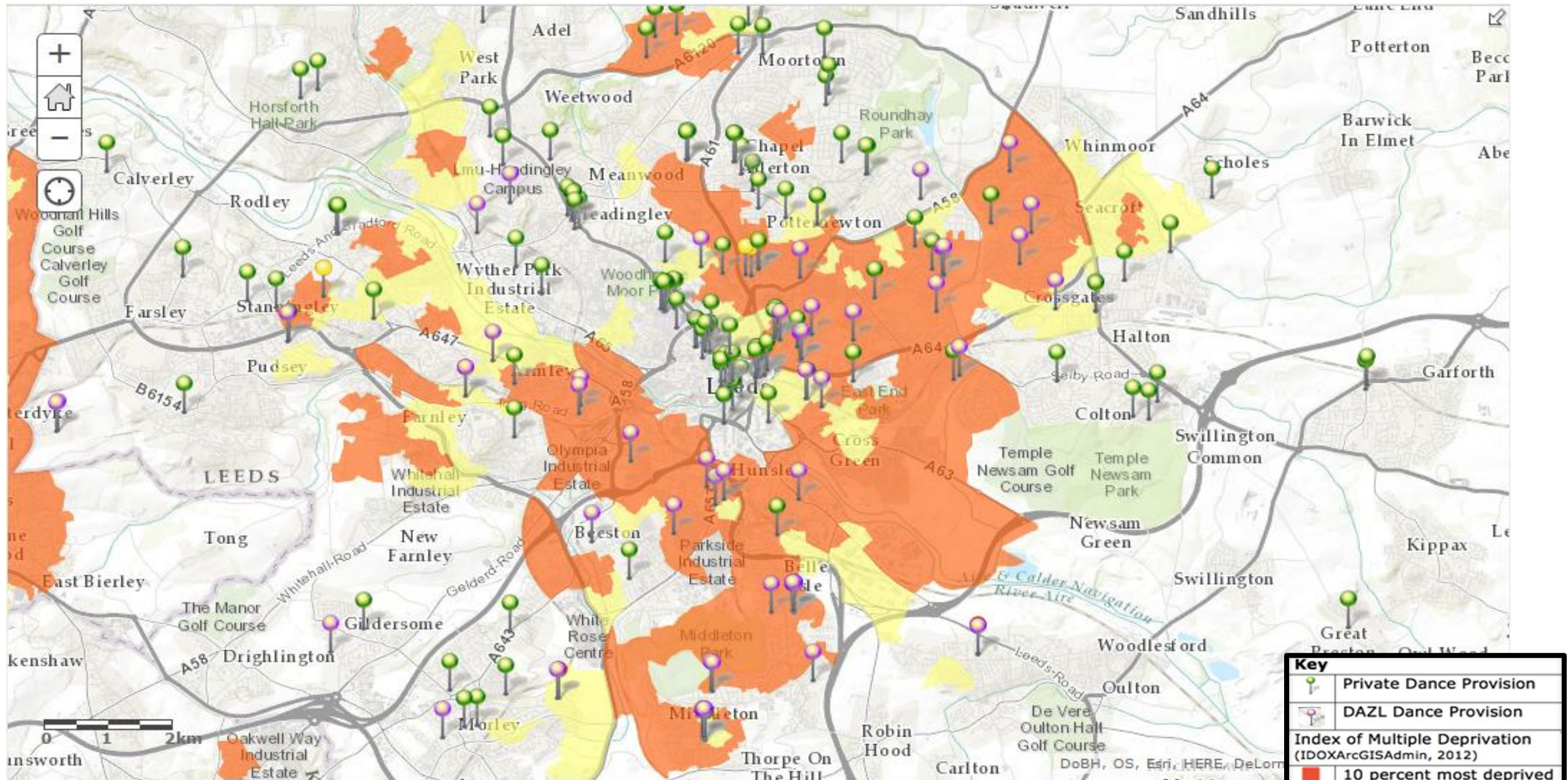
Public Health commissioned

Engaged over 1000 children and young people per week in regular dance activity in the lowest 20% SOA in Leeds

- 76% female
- Community centred approach

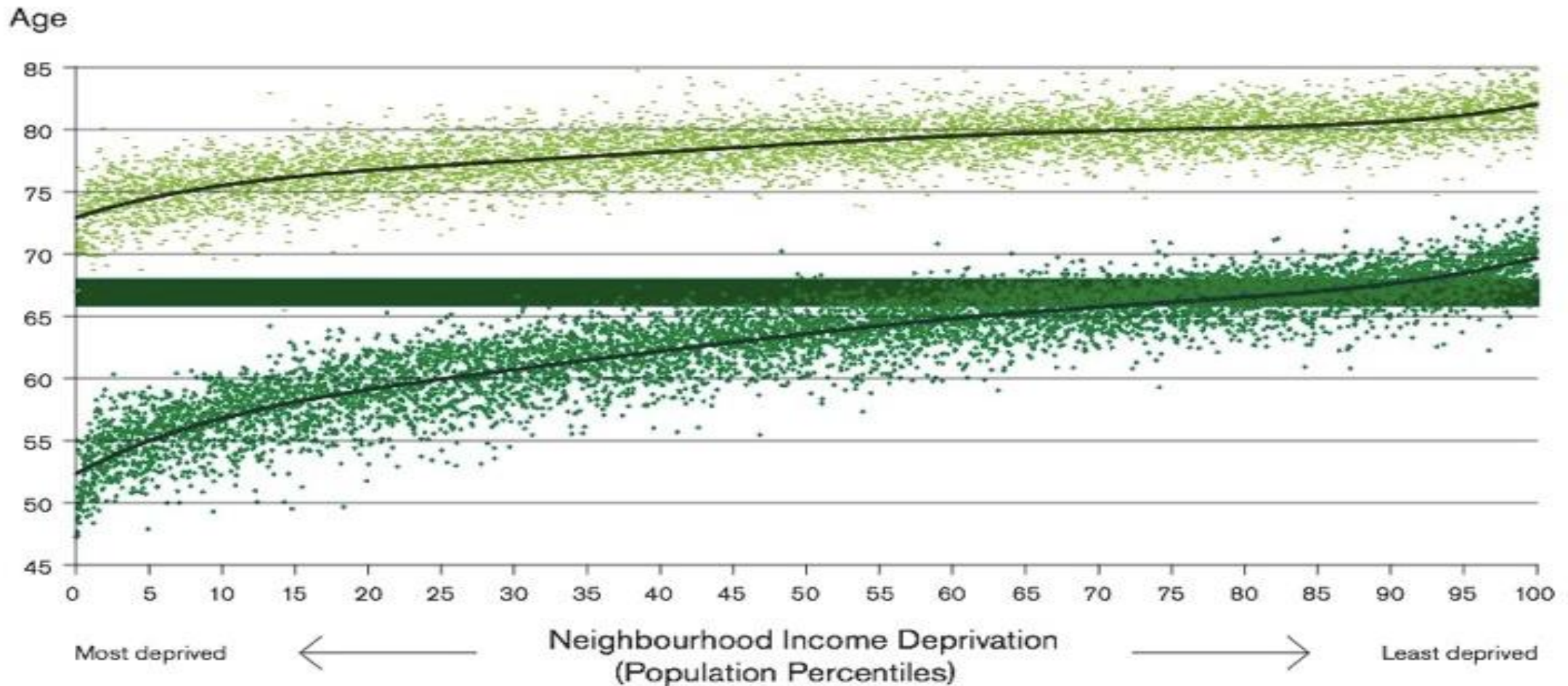


# Research Leads Beckett University: Dance provision in Leeds (IMD areas)





**Figure 1.1** Life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy (DFLE) at birth, persons by neighbourhood income level, England, 1999–2003



- Life expectancy
- DFLE
- Pension age increase 2026–2046

# Older Women

Only 6% of women over 75 are active enough

Studies show dance can:

- Improve mental wellbeing and cognitive function
- Reduce cardiovascular risk, risk of falls and social isolation

Comparative studies: dance showed the greater improvements in balance and cognitive function

**AESOP** Dance to Health Programme

<http://dancetohealth.org/>



# Dance On Programme



YORKSHIRE  
DANCE



## £495,000 dance programme to tackle inactivity in older women 65+ years

- Disadvantaged areas of Leeds, Bradford and Doncaster
- PA “disguised” in fun, social dance activity
- Improved mobility and mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation.



# Yorkshire Dance - Dancing in Time

Over 90 % those engaged were women

Research by University of Leeds:  
Statistically significant increases  
in moderate intensity physical  
activity, improved mobility and  
mood and reduced social  
isolation.



# Research design

Quantitative and qualitative research methods:

- Inactive to active (30 mins MIE) – PA self report
- Accelerometers...challenges of measuring dance
- Balance and mobility - Timed up and go test
- Health economics – EQ\_5D
  
- Cognitive function
- Social isolation

# Reducing health inequalities

Social Inclusion

Health education

Cultural cohesion



# Why dance matters

“it is fun” and a social activity; can reach inactive people who are not motivated by health or fitness

It is popular with underrepresented groups:

- Women and girls
- Older people
- BAME communities – cultural cohesion
- It can be an inclusive, non-competitive activity for people living with long term conditions and disabilities



# Progress so far 2012 - 2017

- Commissioning guidance
- National advocacy and partnerships – PHE, DH, Arts Council
- Dance and Health Links – Yorkshire and Greater London
  - 6 Dance and Health training days -158 dance managers/artists trained
  - 6 Dance and Health Links Events – 312 health/wellbeing/dance professionals engaged in networking
  - £164,000 investment from health sector

# National Dance Network

Akademi, Hampstead (London)

Coreo Cymru, Cardiff (Wales)

Dance 4, Nottingham (East Midlands)

Dance Base, Edinburgh (Scotland)

Dance City, Newcastle (North-East)

Dance House, Glasgow (Scotland)

Dance Manchester, Manchester (North-West)

Dance Umbrella, London (South-East)

DanceEast, Ipswich (East Anglia)

DanceXchange, Birmingham (West Midlands)

Déda, Derby (East Midlands)

East London Dance, Stratford (London)

Greenwich Dance, Greenwich (London)



National Dance Company Wales, Cardiff (Wales)

One Dance UK, London (UK-wide)

Pavilion Dance South West, Bournemouth (South-West)

Royal Ballet Studio Programme, London (South-East)

Sadler's Wells, Islington (London)

South East Dance, Brighton (South-East)

Southbank Centre, Southwark (London)

Swindon Dance, Swindon (South-West)

The Place, Bloomsbury (London)

The Point, Eastleigh (South-East)

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Greenwich (London)

Yorkshire Dance, Leeds (Yorkshire and the Humber)



# U•DANCE™



# Next steps...

- Integrate dance in the physical activity and health and wellbeing agenda: “think dance”
- Mobilise the dance sector to tackle inactivity
- Pilot regional development programmes



<http://www.danceinhealthandwellbeing.uk>

[Jan.burkhardt@onedanceuk.org](mailto:Jan.burkhardt@onedanceuk.org)

Sign up to e-newsletter on our website