



**WALES WIDE TRAINING PROGRAMME
MANAGED BY RUBICON DANCE**
Impact Report
2025 – 2026



“WWTP is more a family than a ‘programme’ providing essential points of connection for those working in the sector to meet, learn, discuss, be challenged and grow. It is especially valuable for freelancers who can feel isolated and alone. It is affordable and always of exceptional quality. There is something for everyone from recent graduates to seasoned professionals. Through WWTP you can always find support, kindness, encouragement and the belief to carry on working in tough environments through dance. Many have remained in the sector because of the consistent support offered through WWTP.” (Heidi Wilson, Senior Lecturer in Dance, Cardiff Metropolitan University)

Introduction

The Wales Wide Training Programme (WWTP) is managed by Rubicon Dance and in March 2026 it celebrated 13 years of serving the dance sector in Wales. Primarily a training programme for those working in dance, WWTP aims to inspire and sustain community dance in Wales by providing training which is responsive to sector need. The 2025/2026 programme was supported by a Create grant from the Arts Council of Wales with match funding from The Waterloo Foundation.

“Wales Wide Training Programme (WWTP) enables those involved in working in community dance across Wales to come together to develop skills needed to sustain careers whilst reducing professional isolation. The project brings together like minded organisations and individuals to share practice so that practitioners have the tools they need to reach diverse communities and to be as inclusive in all their work as possible giving opportunities for all.”
(ACW Application)

The sector is fragmented and fragile and this was recognised in the Dance Review commissioned by Arts Council Wales, hence a revision to the current Wales Wide Training Programme with a commissioned strategic grant from Arts Council of Wales. The Dance Review was published in December 2024 which stated:

“Wales once had a globally respected community dance sector, but under-investment in infrastructure and artists has caused fragmentation Many practitioners find themselves trapped in a hand-to-mouth existence, focusing on micro-level survival rather than contributing to sector-wide development. This diminishes professional standing and exacerbates challenges such as low pay and demanding schedules. The lack of ‘glue’ holding the community dance sector together was often mentioned.”

WWTP has sought to provide this ‘glue’ by connecting a network of 29 partners, 226 freelancers and 511 attendances during 2025/26 who worked together to support training and professional development for the community dance sector across Wales. Through its core activities WWTP aims to contribute to workforce development and enhanced community dance provision through relevant, regular and varied opportunities for dance practitioners at all stages of their career journeys. It aims to do this by:

- Developing and upskilling the dance workforce in Wales in order to ensure ongoing quality improvement and the development of new areas of practice which will address strategic priority needs;
- Enhancing employment opportunities and meeting the demand for skilled dance practitioners to bring community dance to a wider audience;
- Cultivating and sharing best artistic practice and encouraging innovation;
- Reducing professional isolation;
- Supporting specialist practice in those areas identified as strategic priorities by the sector such as Dance and Health;
- Supporting the sustainability of the sector through ensuring the workforce is fit for purpose as well as socially, economically and emotionally supported.

Partners include not only community dance organisations and individuals, but venues, universities and national companies from across Wales stretching from Powys, Carmarthen, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caernarfon, Monmouthshire, Ceredigion, Cardiff, Llanelli to Flintshire.

In 2020 a review of the work of WWTP to date was published and since that date ongoing research, evaluation and consultation has continued to provide evidence of impact and has highlighted the ongoing demand for a training programme that responds to the strategic needs of the sector. This 2025/2026 impact study continues to present and summarise the learning building on a pre-existing wide range of evidence, blogs and publications including a film and blog which are listed at the end of the review.

The Programme

Since its inception in 2013 the programme has sought to include a wide range of activity and training approaches in order to address the diverse and strategic needs of a sector facing ongoing change. Initially, it was largely delivered through a series of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days which took place across Wales and were hosted by WWTP partners. But, as the pandemic hit in March 2020 the strands of work were adapted. The programme grew exponentially, perhaps because most of the activity was delivered online, it became more accessible as travel and accommodation were no longer barriers. Therefore, many of the approaches adopted have been maintained with the activity balanced between face to face and online access to activities and events. Ironically this might reduce the impact of face to face networking and this will be considered later in the review.

In 2025/26 there were 88 distinct events including the following 13 strands of activity:

- CPD training programmes – face to face in three geographical areas of Wales with follow on online sessions to share learning x 6
- Shared Practice Forums led by WWTP partners x 2
- Graduate information sessions x 2
- Network Meetings x 9
- Partner Meetings x 9
- Guest Talk Series x 6
- Creative Practice & Wellbeing One to One Support Sessions x 9
- Welsh Language Support One to One sessions for beginners and improvers x 15
- Sharing of Practice Sessions x 21 ¹
- Evaluation Support One to One Sessions x 6
- Impact report (annual) x1
- Case study on an element of WWTP (annual) x1
- Film to highlight the success of an element of WWTP (annual) x1

The work of WWTP is therefore equally relevant to individual practitioners as well as the dance organisations, other arts organisations, venues and cross sector employers who employ them to support their programmes.

During 2025/26 WWTP continued to increase the number of disabled practitioners (8) participating in the programme both as event leaders and participants, the numbers of people who were Welsh speakers (13) and those identifying as global majority (12) - There have been 49 new participants accessing WWTP who've not done so before. Together these numbers indicate the further expansion of the programme artistically and in terms of reach.

¹ These included School's Curriculum for Wales, young people dancing, the importance of movement for early years in a range of settings, diversity in dance, inclusive practice, keeping current with practice and sector developments, agent for change roles in Wales, Dance for People living with Parkinson's including an early onset diagnosis, arts & mental health, looking after dance practitioner's own mental health, Welsh language forums "What is it like to be a first language Welsh dance practitioner working in Wales?"

Other speakers and session leaders across the diverse programme have included:

Dr Kate Lawrence, Choreographer and Karina Jones, Performer and Access consultant - *“Visual Impairment and Creativity”*

- Jane McLean and Ruth Spencer, Dance Artists – *“A focus on dance and movement approaches for adults with Profound, Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities”*
- Sara Sitari – Director/Founder, Ardour Academy - Inclusivity
- Despina Lloyd-Goula and Kseniia Fedorovykh -Co -Directors, Hedydd Dance Company (a new company based in North Wales)
- Joe Powell-Main - Inclusivity
- Richard Chappell – Independent Choreographic Practices and Self Producing
- Dr Bethan Ryland – Moving Together: The Power of Dance in Care and Community
- Kayla Dougan Bowtell – Aesop – Falls Prevention
- Lisa Davies and Tom Stupple – Mental health of artists and practitioners/boundaries whilst working in challenging/difficult contexts
- Sally Varrall, Heidi Wilson, Esther KilBride – approaches to facilitating movement sessions in Ty Hafan Children’s Hospice
- Gina Roberts – Education/Teacher Development focus (primary schools)
- Jên Angharad, CEO YMa – Welsh Language
- Dr Susanne Burns – Evaluation sessions
- Marla King – Reflective Writing Sessions and Climate Change in the Arts
- Ballet Cymru, Louise Lloyd and Billy Brooke, Inclusive approaches through Ballet
- Uma O’Neill, Where Inclusivity Stimulates Possibility (WISP), north Wales
- Jemma Thomas- Early Years focus/working in nurseries/schools/child development
- Jessie Brett, Humans Move – Inclusivity with learning and physically disabled people
- Dorka Zatonyi, A focus on international links
- Heidi Wilson – “A Time to Pause” and Dance for Parkinsons
- Paul Bayes Kitcher, Fallen Angels Dance Theatre – dance, mental health and recovery from addiction
- Jo Taylor, No Fit State – community engagement
- Gary Clarke, Gary Clarke Dance Company- community engagement
- Lily Norton, Stopgap Dance Company – Making Dance Accessible
- Ffion Campbell-Davies, Dancer/Choreographer – multi disciplinary arts work

A focus on Welsh Language provision has characterised the 2025/26 programme:

- Dwywnwen Lloyd Llywelyn, Theatr Felinfach, Ceredigion who is an established partner in WWTP has written a case study on Welsh Language Support for practitioners through WWTP;
- *Sensing Welsh* Sessions led by Jên Angharad have been a feature since 2021- aimed at Beginners and Advanced (groups and individuals). An in person session aimed at a mixed level of Welsh learners took place at YMa in Pontypridd in February 2026. One to one sessions online have also been offered so that people can work at their own pace whatever level they are in terms of learning Welsh within their dance sessions/performances/practice etc:

- A second Welsh Language Forum led by Jên Angharad took place in September 2025 “*What is it like to be Welsh speaking dance practitioner living and working in Wales?*” A more recent Forum took place in May 2026 which was opened to those working across the arts and not just dance.
- A WhatsApp group for those more confident in Welsh language supported by Jen Angharad is in place as an instant go to for translation and pronunciation;
- Cai Tomos has continued to offer Creative Practice & Wellbeing Support one to one sessions. These are offered through the medium of English, Welsh or can be Bilingual.

The above programme developments, growing partnerships and new members have all enriched and diversified the overall programme. However, it is worth noting that the balance appears to have shifted significantly towards more on-line provision.

The Partners

In March 2013 when WWTP began, it had seven partners and a database of around 60 individuals and organisations working in dance in Wales. This has grown considerably since that date and WWTP now works with 29 partner organisations (including Rubicon) and extends to include many individuals and freelance community dance practitioners across Wales who are part of the WWTP database.

Three new partners have joined the programme increasing numbers to 29 (including Rubicon) from across Wales. These have included Common Wealth Theatre, Ardour Academy and Hedydd Dance Company.²

- Caerphilly Arts Development, South Wales - Dave Chamberlain, Arts Development Officer
- Arts Care Gofal Celf, West Wales - Chris Ryan, Director
- Afon Dance, South Wales - Louise Prosser, Artistic Director
- National Dance Company Wales, South Wales, Karen Thomas, Artistic Company Manager
- Wales Millennium Centre, South Wales, Naomi McKenna-Lawson, Producer Creative Learning
- Hedyn, (freelancer led), North Wales Sarah Mumford and Alys Huws, Freelance Dance Practitioners
- Theatr Clwyd, North Wales, Angharad Jones, Engagement Officer
- DanceRama, West Wales, Rebecca Mullan, Director
- Artis Community, South Wales, Jen Angharad, CEO, YMa
- Ballet Cymru, Amy Doughty, South Wales, Artistic Director, Engagement & Training
- Riverfront Theatre & Arts, South Wales, Sharon Casey, Head of Theatre, Arts & Culture
- Dance Blast, South Wales, Kathy Young, Company Manager
- Coleg Sir Gar, West Wales, Claire Mackerras, Director of Curriculum
- Cardiff Metropolitan University, South Wales, Heidi Wilson, Senior Lecturer, Dance and Freelance Dance Practitioner, Powys
- Tanio, South Wales, Lisa Davies, CEO
- Dawns i Bawb, North Wales, Catherine Young, Artistic Director
- Impelo, Bethan Cooper, Mid Wales, Dance Artist/Convenor
- Eleni Cymru, Gwenno Jones, North Wales, Project Manager
- Theatr Felinfach, Mid Wales, Sioned Haf Thomas, Theatre & Drama Producer

² This builds on the three new partners for WWTP 2024-2025 which were Paallam Arts, Jones the Dance and Hijinx

- National Youth Arts Wales, South Wales, Jamie Jenkins, Dance Producer
- Motion Control Dance, south Wales, Emma Mallam, Director
- Groundwork Collective (freelancer led) South Wales, Sophie Lorimer and Lara Ward, Freelance Dance Artists
- No Fit State Circus, South Wales, Jo Taylor, Community Programme Manager
- Paallam Arts, Krishnapriya Ramamoorthy, Director/Producer
- Jones the Dance, Gwyn Emberton, Artistic Director and Kate Perridge, Executive Producer
- Hijinx, Susan Kingman, Training Manager
- Commonwealth Theatre, Chantal Williams, Community Producer
- Ardour Academy, Sara Sitari, Director/Founder
- Hedydd Dance Company, Despina Goula and Kseniia Fedorovych, Co-Directors

The Impact

In previous reviews we have noted that the impact of WWTP is significant and increases with time. 2024/25 saw a wider and more diverse set of practitioners and practices as well as a more outward facing take on the dance sector. This appears to have continued throughout 2025/26 with an emphasis on Welsh language provision, diversity and inclusivity.

Quantitative targets set as a condition of funding have been exceeded with a focus on securing three new partners to the programme, new people attending events who had not attended before (49) – 23 of whom are disabled, Welsh speaking or global majority and new people leading events who are disabled, Welsh speaking or global majority (10).

The qualitative data gathered evidences impact on practitioners, partners, session leaders and dance practices.

On Practitioners

“WWTP is inspiring, and we are proud to be a part of it”.

“WWTP is such a person centred and nurturing programme which has given me such a breadth of training and learning opportunities through blended delivery both online and in person. The use of repeat workshop leaders and facilitators are a strength of the programme in terms of having a deeper understanding of individuals work and vice versa and so that they shout about WWTP to others!”

“A wonderful gathering of supportive creative dance artists from across Wales and an inspiring presentation. The simplicity and at the same time, richness in one to one movement conversations; the nourishment of being seen and seeing; making the time to do so. Practising the forms, practically with partners made it all so much more vivid; the experience of being invited to dance as well as inviting. These are practises that are transferable to many contexts.”

The WWTP provides crucial support to practitioners in many ways both inline and in person. It seeks to address the needs of freelance dance artists across the career spectrum encompassing early, mid and established career stages for individuals. This is a major strength of WWTP in that it brings together people to share and learn from one another with a range of experience from practitioners just starting out in the sector to those who have decades of

experience. Through connection with and support to and from others the programme provides emotional and social support but it also supports practitioners with new skill sets and ideas.

Extensive evaluation and feedback from practitioners highlights the following key impacts on them and their practice.

Connection and Networking:

The importance of connectivity and networking in a country which is diverse and difficult to access geographically cannot be emphasised enough. The isolation and hand to mouth existence of many artists means that there is a need for networks that bring practitioners together so they can feel less alone. The sector has also been impacted deeply by recent policy and funding changes that have threatened an already fragile and precarious infrastructure.

Respondents therefore value the opportunity to come together to share learning and experiences and to work together for the benefit of the sector as a whole and this appears to benefit the leaders as well as the participants in sessions.

“As a collective, dance organisations and freelancers have a forum to discuss training needs, share ideas and, most importantly, work together to ensure that the community dance sector continues to create an active and aspirational community dance network across Wales.”

“These CPD days allow me to gain so much insight for my own personal practice and to make connections with other practitioners in my area.”

“First of all thank you and Rubicon for creating these wonderful spaces to learn and meet and engage with such different and varied dance practices. It is so invaluable to have the possibility to come into sessions and hear and learn from other practitioners, who are all offering their own perspectives and own spins on how to make, create and share making a living in these super challenging times that we currently live in. I'm truly moved how generous the speakers are sharing insight and also being willing to talk further after the sessions.”

“Always so great to get an insight into another practitioner's work.”

Accessibility:

Crucial to participation is the availability of free and supported places.

“Without the support of a free (funded) space for a freelancer I would not have been able to attend the CPD day with Jones the Dance and Deaf Men Dancing. It means a lot to be able to attend and get training without financial instability stopping me accessing information or being able to be in the same room as others. Thank you for creating these opportunities to dance and meet up with each other. I always leave feeling so motivated and uplifted”.

“I was really pleased to be offered a free Freelance Space. It is always difficult to consider attending courses as cost can often be a barrier. The offer of a free place meant I could just join with no financial worry”.

“As a freelance practitioner it is rare for me to; 1. be able to take time off to attend training days and 2. afford them. To be offered a free place is a real rarity and deeply appreciated as it allowed me to gain so much insight for my own personal practice and to make connections with other practitioners in my area.”

Well- Being:

Participants cite the impact on individual well-being and the face to face sessions as well as the one to one sessions appear to contribute to this impact.

"It was wonderful to have a day focused on practitioner wellbeing. I often find myself so busy, not just facilitating but travelling and trying to be everything for everyone, that giving that permission to just sit with myself and reflect can get overlooked. I felt the gentle pace of the day was just what I needed, and getting to do it on a glorious day at the Botanical Gardens was simply joyous".

"Thank you for today's meeting with Sara and sorry I got a bit emotional at the end. We all work tirelessly to support each other and our communities through our work. It's a difficult time. Appreciate being part of this group of people that will continue to fight for what is right and to do all we can for a better world."

For some respondents the one to one approach was most effective while others appreciated the group experience for connection.

"Another incredible one to one Welsh session through WWTP. This is the best way for me to learn one to one, explanation and connecting language learning to movement".

Skills and Practice Development:

The range of activity offered throughout the year was as rich and diverse as in previous years and sought to develop skills in many different areas. Those attending unanimously feedback positively on the skills they have developed and how they will implement them.

"Not only do I now have a much clearer understanding of how qualitative methods can strengthen the evaluation of dance and health work, but the facilitator also shared practical tools that I can put into use straight away, including in preparation for a meeting with a funder tomorrow. I had never considered planning 'what' I want to evaluate before a project begins, and this feels like a real shift in how I will approach evaluation moving forward."

"I have taken lots of very practical and useful ideas and information from this WWTP workshop, some of which I have already put into practice. A huge thank you to everyone for sharing your rich experiences so generously. You created a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment in which to learn and explore. I feel better informed and much more confident to meet the specific needs of D/deaf and hard of hearing dancers. A happy, challenging and fun day!"

"Joining the Visual Impairment and Creative Work CPD day has made my own sessions seem different today."

"The additional skills I gained from the workshop has helped me to be much clearer when describing activities to class participants. I was able to put it into practice in my class this morning."

Some practitioners were learning new skills whilst others found opportunity for refreshment.

“Living and dancing in North Wales, I recognised the importance of being able to train and enjoy dance through the medium of Welsh and by attending the "delivering a class through the medium of Welsh" session, I was provided with ideas as to how to accomplish this.”

“I learned new skills regarding BSL and SSE. I am a Bharata Natyam dancer and the links I can make with my dance hand gestures is something I would like to explore”.

“When we closed our eyes and one dancer guided the other moving through the space and just walking through the space lead by the arm really impacted on my ability to balance well. I hadn't considered this before, so I will take that learning and find ways to apply it in my sessions.”

And in some cases the training was cascaded within organisations maximising the impact:

“The training with Dr Kate Lawrence and Karina Jones has enabled us to work with artists who attended the workshop to integrate audio description in a fun and playful way into our children’s show Sblash that has toured festivals this summer. We were delighted that the training enabled us to do this”.

The opportunity to share someone else’s practice is also often mentioned as a privilege and a chance for reflection on one’s own practice.

Career Development:

As stated above, those who participate in the WWTP activity are at different stages in their careers and the programme skilfully addresses this wide range of needs. Through careful support it provides opportunities to enter or re-enter the field as well as developing the careers of more established artists.

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for the CPD day and how smoothly it ran. It was lovely to meet and move with everyone and I felt really comfortable and guided in all of the tasks we were exploring. The film visually put into perspective the different scores we played with and it was great to see how the work comes to life. It's made me value the quality of 1-1 work and how it's truly life changing. I look forward to implementing these into my practice in the future. As a recent graduate I am new to WWTP but hope to get involved in more opportunities with WWTP and connect again!"

“I am a recent dance graduate of the NSCD and have recently moved back to north Wales. I recognise that dance can often be thought of as an elitist art that's only understood by some. I think it vital that dance be transformed into an art form that can be appreciated and enjoyed by everyone and anyone. I saw the CPD training sessions as a gateway to better understand how to encourage that inclusivity and have come away feeling incredibly inspired to bring inclusivity to my future dance experiences. For example, during the visual-impairment training session, I felt exposed to a whole new perspective of dance and was amazed by the richness audio description could bring to my work”

“As a later career dancer, it was a reminder that as times change, we must adapt, be creative in how we sustain our careers, and keep pushing for what we believe in, especially in dance. It was inspiring and made me reflect on my vision and my place in dance in Wales (especially North Wales!) and beyond.”

“A confident and informative presentation which usefully mapped D's continuing development as an emerging dance artist. It highlighted for me the considerable challenges which recent graduates face when seeking to make performance work, and the lack of opportunity to platform new work in Wales at the moment. It was interesting to hear from other emerging artists about the support needed to maintain physical (and artistic) fitness through affordable access to technique and choreography and possible solutions they were considering. As always valuable to keep in touch with what is happening across the dance sector in Wales (and further afield).”

The information sessions for dance graduates are invaluable for those dancers returning to Wales connecting them with others working in the community dance sector.

Care and Support:

Respondents all praise the care and support provided by WWTP. Respondents refer to the creation of ‘safe spaces’, the quality of speakers facilitators and session leaders as well as the leadership of the programme. The coming together of practitioners at this crucial time in the development of dance in Wales also appears to have been needed in both supporting individuals and generating collective hope and potentially action.

The Creative Practice & Wellbeing Support sessions with Cai Tomas continue to be highly valued by those who take them.

“It was really supportive and I would benefit from more sessions. Right now one to one sessions work for me but group sessions could work for others. I gained an opportunity to feel into the sensations of my bodily response to emotions that came up during our conversation about my experiences in post project down time. He held space for me not knowing where I am at and any feelings I feel as something. This has helped me be in the present and acknowledge that whatever is going on that there is time for it which is a relief even if it's not something concrete as yet.”

“Thanks for an interesting session. It was lovely to be able to talk openly about the current situation of the dance sector in Wales and our hopes for the future.”

“It was reassuring to hear that difficult things that I am experiencing as a freelance artist were “normal” and shared. It was useful to be able to feel my emotions around things without having to be guided into a plan of action. But to be left with the feeling that I have them, having been brought to the surface felt in itself some clarity of where I am at.”

Confidence and Validation:

Linked to the above it appears that the skills development and the caring environments within which these opportunities are created contribute to both enhancing confidence and validating the practice of practitioners whose practice is often isolated.

“Cai Tomos was REALLY listening to me – firing back questions to really make me think and clarify. Excellent session!”

“It really is in good part down to WWTP that I have found the stamina and threads to start to grow my practice again. Thank you”

“A wonderful gathering of supportive creative dance artists from across Wales and an inspiring presentation.”

“The simplicity and at the same time, richness in one to one movement conversations; the nourishment of being seen and seeing; making the time to do so. Practising the forms, practically with partners made it all so much more vivid; the experience of being invited to dance as well as inviting. These are practises that are transferable to many contexts”.

On Dance Practices and the Sector

The programme also appears to have had an impact on dance practices during this year by skilling up practitioners in specific areas of need whilst also upskilling the workforce so new areas of practice can be developed contributing towards sustainability by developing new income streams. This also provides communities in Wales with more opportunities to access sessions as the workforce develops to meet current needs.

“Alongside our Welsh colleagues, it has been so valuable to reflect on the approaches and impact of the Live Well & Dance with Parkinson’s programme and share some of our learning across this national context of practice. People Dancing is currently developing the ‘Blueprints’, a space where resources, films, images and learning for the Live Well programme will be made available. It is by sharing and learning through a dialogic and practical exchange facilitated by the WWTP initiative and organisations like People Dancing, we ensure that the practice of dancing with Parkinson’s continues to grow, thrive and develop across all the nations, always of course taking place alongside our ever growing community of participants and colleagues.”
(Yael Owen, Head of Health & Wellbeing at People Dancing)³

The focus on Welsh language has also been an achievement in this year.

“Llongyfarchiadau on doing so much in this area. I love the way you’ve integrated the Welsh Language into every aspect of the work and offers to the sector. I’m grateful to you for being so thorough and thoughtful in your planning and implementation” (Einir Sion, Welsh Language Enabler, Arts Council of Wales)

On Partners

The impact on partners can be profound and is unanimously welcomed as widening the impact of what any one organisation can do alone. There has been an emerging emphasis on cross art-form learning and knowledge exchange and this was demonstrated by Common/Wealth joining as a partner.

“Common/Wealth believe that collaborative practice is key to a stronger arts culture in Wales. Joining the partnership felt like a natural next step after our Community Producer, Chantal Williams, delivered a session on the site-specific and community-embedded work we do, alongside a brilliant group of creatives and practitioners. This work matters, and we’re excited to keep building connections and exchanging ideas.” (Chantal Williams, Community Producer)

The partnership with Arts Care Gofal Celf, supported the face to face training day and benefitted not only the participants but the host organisation:

“Thank you so much for working with Arts Care Gofal Celf to organise and deliver the recent CPD day at y Ffwrnes, Llanelli. It was a fantastic day, and all the practitioners I spoke to said they had enjoyed the day and the opportunity to share expertise and explore different approaches to working with adults with learning disabilities. On top of that, the participants clearly had a fantastic time and the energy and joy in the room throughout the event was great to witness. Thanks again for your support and the invaluable work of the WWTP.”

Partners who present their work also benefit from the reflection undertaken to do so:

³ https://www.communitydance.org.uk/DB/logs/news_and_views/dance-parkinsons-communities-and-connections

"Thank you for the opportunity and the platform. It was a really valuable experience and process for us to sit and reflect on our first year's achievements and learning. The atmosphere was so warm and welcoming. (Despina Lloyd Goula, Co-director, Hedydd Dance Company)

The main driver however for partners appears to be the connectivity and shared learning:

"We are delighted to join WWTP as a partner, as we have a shared belief in the importance of sharing practices and experiences to that will develop dance in Wales. We are excited to build on our recent collaboration with WWTP when our Dance Officer Amber Howells led an introductory session for Wales' dance teachers and facilitators on our work with young Deaf people and our project Quiet Beats". (Gwyn Emberton, Artistic Director, Jones the Dance/Y Dawns)

"Paallam Arts is a performing arts organisation based in Wrexham with dance and movement art as its core medium of expression. We are pleased to be invited to become partners in WWTP". (Krischnapriya Ramamoorthy, Producer and Director, Paallam Arts)

"I am very pleased to be representing Hijinx as part of WWTP. It's a brilliant and vital partnership bringing together people and arts organisations from across Wales to build a stronger, more engaged and inclusive future" (Dan McGowan, Head of Film, Hijinx)

"We are growing as an organisation and through collaborating with WWTP we have been able to increase our capacity to deliver high quality training opportunities for Dance Artists in North Wales. The experience WWTP has in this area has been invaluable to supporting us as we expand our provision further working with experienced local artists and providing training opportunities."

On Session Leaders

Session leaders appear to welcome the opportunity to work on the programme as it provides opportunities to reflect on and articulate practice whilst sharing creative spaces with other practitioners who bring new perspectives.

"It has been an absolute pleasure to deliver a CPD day in North Wales as part of the Wales Wide Training Programme. It was excellently organised with clear, thoughtful and solution focused communication throughout the lead-up and on the day. It was heartening to see PMLD placed at the centre of the Wales Wide Training Programme's focus—this kind of specialist CPD is vital for deepening inclusive practice across the sector. The diversity of dance practitioners attending from across Wales brought a rich exchange of perspectives, making the day inspiring for us to deliver."

"It was a pleasure to talk at the Wales Wide Training Programme session today. It's always a joy to meet other creatives and be inspired by their work whilst having the opportunity to share practice and Common/Wealth's work. These forums for sharing are important, we all have lots to learn from one another and the incredible people that make up the creative landscape in Wales, organisations, artists, participants and communities alike". (Chantal Williams, Community Producer, Common /Wealth)

"Having the opportunity to lead a Welsh language movement session for dance practitioners was an absolute joy. It was wonderful to share the creative space with other professionals, a

reminder of the talent and expertise we have here in north Wales and so grounding for me personally, bringing me back to my own creative practice and roots. Thank you! Diolch yn fawr!"

Session leaders welcome the organisation of the work that supports their delivery:

"It was an absolute pleasure and an honour to be asked to lead a CPD session for WWTP. The organisation was excellent and Tracey communicated with me really clearly and responded to questions very quickly. She was a pleasure to work with. (Dr Kate Lawrence, Director Vertical Dance).

"I was delighted to be asked to lead this workshop with WWTP by Tracey Brown and so pleased that the dance practitioners were keen to learn about accessibility from a visually impaired perspective in their own work. It was so lovely to work with Tracey and I hope to work with her and WWTP and Rubicon again soon". (Karina Jones, Visually Impaired Aerialist and Actress).

It is important to acknowledge the criticism levelled at the programme in the ACW Dance Review:

"While appreciated by some participants in this review, the Wales Wide Training Programme has drawn criticism for becoming less responsive to sector needs in recent times. The shift to a paid model, combined with reduced participant input to programme development has altered its original collaborative spirit. Though its online delivery ensures broad accessibility, the current format is viewed as homogenised by many through its series of presentations rather than practical application and personalised support." (ACW Dance Review p49)

The feedback cited above tends to contradict some of this criticism although the shift to on-line delivery – whilst enabling and supporting broad access - is clearly a challenge to the connectivity and face to face networking that many appreciate and it would be timely to seek more views on the model moving forward.

What supports this impact?

In the earlier Review of WWTP the following key success factors were identified and it is clear from the feedback on the activity programme that has taken place in 2025/26 that these factors and characteristics are still at play and are supporting WWTP to continue to meet sector needs.

- Management and Leadership;
- Knowing what is needed and consulting with the sector on the development of the programme;
- Selecting and supporting the 'right' artists and speakers to lead sessions on the strategic needs and priorities of the sector;
- Long term sustained approaches;
- Breaking down barriers to access;
- Great communication and attention to detail;
- Warmth, kindness, care and humanity – a person centred approach.

Into the Future

As a resource the sector and partner led approach is central to nurturing the dance ecology in Wales at this crucial time when dance artists are working in an economic climate that is both uncertain and demanding particularly given the precarious nature of their existence.

The programme offers blended opportunities for skills development, peer to peer learning, dialogues and reflection, networking and connectivity and care and support at different career stages. Artists and practitioners feel heard, validated and affirmed. The programme is accessible and affordable and offers a safe space for artists and practitioners to both learn and share their own knowledge and skills.

As stated in the review of 2024/2025 *“For 12 years WWTP has offered crucial support to the community dance sector in Wales and has weathered the challenges of the pandemic, not only with organisational resilience and adaptation, but having played a crucial role in supporting practitioners through precarity, isolation and acute anxiety. It has been totally committed to assessing its impact on the practitioners, the sector and the practice and has told its story with honesty, openness and generosity. It provides essential support to a workforce which is isolated and financially precarious and does so with immense care.”*

Drawing on this strong foundation it is believed that it is important for future provision in an ever changing community dance sector that there is a period of reflection on the programme. Recommendations emerging from the Wales Dance Review and wider strategic priorities including climate justice, Welsh language and anti-racist practice, suggests that there is a need for a structured future-focused review of the programme that can critically assess the current model and collectively shape what community dance training in Wales could look like in the next decade.

However, it is crucial for practitioners and artists that there is continuity of delivery and it is proposed that ongoing provision should run alongside an independent review which would seek to work collaboratively with the sector to re-imagine this programme. For the WWTP to continue to grow and meet the needs and strategic priorities of the sector, as stated in the review of 2024/2025 activity the ‘team’ needs to grow beyond the current sole leadership with the addition of administrative and marketing support.

Crucially, this process will ensure continuity of support for the sector whilst simultaneously shaping a clear and shared vision for its long-term development to ensure the development of a relevant training programme that will be a part of Community Dance training in Wales for the next decade. Wales needs a workforce that has the skills, experience and knowledge to deliver a range of community dance sessions in a wide range of cross-sector contexts. By continuing to provide connection, support, learning, sharing and opportunities as well as relevant training the intention is to continue to bring practitioners and artists together from across Wales through a programme that they own

WWTP continues to be a valuable resource for a sector facing immense challenges in the current economic climate and has to date worked on a year by year rolling basis with insecure project funding. It has achieved significant impact within such limiting constraints and is a model for the rest of the UK in how to support the freelance workforce upon which our sector depends. It is to be hoped that this proposed review will render the programme more sustainable into the longer term thus providing greater stability for the artists and practitioners it serves.

This short review draws on an extensive body of material gathered by Tracey Brown, Stakeholder Manager, at Rubicon Dance - who coordinates the Wales Wide Training Programme (WWTP). The material has been edited by Dr Susanne Burns.

The words in italics are all quotes from feedback from participants. Some are attributed whilst others remain anonymised.

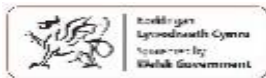
Please click on the link below for the WWTP film of the Deaf Awareness CPD day.
https://youtu.be/3vwzTZvSsLs?si=HN9_YhJyJSrldFq

This blog refers to a CPD day which took place in May 2025

https://www.communitydance.org.uk/DB/blogs/news_and_views/dance-parkinsons-communities-and-connections

For more information on Wales Wide Training Programme please contact Tracey Brown, Stakeholder Manager at Rubicon Dance tracey@rubicondance.co.uk.

You can find WWTP on Facebook or please visit www.rubicondance.co.uk



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