

Thinking about difference: how to make dance more accessible

Who we are and what we do

We are **One Dance UK**.

We support dance to happen across the UK. We provide information, support and opportunities for people in the dance world.

We want to make dance more accessible to more people. We have written this information for places where people dance so they can:

- √ Look at the barriers some people might have to taking part in dance.
- √ Make suggestions to be more inclusive and independent.



Why it is important to make dance more accessible

Dance can be an equal place for people to be creative. We believe that dance spaces should do everything they can to make it easy for people to take part in dancing.

We looked at what people have written about dance spaces in the UK. We found that there is not much information that considers lots of different users.

This made us think about what dance space managers and people who use dance spaces should make happen so more people can take part in dance.

We wanted to create a resource or guide to show dance spaces how to be more accessible so that this becomes a normal part of dance.

We spoke to 28 people who work in dance and dance spaces.

We asked them about:

- √ Their dance experiences.
- √ Why they think it is important to think about difference in dance.

Thinking about difference

There are lots of dance spaces that are not accessible to disabled people and others. But there are some organisations that are doing a lot to make dance more inclusive to more people. This is a positive move for the world of dance.

We know that being 'different' can include:

- the physical body
- mental health
- how someone learns
- age
- gender
- having a person or people to care for
- religion and what someone believes in
- how much money someone has.

Everyone has differences and so no one should be excluded because of their differences. Everyone experiences dance in their own way.

How we can start to make dance more accessible



- √ Talk about dance in an open way.



- √ Listen to the people in our communities.



- √ Challenge ourselves to think about dance in a new way.



√ Give more time, resources, and research to dance.

What do you think someone might need to take part in your dance space?

Key questions might be:

How much does it cost for someone to travel and take part?

What space is available if someone brings a guardian or carer?

Will there be the right support for someone with a physical or mental health condition?

Is there an accessible place for someone to use the toilet, get changed and rest if they need to?

Is the dance class at a time that is good for the person? For example, do they care for someone, or does it happen during a religious festival?

Useful ideas to make your dance space or venue more accessible

Arriving at the dance space:

When the person gets to your space, have you thought about:

- A safe and accessible travel experience?
- Any barriers to them getting into the building?
- Can your staff look after the person's needs?

Using the dance space facilities:

For the person to use your facilities, have you thought about:

- How easy the lighting and sound controls are to use and adjust?
- Having a safe, calm space for the person to get changed and rest if they want to?

- Considering the dance flooring where the person will move?
- Will the person know who to get in touch with about the building?

The digital experience:

If the dance experience is not in person, have you thought about:

- If the user has digital access?
- Other ways your participant can engage?
- Having an accessible website that is easy to use, where the user can go to learn more about your space?

Communication and taking part:

For people in the dance space, have you thought about:

- Using language that is inclusive that everyone can understand?
- Communicating in a variety of different ways?
- Asking questions about the right words to say and how to treat someone who is different?
- Getting feedback from different people – they are the experts!

Training:

For staff, have you thought about:

- The training needed to understand and work with people with a range of needs?
- What the best kind of training might be for your staff and your dance space?

Read more about our [work to think about difference in dance](#).