

Dance Matters Now Manifesto

Dance nourishes creativity, health, innovation and community. It unites people across difference, empowers individuals and communities and strengthens the UK's cultural and economic standing.

With strategic policy support and recognition of its freelance backbone, dance can reach every child, elevate every community and continue to light up the world stage.

By investing in dance, the UK can unleash creativity, empower communities and support a thriving cultural sector. This will help secure its place as a global cultural leader, driving both social and economic growth.

This manifesto sets out a vision for a vibrant, sustainable and equitable dance sector and the conditions needed for it to flourish. It is structured around four pillars that highlight where dance delivers its greatest impact and where targeted policy support and investment can unlock even more for the UK.

Commented [HC1]: This is strong but aware it sounds similar to the European campaign [Dance Matters Europe » Big Pulse Dance Alliance](#) and the RAD podcast 'Why Dance Matters'

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1. Dance for Every Child and Community

Impact: Dance nurtures creativity, confidence, teamwork and cultural engagement, building healthier generations and stronger communities. Participation improves mental and physical health, fosters social cohesion and develops life-long skills.

Our Commitment: We will ensure that every child and young person, regardless of background, has meaningful access to dance opportunities in schools, communities and youth settings. These will include culturally rooted forms, from traditional British styles to African, Caribbean, South Asian and Latin dance.

Policy Asks:

- Continued investment in the Music and Dance Scheme (MDS) to support talent from the earliest stages.
- Embed dance centrally within Key Stages 1 – 4, including GCSE and A-level provision, ensuring all children can experience high-quality dance education.
- Continue to support the Music and Dance Scheme 'Centres for Advanced Training' (CATs)
- Recognise dance as a tool for health, wellbeing and social cohesion, integrating arts-in-health initiatives and social prescribing.

2. Talent, Skills and Fair Work

Impact: Dance produces world-class performers, choreographers, teachers and leaders whose skills underpin theatre, TV, film, gaming and advertising. A thriving sector requires sustainable careers, equitable access to training and recognition of freelance infrastructure.

Our Commitment: We will build an equitable talent pipeline where every aspiring dancer can train, work and thrive. This includes portfolio careers, apprenticeships and regional access, ensuring professional pathways are accessible to all.

Policy Asks:

- Secure vocational and freelance pathways, apprenticeships and pre-professional programmes, including National Youth Dance Companies and Centres for Advanced Training (CAT).
- Recognise and support the freelance workforce with fair contracting, sick pay, pensions and professional development opportunities.
- Invest in diverse leadership and research, supporting Black, Asian, global majority and disabled artists in shaping the sector.

3. Growth, Innovation and Global Leadership

Impact: Dance drives creativity across the UK economy. It innovates digitally, influences global media and strengthens the UK's soft power through international touring and cultural exchange.

Our Commitment: Dance will continue to lead in R&D, digital innovation and cross-sector collaboration, contributing to the UK's creative economy and global influence.

Policy Asks:

- Deliver tax reliefs and funding for touring, safeguarding the regional and national touring ecology.
- Recognise dance as a contributor to economic growth, exports and international cultural influence.
- Support innovation through independent artists, micro-companies and partnerships, ensuring all creators can access R&D and funding.

4. A Sustainable, Equitable Dance Ecosystem

Impact: Dance demonstrates how culture, equity and sustainability intersect. Inclusive practice drives excellence, engages diverse audiences and models environmental responsibility.

Our Commitment: Dance will be a sector where equity, inclusion and sustainability are embedded. Disabled artists, artists of colour and community leaders will shape the sector's growth. Climate-conscious practice will be paired with fair work, ensuring creative livelihoods and ethical touring.

Policy Asks:

- Ringfence investment in dance within devolved and local government structures to ensure consistent regional support.
- Embed inclusive and accessible practice across training, production and touring.
- Ensure sustainability initiatives are linked to economic justice, providing secure livelihoods alongside environmental responsibility.