



TASGLU LLAWRYDD CYMRU WALES FREELANCE TASK FORCE

DANCE IN WALES Report: November 2020

BACKGROUND

This report has been compiled by Deborah Light, whilst working as part of the UK Freelance Taskforce (FTF). This taskforce was initiated by FUEL with the aim of strengthening the influence of the self-employed theatre and performance community. Deborah Light has been part of the Wales Freelance Taskforce subgroup and the UK Freelance Taskforce Dance subgroup.

This report has input from Jessie Brett, Bethan Cooper, June Campbell-Davies, Laura Drane, Zosia Jo, Becky Johnson, Sarah Mumford and Josie Sinnaduri.

It is informed by:

- Arts Council of Wales (ACW) published reports/annual statements.
- Dance specific Lottery data requested and provided by ACW to Wales FTF.
- Findings from the Wales Freelance Survey.
- Information gathered at the Dance Greenroom (16th July 2020) facilitated by Wales FTF members Zosia Jo, Deborah Light, Krystal Lowe and Anthony Matsena, supported by Groundwork and attended by over 30 freelancers.
- Information gathered by Sarah Mumford from North Wales Dance Collective.
- Work of the UK FTF Dance subgroup.
- The lived experience of the contributors to this paper and Wales FTF members and their conversations with and knowledge of freelancers across Wales.

This report has two key areas of focus:

- The chronic underfunding from ACW for dance in Wales as evidenced in data and statistics, corresponding with and compounded by lack of art form specific strategy or dedicated officer(s) at ACW since 2012.
- The systemic challenges facing freelance dance artists and strategic (ACW and APW) ways to support them in the development, production and presentation of dance in Wales.

It is not a comprehensive mapping of dance in Wales, nor does it represent the voice of all freelance dance artists in Wales.

We recognise there are APWs, venues, project funded and other organisations along with many individuals (including at ACW) who are committed to and are working hard to support dance in Wales. This paper has not had the scope to map that work and, while highlighting the chronic and systemic challenges the sector faces, we do not undervalue or undermine it.

OVERVIEW

DANCE

Dance is a powerful means of expression and communication which moves people both literally and figuratively. Dance connects people physically, emotionally and neurologically and brings people together in transformative shared experiences. Dance supports physical and mental health and wellbeing and can be accessible, either as a participant or as an audience, to all. It is an art form that connects us, authentically, to ourselves and to others.

COVID-19

Dance has been particularly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19. Our art form depends on physical connection to other artists and audiences and on access to appropriate space – all that has been curtailed. The majority of the dance workforce in Wales is freelance and this crisis has exposed just how vulnerable we are. However, the challenges for dance in Wales are chronic as well as acute.

FUNDING, VALUE AND RESOURCE

This paper details how dance in Wales suffers from chronic underfunding from ACW comparative to other art forms and therefore lacks resource and infrastructure. There is a lack of art form specific expertise and representation at ACW coupled with the reality that dance knowledge in venues across Wales is limited. Independent dance artists are therefore operating

in a landscape that cannot support them. There is limited access to space, and independent dance artists lack support mechanisms to develop, produce and present dance. This necessitates that dance artists are often isolated, under-resourced and fulfilling multiple roles: directing, choreographing, performing, project managing, self-producing, teaching, facilitating, delivering engagement activity, marketing, stage managing and more. These expectations on dance artists are unrealistic resulting in unsustainable careers and an inability to develop artistic product. The range and depth of skills of dance artists are under-valued and work is often low paid. Time, space and opportunity to focus on creative development is a luxury. Lack of opportunity alongside barriers to project funding means new graduates seek opportunities elsewhere and expertise is lost from our dance landscape as experienced dance artists either leave Wales or find other work.

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, GEOGRAPHY and LANGUAGE

Data has not been made available from ACW to compile statistical evidence on diversity, inclusivity and accessibility of dance in Wales. From our lived experience we know the dance landscape in Wales is predominantly white and able bodied and centres ballet and contemporary practices. The majority of dance APW funding goes to south Wales and opportunities are even more limited across other parts of Wales. While we recognise that dance projects, community and education work take place through the medium of Welsh, only one dance APW works predominantly in Welsh and the two APW dance production/presentation companies are working language English.

MOVING FORWARD

As freelancers we do not want only to survive this crisis, we want to be part of re-building a healthier, more diverse, inclusive, socially and culturally engaged dance landscape that is founded on artistic excellence. Over the past 6 months, structures and systems that framed dance artists' work have fallen away; this provides an opportunity to re-imagine and re-shape how we work, who with and what for. Dance has the potential to play a valuable role in the recovery from COVID-19; the whole of society has been stripped of physical interaction and intimacy and has become increasingly two-dimensional and technology- focused. As the world shifts rapidly into digital territory, the possibility and potential of re-connecting people through the experience of movement and, eventually touch, is profound.

The recommendations within this report would enable a broader scope of dance in Wales and would support freelance dance artists in meeting their potential.

DATA AND STATISTICS: ACW Arts Portfolio Wales (APW) and delegated funding

This data is drawn from ACW published reports/annual statements and data provided by ACW to Wales FTF.

DANCE WITHIN THE PORTFOLIO:

- **Only 7 out of 67 APW clients are dance-specific:**
 - NDCWales
 - Ballet Cymru
 - Rubicon Dance
 - Jukebox Collective
 - Impelo
 - Dawns i Bawb
 - New Dance

- **Only 2 of the 7 dance-specific APWs are funded primarily for dance production and presentation** (NDCWales and Ballet Cymru). The others are primarily funded as community dance organisations.

- **Since 2010, six dance organisations have been cut from the portfolio:**
 - Community Dance Wales
 - Dance Blast
 - Earthfall Dance
 - India Dance Wales
 - Welsh Independent Dance
 - Tan Dance

FUNDING FOR DANCE WITHIN THE PORTFOLIO:

In 2018/19 the seven dance-specific APWs received £1,722,231 out of £26,790,402 total APW spend.

- **Only 6.4 % of APW spend went to dance-specific organisations in 2018/19.** (This level has consistently been between 6.2–6.8% for the past 10 years).

- **Two of the seven dance-specific APWs receive less than £100,000; these are the two dance APWs in north Wales.**

- **Of the 30 APWs which receive over £200,000, only two are dance-specific.**

In 2018/19, four organisations (Ffilm Cymru Wales, BBC Cymru Wales, Literature Wales and Tŷ Cerdd) received a total of £1,500,357 in delegated funding.

- **Dance receives no delegated funding.**

In 2018/19, NDCWales and Ballet Cymru's combined funding was £1,086,562 compared to £6,657,230 which went to theatre production and presentation.

- **Only 4.1% of APW spend went to dance production and presentation, compared to 24.8% on theatre production and presentation.**

The 8 National Companies (WNO, WMC, Ffilm Cymru Wales, NTW, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, Literature Wales, NDCWales and BBC NOW) received a total of £14,702,127.

- **Dance receives only 5.6% of funding at National level.**
- **Out of the 8 national companies, NDCWales is the second lowest funded.**
- **NDCWales receives only 18% of WNO's funding.**
- **NDCWales receives approximately half of NTW's funding.**
- **NDCWales receives only 31.64% of NTW and Theatr Genedlaethol's combined funding.**

Outside the national companies, the only other APWs to receive over £1,000,000 are theatre production houses, Sherman Theatre and Theatr Clwyd. Their funding combined with that of the nationals is £17,814,415 of which NDCWales receives £834,186.

- **Funding for dance is 4.68% of what the National companies and Sherman and Clwyd receive.**

DATA AND STATISTICS: Lottery funding (individuals and organisations)

This information is drawn from data provided by ACW to the Wales FTF. On request we were provided with data on Lottery funds, from 2005–2020, where more than 50% of the project was dance activity.

- **In 2019/20, only 3.5% of Lottery funding went to projects where more than 50% of the project was dance activity.**
- **From 2005–2014, the average success rate for dance applications was 80.72%. From 2014–2020, this average success rate dropped to 59.26%.**
- **Between 2005–2015, the average % level of £'s going to dance activity was 10.41%. From 2015–2020, this average has decreased by almost half to 5.63%.**
- **This significant reduction in % success rate and % level of funding for dance coincides with an ACW re-structure when dance specific strategy and the role of dance officer was cut.**

Findings from the WALES FREELANCE SURVEY

In July 2020, the Wales FTF launched the Wales Freelance Survey for theatre and performance. Full report and data available at www.freelance.wales www.llawrydd.cymru

Key statistics include:

- **94% of theatre and performance freelancers in Wales lost work due to COVID-19.**
- **47% received no financial support from the Government's SEISS scheme.**
- **79% said their well-being was negatively affected.**

Dance specific analysis shows that:

- **73% of dance artists earn £15,000 or less compared to 42% of respondents as a whole.**
- **68% of dance artists supplement their income compared to 45% of respondents as a whole.**
- **41% don't know if they will stay in the industry compared to 33% of respondents as a whole.**

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- As aforementioned, there has been no dance specific strategy or dedicated officer at ACW since 2012.
- As well as the six dance APWs that have been lost from the portfolio since 2010, Coreo Cymru has ceased to operate as a Creative Producer for dance, Creu Cymru no longer runs dance specific consortium/sector meetings or dance support schemes (i.e. Dance Buddy/Independents), and Wales Dance Platform, Dance Shorts and Family Dance Festival are no longer running.
- A number of key supporters and long-standing advocates for dance have in recent years been lost from the sector, including leaders in roles at Taliesin, Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Creu Cymru and WID/Coreo Cymru. (We recognise dance advocates remain in other posts within some of those organisations and people with previous experience of, and/or a commitment to, dance have been recruited to a couple of those senior vacancies.)
- The two dance-producing/presenting APWs are contemporary and ballet focused; this marginalises other dance forms and styles resulting in a lack of diversity in the dance sector.
- Four of the seven dance APWs (and both of those funded for dance production and presentation) are based in south Wales.
- Dawns i Bawb is the only dance APW to operate primarily through the medium of Welsh.
- NDCWales and Ballet Cymru are both touring/repertory companies. There are no production houses that develop, to production, the dance work of independent artists in Wales.
- The majority of NDCWales and Ballet Cymru company dancers, and NDCWales main company choreographers, are not Welsh or initially recruited from within Wales. This is, in part caused by other systemic problems here, i.e. lack of training for dancers and lack of opportunity for choreographers to develop.
- There is a shortage of appropriate rehearsal space for dance in Wales. These are often not available to freelancers and project funded organisations and/or are not physically and financially accessible.
- Dance House is the only dedicated venue for dance in Wales; however, this is primarily NDCWales's company base. NDCWales is not currently funded to operate it as a producing house or have a regular program. Limited by company needs, The Dance House does not fulfil the needs of the freelance community for rehearsal/production spaces or a presenting venue.
- NDCWales went through a period of prioritising larger scale venues/international touring, this impacted on local venue and artist engagement, community engagement and audience development for dance. Since 2015 NDCWales priorities have shifted back towards smaller

venues with a focus on audience and venue development; the full impact of this will take some time to be felt across the dance ecology in Wales.

- Sherman Theatre used to be a key venue for dance, presenting dance work and supporting its development via rehearsal space, but this is no longer the case.
- Many venues across Wales have little in-house dance-specific knowledge and take comparatively little dance into their programmes.
- Wales has no members of the UK National Dance Network.
- Wales has no conservatoire or post-graduate level training for dance, the newly established Dance course at USW is set to close in 2 years and the dance course at USWTSD is under threat. As well as training and feeding the landscape, these courses offer employment, research and development opportunities.
- Freelance dance artists have little protection. This makes it very difficult to speak out about pay/terms/working conditions/unfair treatment etc and therefore problems persist.
- ACW has just launched its new Connect and Flourish scheme. This is *'For the development of collaborative proposals between organisations, individuals and creative professionals.'* However, applications have to be made by an organisation; dance freelancers will therefore be dependent on organisations developing applications which include, empower and pay them.

Issues arising and statements of need from Freelancers Dance Green Room 16th July 2020.

The Dance Greenroom provided a safe space for freelancers to communicate to each other. As such no direct quotes were taken and statements were anonymised. The points below are a summary of statements made, and they do not indicate consensus or reflect all dance freelancers.

ISSUES:

- Funding applications wire us towards competition. The criteria make us value a particular set of objectives, and this limits the nature and scope of our work.
- ACW applications don't cater to diverse ways of thinking or communicating; the language used and needed is a barrier.
- Dance is seen as a secondary art form; dance is not as recognised, valued or supported as other art forms, from funding levels and venue priorities through to schools and education settings.
- Lack of infrastructure, support, space and resources.
- Lack of knowledge about/communication and transparency across the sector.

STATEMENTS OF NEED:

- Increased financial support, more sustainable/longer term financial structures.
- Changes to ACW processes that value individuals' different ways of working and communicating.
- Support and recognition from organisations, venues, funders and government.
- Staying true to our values.
- Communication and ways of working together across the art form: a sense of community.
- De-centralisation: support outside of Cardiff/bridging the gap between north and south.
- Support for mature/experienced artists.
- Support for new graduates.
- Producing and production support.
- Mentoring support.
- Support for parents to stay in the sector.
- Learning from theatre, ways of working and structures of support.
- More spaces to train, develop, create and show work.
- More access, space, support and a voice for marginalised dance forms (i.e. hip hop).
- Opportunities/platforms to share and present work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

*Please note that this paper focuses on dance-specific recommendations. Further recommendations for the performing arts as a whole are referenced below, including recommendations on representation, diversity and meaningful engagement, changes to organisational governance and the development of Welsh-language work.

ACW to:

1. Increase funding levels for dance via the portfolio, Lottery and strategic funds.
2. Review its application and reporting processes to ensure the vision and values of freelance dance artists can be communicated and a broader range of work can be valued.
3. Enable development, sustainability and longevity via longer-term funding structures for individuals and project funded organisations. Make changes to investment review processes and support project funded dance organisations to transition to portfolio status.
4. Develop a strategy for dance in Wales in consultation with those who are part of the sector, including freelancers. Central to this should be ensuring dance-specific knowledge is embedded in ACW culture and is present and an active part of funding award processes.

Organisations including, but not limited to: dance-specific APWs, Creu Cymru, cross art form APWs and venues to:

5. Increase the number, and expand the diversity, of freelance dance artists you employ, support, engage and connect with. Deepen your relationships to empower those artists giving them value and recognition. Ensure these relationships are not homogenous and cut across the organisations' operations from leadership roles to peripheral activity.

Actively include:

- African diaspora people, South, East and South-east Asian diaspora people and those who are ethnically diverse
- those who are D/deaf or disabled
- Welsh speakers

*This list does not exclude other protected characteristics, it recognises particular shortcomings in the current dance landscape in Wales.

Where there are no Welsh/Wales-based freelancers who fit the above characteristics, initiate opportunities to develop that talent.

6. Ensure fair pay for dance freelancers that values their time, skills and experience. Employ minimum session rates for activity that takes into account preparation and travel time.

Pay freelancers for meetings, e.g. project planning, development and evaluation. Pay on time.

7. Share resources with dance freelancers and project funded organisations:
 - Increase free/low cost access to your space(s) and use your status to leverage access to additional space to increase the supply of dance appropriate space.
 - Offer access to equipment, human resources, desk space, networks, expertise, audiences, communities etc.
8. Develop initiatives that support the development, production and presentation of dance by Welsh/Wales based freelancers. For example, paid residences, scratch events, performance opportunities, commissioning, co-productions, producing support. These have the potential to connect freelance dance artists with local communities, audiences, peers and partners.
9. Work with freelance dance artists, project funded companies, other APWs and organisations to build connectivity and cohesion across the dance landscape in Wales. For example, HUBS, networks, platforms and events at local and national levels. Pay freelancers to be active agents within this.
10. Develop medium/long-term partner relationships that provide a baseline level of employment/support to freelance artists and project funded organisations (i.e. associate artists/companies, resident artists/companies, freelancers employed within an organisation and supported to develop their own work as part of that role).
11. Recognize that the above are two-way relationships in which the freelancer will also be supporting the organisation. Value freelancers, empowering them to expand and elevate the work of the organisation and therefore dance in Wales.

Targeted organisations:

12. NDCWales and Ballet Cymru to increase the opportunities/employment they offer to Welsh/Wales based dancers and choreographers.
13. Creu Cymru to reinstate programmes that support the production and presentation of dance in Wales, particularly, but not exclusively, work by Wales-based artists/companies.
14. Creu Cymru, along with its member organisations, to support the development of dance programmers/leaders/advocates in venues across Wales.

15. Venues and production houses to ensure they are supporting/developing/producing/presenting/commissioning dance and engaging dance artists from Wales as part of their activity.
16. Venues to engage/consult freelance dance artists to support their programming and presentation of dance where in-house knowledge is limited.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS/RESOURCES

Wales FTF has also produced '**Re-imagining and Re-balancing: strategies to support theatre and performance freelancers**' which includes recommendations on:

- Ensuring marginalised people and those with protected characteristics are represented in and meaningfully engaged with organisations.
- Changes to organisational governance.
- Organisations and ACW taking more responsibility for the long-term development and upskilling of freelancers.
- Changes to ACW's funding schemes, application mechanisms, and accountability processes.
- Strategies for development and sustainability of Welsh-language work.

Further information is available at www.freelance.wales www.llawrydd.cymru

Wales freelance taskforce has also submitted the following **recommendations to ACW**:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cnMkPwcsi6eooYHc6VQU6djm44vjtr/view?usp=sharing>

Members of UK FTF Dance have developed a **Fair Trade Model for freelancers**. This has 5 guiding principles:

- Fair pay
- Inclusion
- Representation
- Transparency
- Sustainability

This model is in development as a Marque to which organisations can subscribe. Contact Prodigal UPG for further details. info@prodigalupg.com

Members of the UK FTF have developed a **Freelance Supporters menu** available here:
<https://www.the-uncultured.com/#>