

Transforming lives
through dance



Annual Review
2020/21

DanceUnited
YORKSHIRE





Introduction

Along with every other arts and cultural organisation across the UK, COVID-19 presented us with an extraordinarily challenging year, requiring us to revise completely our planned schedule of work and design a new and innovative programme of activity to address the specific needs of our groups whilst accommodating pandemic restrictions.

We are extremely proud to have demonstrated both resilience and resourcefulness during such an uncertain and chaotic time. Despite the limitations caused by social distancing and local/national lockdowns, we were able to continue our artistic delivery with children, young people, adults and communities as well as create high quality work, develop new partnerships and remain financially robust. Highlights include the following:

We were honoured to be named 'Charity of the Year' by Bradford Chamber of Commerce for the second year – in recognition of our positive impact on local people and communities.

We produced 5 films during the year, offering exciting opportunities to all our participants. One of these was an external commission with Whalebone Films: 'Here I Am'. Performed by the Bradford Women's Company, this film has now featured in regional and international film festivals including the Global Health Film Festival 2020.

We facilitated rolling provisions and progression routes for young people (aged 12+) via film projects, outdoor workshops and online classes. Our youth film 'Periphery' featured as the finale of Yorkshire Dance's digital festival 2020. DUY also further developed its partnership with 'New Adventures' through a film project inspired by Matthew Bourne's 'Edward Scissorhands'.



'Here I Am' – Bradford Women's Company Film
Photo: David Levene

Our Resi/Dance programme in Holme Wood continued to engage participants and families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We offered a range of ongoing outdoor and online activities as well as an intergenerational film project 'Out of the Woods'. This invited an exciting new collaboration with Manchester-based film company Boca Films, as well as ongoing artistic mentorship from award-winning and Yorkshire-based choreographer Gary Clarke.

Responding to the needs of the local community, DUY was thrilled to receive funding from 'Transforming Lives for Good', the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food Programme. Incorporating the remote facilitation of the Discover Arts Award and the delivery of arts packs and healthy food parcels, DUY successfully reached 54 vulnerable children (and their families) across Bradford during the summer of 2020.

DUY's achievements during such an unprecedented time were the result of an incredibly hard-working, passionate and dedicated team of staff and trustees. We also want to thank all our participants and their families, our partners and, in particular, our funders for all their support during this extraordinary year.

Blair Davies
Chair

Helen Linsell
Artistic Director



Our Vision and Mission

We are a Bradford-based charity and distinctive cultural leader connecting the very best of the professional contemporary dance world with marginalised communities. We increase access to high quality contemporary dance for children, young people and adults who are 'hard to reach' and living in challenging life circumstances.

We produce contemporary dance performances which engage members of the public who would not traditionally encounter this art form. We commission emerging and established choreographers to create high quality artistic work and offer regional dance artists the skills and opportunities to work with culturally disengaged people and communities.

We offer creative settings that will have a positive and lasting effect on the lives of those who are socially excluded. Our commitment is to reach across the region whilst maintaining a high quality choreographic vision, bespoke artistic training opportunities and ongoing progression routes for children and young people.

'Happenings' – Gradient Dance Company
Photo: Daniel Johnson

Artistic Provision

We work with disadvantaged children, young people disengaged or excluded from mainstream education, young offenders, young people and adults suffering with poor mental health, women prisoners, refugees, asylum seekers and families living in areas of deprivation. Most of our participants are non-dancers with little or no previous experience of contemporary dance or live performance. We continue to be recognised for our radical and transformative work by partners and funders representing arts and culture, education, criminal justice and health.

During the COVID-19 crisis, all of our weekly classes, one-off workshops, intensive projects and performance events were cancelled or postponed and were replaced with brand new programmes of work and projects:



Children and Young People

We delivered a total of 54 Discover Arts Awards (May – August 2020) to vulnerable children aged 7-11yrs across Bradford as an element of our **'Healthy Holidays'** project, partly funded through the Department for Education's 'Transforming Lives for Good' initiative. All children were eligible for free school meals with a third having English as a 2nd language. The programme involved the design of a bespoke curriculum for children to complete with their families. Dance workshops were facilitated in people's gardens, children were provided with arts packs and families received healthy food parcels.

Our youth companies – DUY Performance Company, Bradford Youth Company and Calderdale Youth Company – were offered ongoing creative opportunities outdoors and online, as well as extensive pastoral care. The majority of our young people (aged 13+) did not engage with online activity and preferred those projects which involved working towards an artistic goal and face-to-face activity (working in small groups or 1:1). The most successful of these were:

'Periphery': a youth dance film featuring 26 dancers from across our companies, with each young person being filmed in a different location in Bradford. The film was selected for inclusion in Yorkshire Dance's digital youth dance festival 'Re:Fresh'.

'The Sun Inside': a film project led by Protein Dance in which selected members of the DUY Performance Company featured. The film was shown at a number of festivals across the world.

'The Stitchling': a collaboration with New Adventures inspired by Matthew Bourne's 'Edward Scissorhands'. Weekly sessions were delivered via Zoom by New Adventures' Resident Artist Paul Smethurst and the filming took place on location once restrictions had been lifted.

"Working with Dance United Yorkshire over lockdown helped a lot with keeping me active as I would have otherwise probably done nothing. It motivated me to get out of bed and do something productive despite being restricted on what I could do and consequently allowed me to feel confident and feel good about myself."

(DUY Performance Company Dancer)

DUY chose to prioritise face-to-face activity wherever possible during 2020/21 but, with the winter lockdown, we launched an online programme of activity. With the help of additional funding we were also able to provide digital support to some of our participants (e.g. tablets and internet dongles). Our weekly Zoom classes included 'dance for all' sessions, targeted youth dance sessions and creative craft sessions for children and their families.

A total of **438** vulnerable and disadvantaged young people (aged 4 – 21yrs) participated in our programme during 2020/21. As a result of the pandemic, we were unable to deliver any one-off/taster workshops but instead placed an increased emphasis on pastoral care; ensuring the mental and physical well-being of our participants.

*The filming of 'The Stitchling' – Partnership project with New Adventures
Photo: Duncan Bedson*

Adult Women

In the summer of 2020, DUY commissioned Whalebone Films to make a film with the **Bradford Women's Company** (for women who have experience of domestic abuse, suffer with poor mental health and are socially isolated). Drawing from their experiences of lockdown, each participant learned, developed and performed a set piece of choreography in an outdoor location near their home. The product was 'Here I Am', which illustrates the women's journeys through dance and their relationships with each other. The film has now been screened at the Global Health Film Festival 2020, Derby Film Festival 2020 and is due to be screened at Bradford's National Science and Media Museum and the Busan (South Korea) International Film Festival.

"It was amazing to feel like we were all dancing together, even though we weren't. It helped me overcome confidence issues due to dancing in a public space. I would definitely do it again"

(Bradford Women's Company Dancer)

At the same time, classes continued both outdoors and in the studio wherever possible. DUY also delivered a number of 1:1 sessions and ongoing pastoral care to some of our most vulnerable participants.

*'Here I Am' – Bradford Women's Company film
Photo: David Levene*





Resi/Dance

Holme Wood in Bradford is a community where people often find themselves invisible, defined by difficult circumstances and written off. The **4 year Resi/Dance project** – funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – was designed for residents across the estate to participate in an artistically ambitious cross-community and intergenerational dance project punctuated by a series of professionally staged performances. During the first 5 months of the project (2019-20), DUY reached 566 children, young people and adults through weekly classes, school workshops, bespoke performance projects and partnership initiatives. During the global pandemic, we remained committed to all our participants and continued to offer a range of activities. These included film projects for people of all ages, outdoor summer schools for young people, 1:1 dance classes for adult women and online workshops for children and their families. The creative sessions involving dance and other arts and craft activities were very well received during the winter lockdown:

“During a time when he has been disconnected from his friends, it has been amazing to see familiar faces on the screen. It has been a massive help for his mental well-being. Having the resources delivered each week has been much appreciated. As a busy working mum, it’s not easy to find time to buy creative things”

(Parent of 4-7s participant)

A significant piece of work during this period has been the creation and filming of ‘Out of the Woods’, an **intergenerational film** inspired by the people and community of Holme Wood. Working with Manchester-based Boca Films and artistic mentorship from Gary Clarke, we have involved 40+ people aged 18 months – 80 years from across the estate. The film will be screened in the summer of 2021.

‘Out of the Woods’ performer from 4-7s group.
Photo: David Bewick



Arts Award

At the core of DUY's 'Healthy Holidays' project was the delivery of the Discover Arts Award for 7-11yrs. The first phase involved participants from the Resi/Dance programme in Holme Wood and the second phase (funded through the Department for Education) reached children from across the Bradford district. Overall, **54 children completed their Discover Arts Awards**, all of whom live in areas of deprivation and are eligible for free school meals. During the pandemic, the facilitation of the Discover Arts Award was an effective way for us to keep current participants engaged whilst also reaching into new disadvantaged communities across Bradford.

The delivery of the Discover Arts Award has since been adapted for local primary schools and this work is ongoing.

DUY also delivered 10 Bronze Arts Awards with young people from the Resi/Dance Youth Dance Company as part of two intensive outdoor summer schools.

Our successful delivery of the Discover and Bronze Arts Awards during the pandemic was recognised by local and regional partners:

“We were delighted Dance United could come to an IVE Arts Award support session and share their experiences about delivering Arts Award remotely during lockdown. It was inspiring to hear how the children and young people they worked with managed their Arts Award journey with such resilience in ever-changing and challenging circumstances.”

(Aoibheann Kelly, Schools Engagement Manager, IVE)

*Discover Arts Award activity during lockdown
Photo: mother of participant*

Artistic Collaborations



*Performers of 'Out of the Woods' – Collaboration with Boca Films and Gary Clarke
Photo: Helen Linsell*





Gary Clarke and Boca Films

Building on our partnership with Yorkshire-based choreographer Gary Clarke, we embarked on the creation of an intergenerational film project with the residents of Holme Wood. Working closely with Manchester-based film company Boca Films, we devised an artistic concept which would challenge the negative perceptions of Holme Wood. The piece is inspired by the memories of a group of elders, brought to life by the children and young people who participate in the Resi/Dance programme. It is positive and hopeful, illustrating the beauty of family, friendships and community. Gary Clarke provided ongoing artistic mentorship throughout the process:

“I fully support the fantastic work that DUY does and I am proud to be affiliated with the organisation. It is clear that the team is passionate about positively inspiring and influencing people’s lives and I have witnessed first hand the transformational impact that their work has on people and places. Working on the project in Holmewood has been a rewarding experience so far and to see the community fully engage with the activities on offer has been really inspiring. I look forward to doing more”

(Gary Clarke, Artistic Director, Choreographer, Independent Dance Artist)

Matthew Bourne’s New Adventures

Following our successful partnership initiative with New Adventures in 2019, Resident Artist Paul Smethurst invited DUY to work on a film project inspired by Matthew Bourne’s ‘Edward Scissorhands’. The DUY Performance Company were involved in weekly Zoom sessions led by New Adventures and the filming took place in Bradford in the grounds on Bradford Cathedral.

“It has been wonderful working with the DUY team – an absolute dream! I am so impressed with the attitude and aptitude of your fantastic young dancers. It is clear how much of an impression Dance United has made on their lives”

(Kasaam Aziz, Communications Manager, New Adventures)



*'Periphery' – Youth Dance Film
Image: Daniel Johnson*

New Adventures has also invited three members of the DUY Performance Company to take part in their Cygnet School, a new year-long training programme for young people, particularly those with limited access to high quality arts provision.

Whalebone Films

After recognising the Bradford Women's Company as our most vulnerable group when the country first went into national lockdown, we decided to commission a film company to make a piece of work with the women and provide them with a platform to share their experiences of dance, the company and the global pandemic. The project also helped keep the women engaged with DUY and each other during an uncertain and challenging time. The collaboration involved DUY's artistic team working closely with film-makers Chloe White and David Levene to produce 'Here I Am'.

Daniel Johnson

Yorkshire-based filmmaker and photographer, Daniel collaborated on a number of projects with DUY during 2020/21. These included 'Happenings' and 'Disconnect' with Gradient and the youth dance film 'Periphery'. Daniel is entirely self-taught and has an affinity with community and collaboration. He currently works on dance and music videos, narrative shorts and documentaries. As an emerging local artist who is at the early stages of his career, we hope to continue nurturing this partnership:

"Working with DUY has been a transformative experience, and has made me greatly consider the effects that artforms can have on a community. Dance is a magical thing to capture, but also quite challenging. The work with DUY has made me more responsive and attentive in my work. It's been a genuine honour to be involved with a myriad of projects that have been as emotionally fulfilling as they have been creatively, and the team is such a pleasure to work alongside."

(Daniel Johnson)

Artist Training and Talent Development

An Introduction to Dance United Yorkshire's Practice in Social Inclusion

DUY's bespoke training, with emphasis on our distinct methodology, increases awareness of learner behaviour, develops skills in behaviour management strategies and improves understanding of the group process and communication. The traditional 4-day course has been delivered throughout the year in a range of settings and adapted for different groups and varying timeframes.

During 2020/21, our training offer was limited due to national lockdowns and social distancing measures. However, we were still able to offer a range of online training opportunities including:

- **'Extracurricular'**: a seminar in partnership with Bradford Producing Hub entitled 'Social Inclusion and Outreach through Dance and Performance'
- Behaviour management training with **New Adventures**
- Behaviour management workshops for 2nd Year undergraduates from the **Northern School of Contemporary Dance**

"The training provided very detailed and clear explanations on how to deal with different groups' dynamics and challenging behaviours. I gained very effective and invaluable tools that can be adapted for different groups and environments. These sessions are a "must" for anyone who goes into the teaching sector."

(Michela Meazza, New Adventures Artist)

Partnerships with Further and Higher Education

We deliver lectures and workshops for colleges, universities and conservatories across the region and offer placement and peer mentorship opportunities. In the past year, we have managed to continue developing our partnerships with a range of education institutions: 4 students from the Northern School of Contemporary Dance undertook placements and contributed to our online programme of work, 16 Leeds Beckett University 3rd year students attended an online lecture introducing them to the work of DUY and Artistic Director delivered a key note address to students at the University of Central Lancashire as part of their annual 'cJam' careers event. We also partnered with the Central School of Speech and Drama to provide a 'writer in residency' placement:

"My placement with Dance United Yorkshire was one that will stay with me forever! I feel I learnt new skills just from observing the charismatic way that workshops are lead. My experience was an amazing way to learn about the impact of dance in these communities and how it can be used as a healing tool."

(MA Student from Central School of Speech and Drama)





M&S


Gradient Dance Company

Gradient is integral to our support of cultural diversification and DUY's aspiration to retain new and diverse dance talent in Yorkshire, whether young professionals who originally trained with us (many of whom are the first in their family to have entered higher education) or undergraduates/graduates who have experienced DUY's methodology through our HE and FE teaching and placements. Gradient provides key training, performance and professional development opportunities for young adult dancers at a critical juncture in their professional lives.

The company continued to meet as much as possible during 2020/21 – in the studio, online and outdoors. The first project brought 16 dancers together through 'Open Your Eyes', a film exploring choreographic tasks in different locations and settings. The group then created 'Disconnect', funded by Bradford Council and featured at Bradford's LIT festival. The piece was projected on to the side of Broadway Shopping Centre for 4 nights during the lead-up to Christmas 2020. The company also performed in 'Happenings', a series of socially distanced outdoor performances which spontaneously took place in unexpected places across Bradford and Leeds.

"When everything else had come to stop, working on the 'Disconnect' project gave me something to look forward to every week. It helped me stay positive and hopeful"

(Gradient Dancer)



*Performers of 'Disconnect' – Gradient Company
Photo: Telegraph and Argus*



Partnership Development

We are a development organisation aiming to reach marginalised people and communities locally, regionally and nationally. To succeed, we recognise the importance of nurturing current and past relationships as well as developing new relationships. Despite the challenging year, we continued to forge new partnerships across arts and culture, education, social care, criminal justice, health and business. Much of this work has been in preparation for the projects and initiatives we will deliver in 2021/22, in particular with partners in education, health and criminal justice settings. In a post-COVID society, DUY's work will be even more relevant and important; using the power of high quality contemporary dance to reach those who have been most impacted by the pandemic:

“Dance United Yorkshire have played a vital role in helping people in the Holme Wood community get through these increasingly difficult times. The therapeutic effects of dance on mental health, and indeed physical health, is often something that gets overlooked in areas struggling with deprivation. People often find it difficult to connect and trust, meaning social isolation is a huge problem – yet DUY is helping to reduce inequalities by offering opportunities, experiences & a ‘safe place’ for people to express themselves”

(Bella Stirrup, Healthy Lifestyle Solutions)

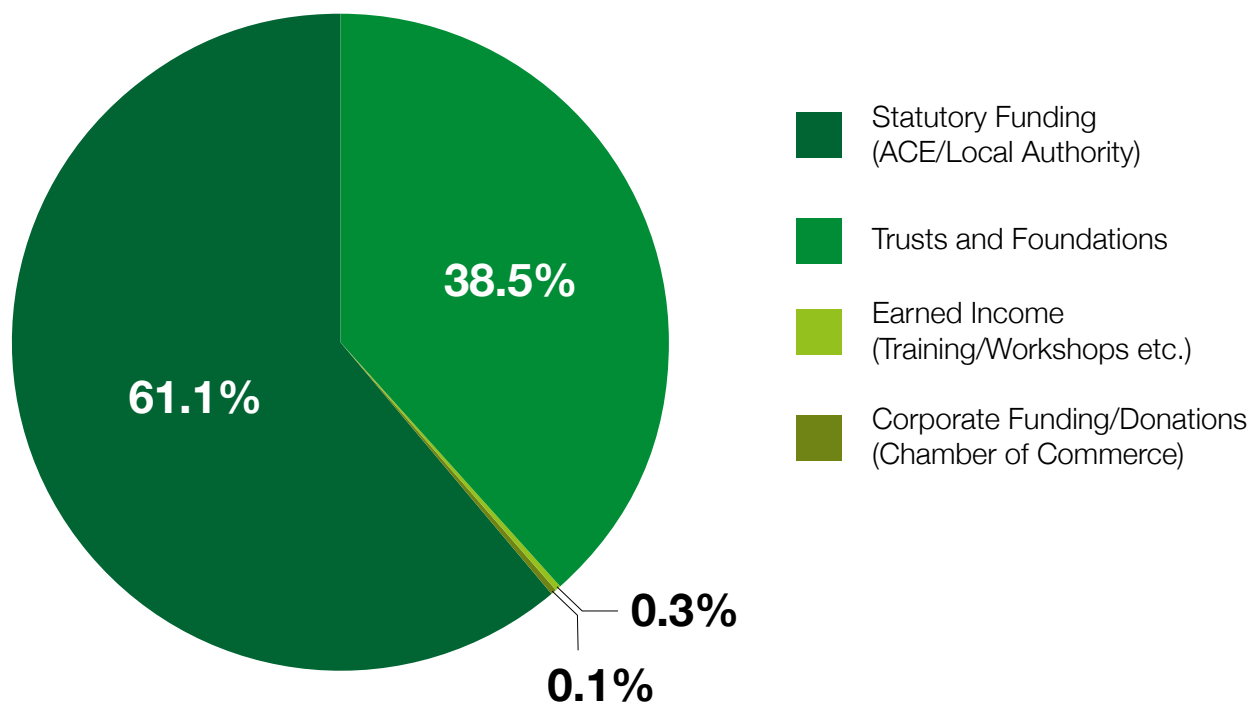
DUY Performance Company Dancer
Image: Kristen Spitty

Finance

	2020/21 £	2019/20 £
Income	293,012	274,681
Expenditure	222,089	189,779

Funding and Donations 2020/21

The pie chart below shows the sources of income for Dance United Yorkshire.



Overall Impact

DUY engaged **647** children, young people and adults in projects, classes, workshops and training. Unlike previous years, we were unable to deliver school and college workshops but, instead, offered an increased level of pastoral care to all our participants.

DUY's audience was in excess of **8,000**, predominantly as a result of our increased digital activity and online presence.

The feedback received from participants, audience members, partners and funders has been overwhelmingly positive throughout 2020/21 with many recognising how valuable our continuing work has been during one of the most challenging times our society has experienced:

“When we were in lockdown it was difficult, I felt stuck in a rut, locked in the house and it was no good for me. Doing those dance sessions felt like a weight had been lifted, I got to move and express myself and it felt good. Adrenalin would be rushing through my body after classes and I'd be happy, almost freer, it lifted my mood.”

(DUY Performance Company Participant)

Staff and Governance

Dance United Yorkshire Team

Artistic Director:	Helen Linsell
General Manager:	Duncan Bedson
Dance Programmes Manager:	Romina Thornton
Dance Programmes Manager:	Stephanie Donohoe
Dance Artist:	Adrienne Melling
Administrative Officer and Project support:	Abbie Padgett
Fundraiser:	Bridget Eadie
Freelance Support Worker:	Emma Robertson

Board of Trustees

Blair Davies (Chair)

Nikki Crane

Stephanie Derrick

Keira Martin

Anne-Marie Teed

a charity delivering
radical dance
interventions with
socially excluded
and marginalised
communities

mariaMarina
FOUNDATION



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



phf Paul Hamlyn
Foundation

