

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

THE DANCE NETWORK ASSOCIATION CIC



Website: www.dancenetworkassociation.org.uk

Office Number: 07490 37 47 17

Instagram and Facebook: /thedancenetworkassociation

Twitter: DanceNetEssex

c/o The Mercury Theatre, Balcerne Gate, Colchester CO1 IPT

THE DANCE NETWORK ASSOCIATION CIC

The Dance Network Association is passionate about offering a wealth of dance participation and education to local communities in Essex and its neighbouring counties.

Our mission is to raise the profile of dance in Essex and further afield. We seek to do this through the provision of affordable high-quality dance delivery for local communities, individuals, schools and young people more generally.

We seek to:

- increase the opportunities available for everyone in the community to engage in dance
- encourage happy and healthy lifestyles through dance activity by promoting self-esteem, confidence, mobility and general fitness
- widen aspirations by providing both performance opportunities and the opportunity to be part of a community audience
- enhance the quality of dance provision across the county by offering support in schools and through professional development programmes and qualifications build a coherent and progressive dance future for Essex and its neighbouring counties
- (above all) have fun dancing!



Directors:

Gemma Wright Artistic Director

Lyann Kennedy Director of Communications and Finance

Paul Convelly Director

A YEAR IN REVIEW

From Gemma Wright Artistic Director and Founder of the Dance Network Association

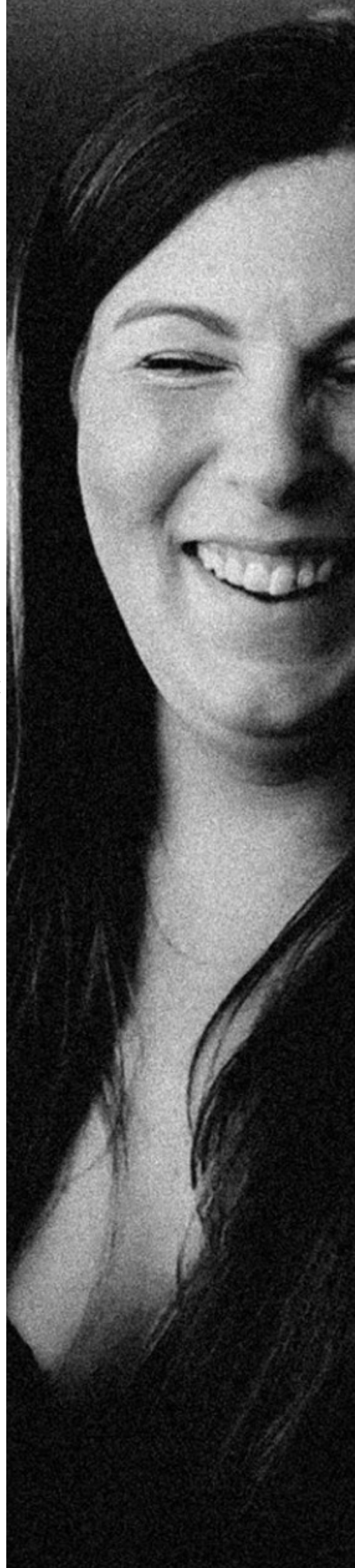
This year we have seen a large increase in our partnership and collaborative working which has led to the delivery of many new dance projects in Essex and allowed us to operate over a larger geographical area.

In September 2019 we delivered a successful annual dance conference with over 55 teachers attending. Not only by local Essex based teachers but national teachers too which I feel has truly reflected our efforts in raising the profile of dance over the past 5 years.

In that same month, we began a new Dancing with Dementia programme in Witham with the Alzheimer's Society and a Dance and Dine programme commissioned by Brentwood Borough Council all for socially isolated older adults to take part in dancing activity.

Over the year we revisited and developed the way in which our Early Years programme was delivered giving more opportunities for teachers in education to upskill and develop their repertoire in creative dance to deliver.

In November 2019 we started a new youth programme allocating 6 secondaries 'after school clubs' in areas identified by both ourselves and our partners Active Essex as the least physically active and those with the most deprived families. As well as building on our two youth companies based at Colchester Sixth Form for disadvantaged young people aged 10 - 26.



March 2020 brought difficulties for many as COVID-19 struck. As a small team, we managed to quickly pivot services and have been successful in changing onto online services and thinking up ways of staying connected to our older adults and those with limited technology access, through initially dreaming up full days of dance called 'Social Dis-Dancing' a day of classes all on line. Sending out tasks on postcards for people to stay creative through lockdown. Guides to how to get onto Zoom alongside various catch up phone calls and friendly letters.

Although financially this was not bringing in any core funding to keep DNA in operation.

We made a significant loss of circa £40k of programmed activity in the Summer 2020 and were unable to deliver our largest mass dance project 'Let's Go, TOKYO!' with an expected 1000 young people taking part and a further 2000 audience members.

At the end of May 2020 we had no option but to stop activity, cancelling many freelance contractual agreements and putting employed staff on the government retention scheme.

As an organisation we are not ready to close our doors indefinitely we just need to make the most of what is available from the government to enable us to support our return and recover from this most difficult time for all.

If you are able to support us through this ongoing difficult time please support us by donating the gift of love to DNA: [SUPPORT US](#)



PROGRAMME 2019/20



DANCE FOR HEALTH

Dancing with Dementia

Dancing with Parkinson's

Dance and Dine

RE:Generation Chelmsford

Generation Harlow

Active Families

DANCE FOR THE COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

Annual Dance Network Conference

Active Start

Youth Dance Clubs

Youth Dance Companies

BE:Spoke Schools programmes

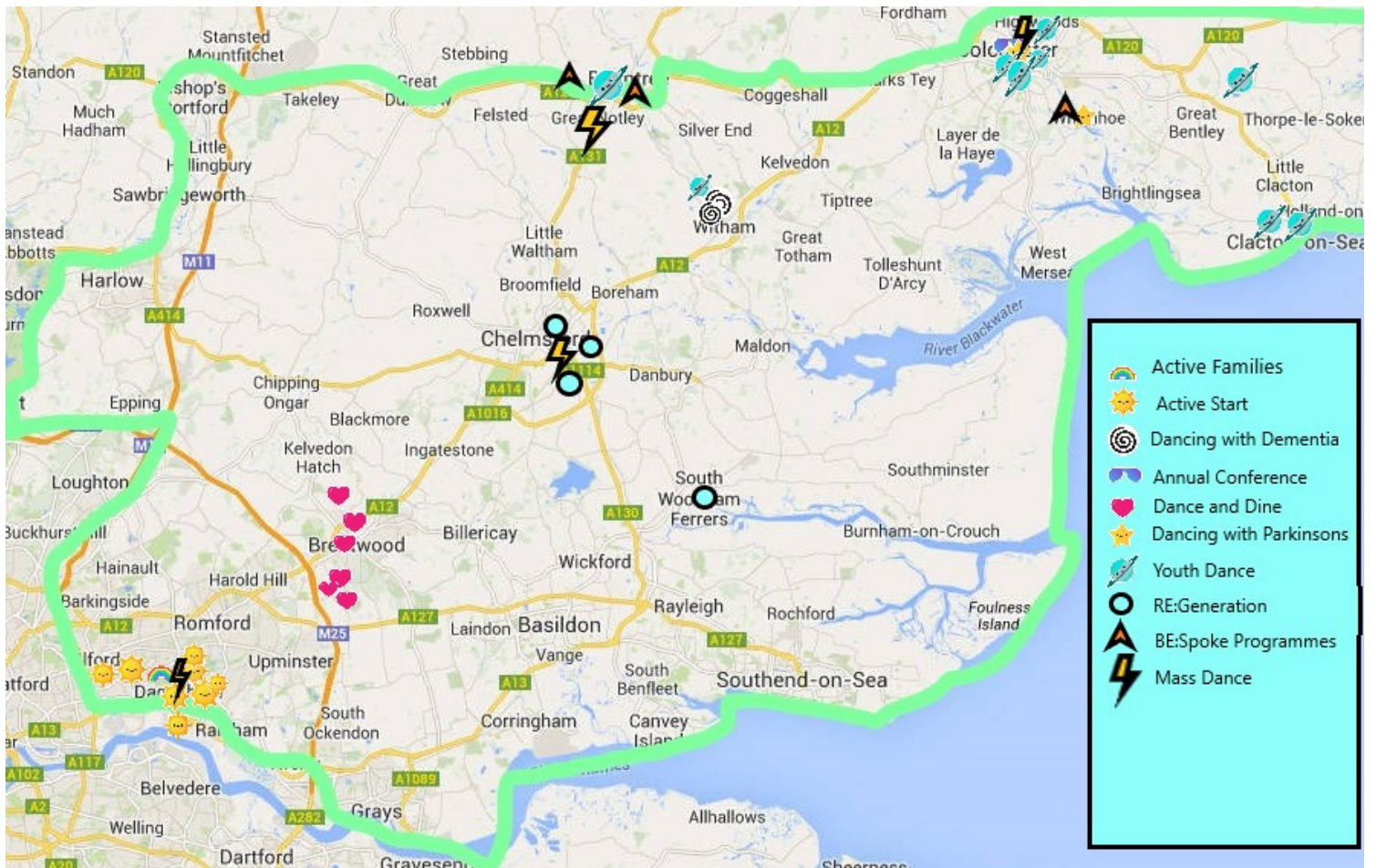
Let's Go, TOKYO!

Creative Dance Toolkit Inclusive CPD

Social Dis-Dancing

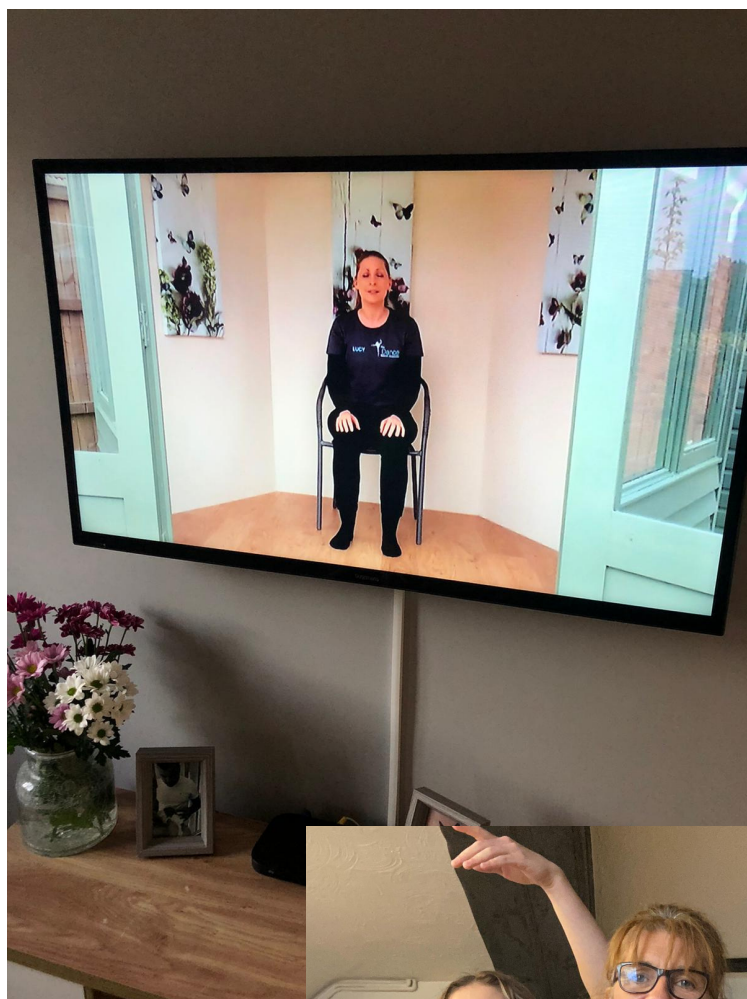
OUR REACH

Reach between August 2019 - March 2020 before COVID



Online Reach

As COVID hit our services then had to be taken online and our geographical reach grew Internationally



Areas of reach included:

- America**
- Bangladesh**
- Black Notley, Braintree**
- Braintree**
- Chelmsford**
- Colchester**
- Dagenham**
- Earles Colne**
- Great Bromley**
- Ingatstone**
- Ireland**
- London**
- Maldon**
- Mumai India**
- Penryn Cornwall**
- Romford**
- Silver End, Witham**
- Barking**
- Romford**
- Southminster**
- Suffolk**
- Wiltshire**
- Witham**
- Wivenhoe**

Engagement



5365 people across Essex and Barking and Dagenham have Danced with us

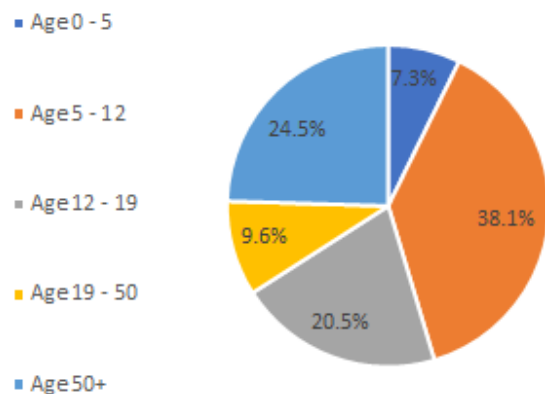
35 Volunteers

4842 Direct Participants

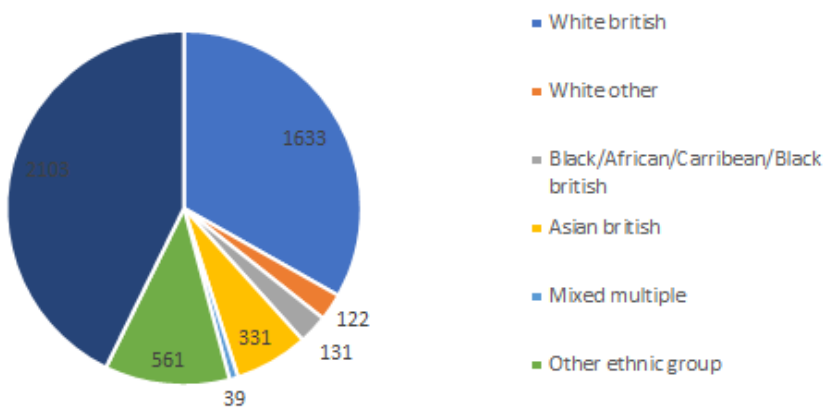
368 Freelance Deliverers

120 Audience Members

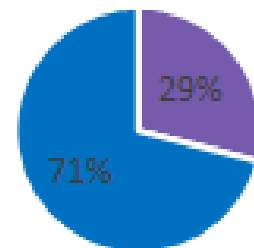
Age Range



Ethnicity



Gender



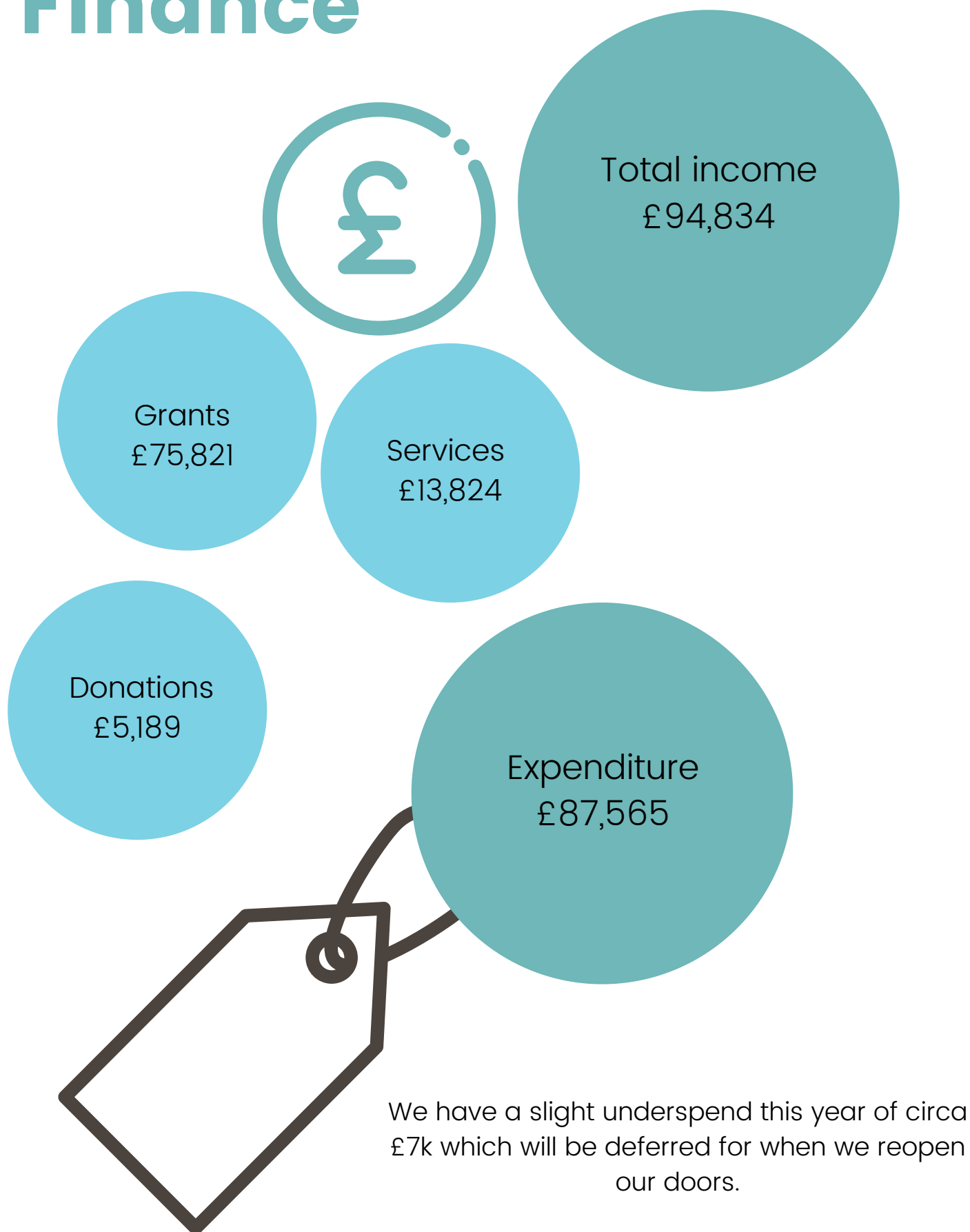
Disability



Of our 5365 dancers only 16 people have said that they are living with a disability

- Male attendance
- Female attendance

Finance



HIGHLIGHTS

We started the year with an incredible Annual Conference in September 2019 hosted at the University Centre Colchester.

57 people were in attendance from across the country and Essex itself. The day was extremely joyful with various dance workshops with professional artists, seminars with funding partners, time to network and support peers. We had attendance from both our regional and national dance organisations and local councillors who added speeches to make it an extra special day for all.

In the Autumn Gemma Wright Artistic Director was nominated for a One Dance UK Award in 2019 as a solo director.

Our mass dance programme this year titled 'Let's Go, TOKYO!' in the lead up to the Tokyo, Japan Olympic and Paralympic Games started delivery with 25 schools signed up from Barking and Dagenham and a further 11 Schools from Essex buying into the programme. Both teacher training days had been delivered by March 2020 with 26 teachers in attendance. However, the summer performances for both Great Notley Country park in Essex and the Jim Peters Stadium in Barking and Dagenham were both cancelled on the news of COVID-19. We are hoping that we maybe able to re-plan the programme for 2021.

Active Essex offered us a grant to enable 8 youth dance programmes to be delivered across the county. The idea of these programme were to get young people aged 14 - 19 (primarily girls) more physically active in our most deprived areas of Essex.

After school provision started in November at Alec Hunter, Colchester Academy, Colchester Sixth Form, Clacton County High, Clacton Coastal Academy, New Rickstones and Manningtree delivered by a team of freelance artists.

We continued to house 'DNA companies' at Colchester Sixth From with the introduction of two companies this year based on past dancers feedback to split the age groups. Companies: Dance Station for 10 - 15 years of age working towards their ISTD Contemporary Dance Syllabus Exams and Young Professionals 15 - 26 years of age working on performance skills.

These two companies unlike the school provision were offered Christmas, Easter and a Summer Intensive periods alongside weekly 1.5 hourly provision. The companies were also entered for our regional platform U.Dance One Dance UK hosted by Dance East and would have represented the county at other national performance events.

In September we launched our new Dancing With Dementia Classes at the British Legion in Witham in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society funded by Livewell at Braintree District Council. We increased physical activity and brought joy to 54 beneficiaries over 4 classes.

We ended the year on a wonderful Christmas party at the Witham Hub in Dec 2019 where many joined for dancing, fun and connections including 2 local care homes and the Mayoress of Witham.

In September 2019 we successfully received a £500.00 grant from Active Chelmsford, and through further crowd funding raised an additional £900.00 to offer 5 older adult sessions in Chelmsford - called RE:Generation. We offered 52 older adults over this time classes of an hour of movement / dancing and 30 minute social in CHP housing associations residential scheme lounges. Classes were for those who classed themselves as older to come together to keep active in a fun environment and meet new friends.

Brentwood District Council (BDC) after successful pilot provision in the previous year offered us a year long programme offering their residents in the Sheltered Housing Schemes in the district a programme called 'Dance and Dine'. Dancers would take part in an hour of dance activity with our freelance artist/s and then stay for a fish and chip lunch hosted by the BDC wellbeing team. A further grant was awarded from Axis to deliver a wider project to the Brentwood Community specifically for isolated older adults, which was paused and monies repurposed due to COVID-19.

Essex Community Foundation (ECF) late in 2019 offered us funding to begin 'Generation Harlow' on the basis of our achievements in Chelmsford, Brentwood and Witham. However due to COVID 19 this project never got off the ground and funds were re-purposed to support core staffing. ECF offered us an additional emergency grant in the summer 2020 to start to create two DVD tutorials for our current older adult participants. Alongside a collection of other repurposed funds we were also able to create 200 care prop packages to send out to all of our dancers with these new DVDs to keep them dancing at home.

The highlight of our year was being awarded the Colchester Voluntary Welfare grant in Spring 2020 which would enable us to deliver a 3 year programme of work for older adults and our Dancing with Parkinson's dancers. Funds are on pause until we reopen our doors.



Photo Rachel Cherry

In April 2020 we had to pivot our in person services to offer online classes due to COVID-19. We offered our first Social Dis-Dancing Day as a way to try to stay connected – online through lockdown with our current participants and participants.

The day included
DNA Team breakfast
Artist Tea
Interactive families
Let's Go Tokyo Chrissie,
Dancing with Parkinson's
Youth Dance
Dance for older people

Total: 126 participants attended
28 people were new participants to the organisation

A similar day was repeated in May 2020 but with less live sessions and more pre-recorded classes, making use of our back catalogue of work. 469 people were in attendance and we raised £1600.00 in donations.

We have continued to offer our Active Start programme throughout the year for Early Years Foundation stages at Schools in Barking and Dagenham funded by Public Health. This year we wanted to redesign the way in which it was delivered to really empower teachers in schools to lead dance practice. This was as an observation over the past 5 years but our Artistic Director and after discussions with local school. Each year DNA go into schools offering an 8 week programme directly to the children and then leave, none of the teachers were being upskilled or understood how to embed the Active Start programme into the everyday EYFS curriculum. Therefore we changed the programme delivery designed by teachers in October. This now included a pre observation of a class, teacher meetings and whole staff meetings after school and developing teacher practice with our artists. Which meant by the end of the 8 week programme class teachers could confidently deliver and lead the Active Start programme.



OBSERVATIONS FROM OUR FREELANCE ARTISTS

Perhaps the most important observation for me, is the improved mood and energy level across all participants. Generally, there is a nervousness in new participants, and for some, attending a dance class is in itself already a challenge revealing physical limitations and challenging social skills. I have witnessed individuals growing in confidence throughout a dance class, be it, their capacity to offer ideas, share memories, provide feedback, say what they do and don't like, empowering agency throughout the learning space. All of these interactions and offerings, have vast outcomes for each participant, as it provides a deepened learning space. Over time, I have observed others coming out of their shell and finding their voice, which in turn bridges creative engagement and process.

DNA's arrangement of these classes along with social function, is fantastic. Each participant, in their own words and across the terms, has expressed that they have worked hard and playfully add, that they have earned their tea and biscuits. This time of settling, provides time to reflect on the lesson, smile about the content and forward plan what might take place in future classes. This provides a motivation to return to a group of now friends rather than strangers.

Some of the girls that attend have never danced before, and some have done gymnastics before. The girls are really enthusiastic and love getting involved. Two girls had a birthday on the same day on the 10th March. So I let them all pair up, and create their own dances but it had to include 3 of the new street dance skills that they been learning. They seemed to really enjoy this and being creative is something they are not shy about, which is great to see.

Our blow up beach ball allowed us to increase our heart rates in a fun and effective way. Through throwing, catching and batting the ball away, we were able to work on our reflexes and action/reaction. This playful activity also sparked a lot of laughter from the group as well as new relationships, visual tracking and eye contact with one another as they passed the ball around.



Photo Rachel Cherry

TESTIMONIALS

In my opinion this class is fantastic, fabulous and fatabulous. It is an excellent group which is helpful to both kids and parents and it encourages us to be active with little effort and free of cost.

Active Families participant

Very hands on - covered everything + went with what was needed

Let's Go, Tokyo Teacher

This reminds me of walking and fitness session in Hackney before I moved. The bending using the chair reminds me of stretches in the park and the good times I had

RE:Generation Participant

The Dance Network Association have a professional, evidenced-based approach to all delivery and have complied to all details contained without our service level agreements, including that for evaluation and insight and reporting.

Dawn Emberson Active Essex

As the County Councillor for Wivenhoe St Andrew and the portfolio holder for Culture I took part in a Dancing for Parkinson's session, I haven't had so much fun in ages. People really had a good time moving as much as they could and interacting with others. It was a session of pure joy and those suffering with this condition loved it.

Cllr Julie Young

SUPPORT

The following organisations have supported DNA to offer all our services in 2019/2020



Essex County Council



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND



We are forever grateful to the Mercury Theatre who provide us with our home

Additionally, we have provided services to local schools and received donations from local Councillors, participants and local residents and additional donations through the Essex lottery. Thank you to all.

