



11 Million Reasons to Dance

Final Evaluation Report

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1.0 SUMMARY

The 11 Million Reasons to Dance strategic touring project has reached 100,693 people (including social media activity, participants, delivery practitioners and audiences)

Between November 2016 and November 2017 the project travelled to six locations across the Midlands and the North of England: Runcorn, Spalding, Doncaster, Durham, Coventry and Middlesbrough.

Through community engagement dance classes, 232 adults and young disabled people engaged with the project and experienced quality inclusive dance activity.

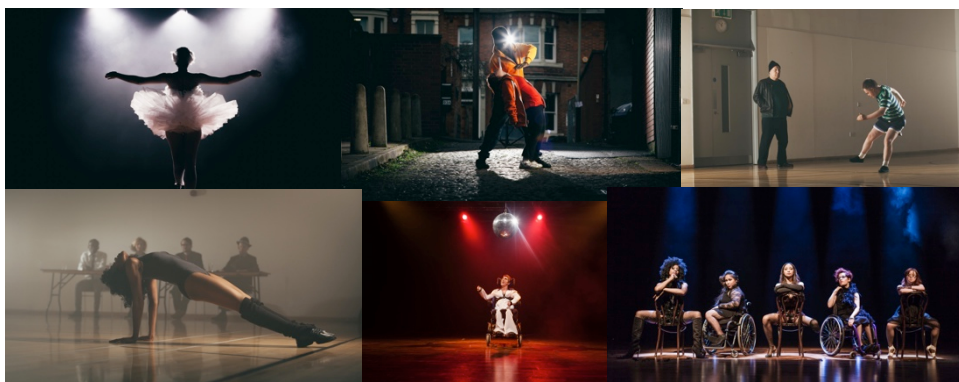
New relationships have been established between cultural agencies in each location, with partnerships formed between arts organisations and local venues, with a focus on developing provision, programming and quality of dance and disability activities in each location.

Nearly 40% of visitors to the photography exhibition had not attended any dance and disability events in the past year, suggesting that new audiences had been reached, to some extent.

Public reaction to the photography exhibition and the performance events in each location were highly positive, with many asking for more opportunities to engage in future events.

Over 90% of audiences claimed that the 11MRTD project had changed their opinion of dance and disability in a positive way.

162 people attended training events held by PD and partners, to promote quality dance and disability provision and equip staff within organisations and venues to provide opportunities for participants and performers.



2.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

In 2014, Sean Goldthorpe was commissioned by People Dancing to photograph 20 reimagined famous dance scenes from popular films, with Deaf and disabled dancers playing the lead roles. These performers are professional dance practitioners, disability arts activists and members of inclusive youth dance groups. It was this collection of photographs that formed the basis for the '11 Million Reasons' photography exhibition.

The 11 Million Reasons to Dance project (11MRTD) began in early 2016 after being conceptualised by People Dancing with the aim to develop inspiring new dance work, improve access to dance for disabled people, engage diverse audiences and work with cultural partners in new UK locations. The programme of events and the project delivery is scheduled to continue until early 2018 and consists of a touring programme of events shaped around the already established photography exhibition, '11 Million Reasons'.

Touring to six partner locations, 11MRTD's ambition was to positively profile disabled and Deaf people who dance. By establishing new relationships with local cultural agencies and performance venues as well as engaging with audiences new to dance and disability work, the project hopes to change public perceptions of dancers with disabilities. By July 2017 the project had toured to five of the six key locations (Runcorn, Spalding, Doncaster, Durham and Coventry), with the final location of Middlesbrough visited in October 2017.

The project consists of different strands of activity, with each strand being delivered in every location by local partners from cultural agencies who have a specific interest or desire to develop their dance and disability offer. The strands include the instalment of the 11 Million Reasons photography exhibition, performance events (both professional and community based), inclusive engagement sessions with local dance practitioners and an associate artist programme, which seeks to establish the legacy of the project in the local area by providing opportunities for emerging local disabled dance artists.

People Dancing, the UK's foundation for community dance, is the development organisation and membership body focusing on providing opportunities for all to dance. The 11MRTD project sits under the 'Deaf and disabled people' remit for the organisation, which aims to create new opportunities for disabled people to participate in dance, to develop professional prospects for disabled dance practitioners and to engage audiences with dance and disability work.

3.0 THIS REPORT

This report is the result of evaluative research of the 11MRTD project, which began in November 2016 as the project toured to its first location of Runcorn in Cheshire, and was conducted in partnership with Coventry University. This final report maps the development, delivery and organisation of the project as well as drawing upon data that has been collected as part of the tour, from audience members project partners, participants and staff members.

The aims of the evaluation focus on:



The following questions were designed by Coventry University, in agreement with People Dancing, as a guide for the evaluation and to aid the development of methodological tools for data collection.

Research questions devised to guide the evaluation:

- **What prior activities led to the creation and development of 11 Million Reasons to Dance?**
- **How are the aims and ambitions of the project realised by each location and project partner lead?**
- **What does 'impact' mean in the context of initiatives that focus on the intersection between dance, disability and audience engagement; what is the impact of 11MRTD?**
- **How have audiences engaged with the 11MRTD project and what effect has this had on their perceptions of dance and disability?**

3.1 METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

11 Million Reasons to Dance is a busy and complex project, with ever developing and shifting aspects, responding to the need of each partner location. Therefore, this evaluation is following a similar design process. Currently rooted within a larger Action Research framework research study, regular reflection and analysis is used to determine the next steps and direction of the evaluation. Aspects of Evaluative Research processes, including consideration of guidance from the Arts Council England's (ACE) evaluation strategies for measuring value and impact¹, are also contributing to the methodological design of the study.

In addition, attention paid to Arts Council England's Seven Quality Principles (specifically for children and young people) will also help to frame the evaluation as a focus for provision.

The seven quality principles are:

1. Striving for excellence and innovation
2. Being authentic
3. Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
4. Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
5. Actively involving children and young people
6. Enabling personal progression
7. Developing belonging and ownership

© Arts Council England²

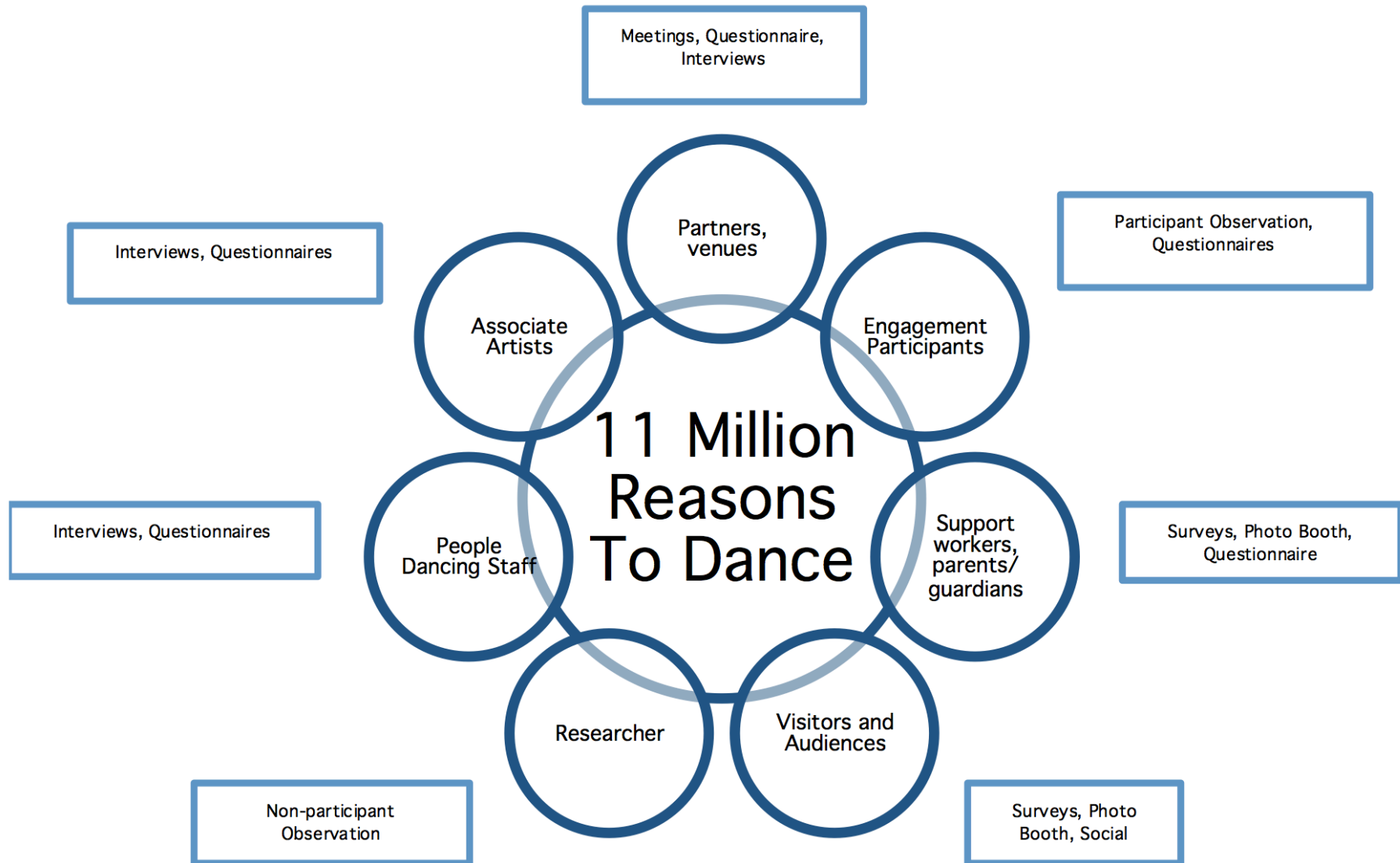
Emphasis for the evaluation is on exploring people's experience of the 11MRTD project as artists, participants, project partners, venue staff and deliverers. This, coupled with quantitative data from venues regarding audiences, will help to shape the breadth and scope of the impact as well as exploring the depth of people's experience of the project.



¹ Arts Council England (2017) *Measuring Outcomes*. London: Arts Council England. Accessible at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/measuring-outcomes>

² Arts Council England (2017) *Quality Principles*, London: Arts Council England. Accessible at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/quality-metrics/quality-principles>

THE EVALUATION PROCESS



Overview of stakeholders, participants and data collection methods.

The Interactive Booth

In every location the photography exhibition was accompanied by a number of evaluation tools. An evaluation booth, designed exclusively by People Dancing and supported by Orange Fox Studios, provides visitors an opportunity to answer evaluative questions and explore more about the 11MRTD project through films, games and to creatively respond to the images by designing and taking their own 'selfie' photographs.

In addition to the booth, quick response slips³ were provided asking:

- **Please tell us what you think of the exhibition.**
- **Which was your favourite photo from the exhibition? Why?**
- **Has the exhibition changed your outlook on disability in dance? How?**
- **This is the first time the interactive booth has been in an exhibition. Please tell us about your experience of it.**

For those wishing to engage more thoroughly with the evaluation, an audience survey was provided. Additionally, the evaluator conducted observations sessions at each location. For the performance events, all audience members were invited to complete an audience feedback survey, exploring individual experiences and perceptions of dance and disability before, during and after the performance.

These surveys were then processed and analysed using SPSS statistical analysis software.

To evaluate the intricacies of the project through qualitative data collection methods, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each partner and venue lead, exploring organisational impact and experience of the project.

These interviews were transcribed and analysed with links grouped thematically and cross-referenced with other data collected via other methods.



³ These quick slip questions were designed and shared prior to the evaluator's arrival on the project.

3.2 LANGUAGE

“[A person is considered disabled if they have] a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.”
2010 Equality Act

A common point of discussion, with both audience members and partner leads, is regarding the language used when engaging with dance and disability issues. Some location partners described their struggle with marketing and designing disability programmes, due to a lack of understanding regarding language use⁴. Additionally, it became clear that there was an element of caution amongst venues with regards to language and communication, which focused on fear of offending, excluding or isolating individuals⁵. Many realised throughout their engagement with the project, however, that discussion is vital in developing understanding and strategies for best use of language when crafting dance and disability platforms, and being in conversation with disabled people in the planning and programming could increase the quality of their provision.

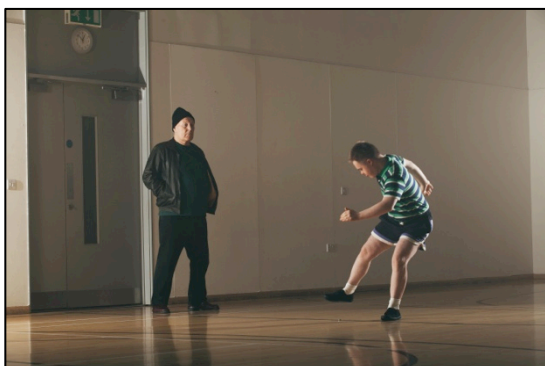
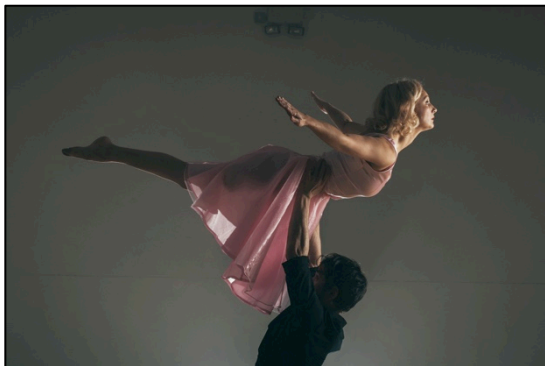
Similarly, a discussion with an audience member in Coventry prompted contemplations regarding the use of the term ‘disabled’ in this study, due to its connotations and the suggestion of ‘otherness’. This audience member explained that as she was unable to perform some of the movements she had just witnessed during the performance she would, therefore, consider this to be a disability within the context of dance performance. Questions are then raised concerning what counts as disability and how does context or how do environments affect our understanding of being ‘disabled’? For many disabled dancers, their impairment is not what prevents them from participating in dance activities, but rather the environment and attitude factors that can act as barriers to participation.

⁴ “we try and market ourselves, I guess we coin ourselves, as ‘inclusive’, but one thing is [11MRTD has] really opened our eyes especially as to the language we’re using” - Participant

⁵ “what [11MRTD] really made me think about is how you need experts. You need people who do [this] all the time holding your hand and being alongside you to make those steps because actually once you’ve started it’s all right - you just do it. It’s making the first step. I know that it’s in a very personal way [not taking the first step] is definitely a lot about being overly...so worried about offending people...in language... in making assumptions assuming people can do things, assuming people can’t do things” - Participant

However, for the purpose of this report the term ‘disabled’ is being used to refer to individuals who would describe themselves as having a ‘disability’, which itself is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as “a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities”⁶. While I acknowledge that this definition is far from perfect, it is being adopted in this report due to number of stakeholders involved in the project and the more common knowledge and understanding of the Equality Act definition. The term ‘non-disabled’ refers to those participants who have not disclosed a disability. Additionally, the terms ‘integrated’ and ‘inclusive’ are used regularly within disability discourse research and particularly within dance contexts. While there is much discussion regarding the positive and negative implications of these terms, the use of them in this context refers to projects or programmes that promote openness to all who wish to participate, providing equality of opportunity for both disabled and non-disabled participants.

These terms are not used with the intention of segregating groups of people or contributing to the implication of the ‘other’, but rather to assess the demographical impact and engagement with the project across a sector of dance participants and theatre goers.

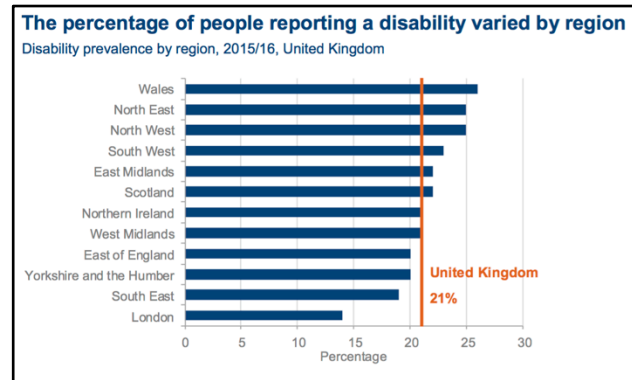


⁶ Government Equalities Office and Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) *Equality Act 2010*. Available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents?>

4.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

4.1 AMBITIONS, AIMS AND INTENDED IMPACT

One of the most common questions asked by visitors and audience members whilst conducting evaluation fieldwork was regarding the title of the project, and more specifically where the statistic of 11 million came from. When the project was first conceptualised there were 11



million disabled people in the UK according to the Family Resource Survey 2011/2012⁷, which was used as inspiration for the title of the project. The 2015/2016 survey reported a rise to 13.3 million, or 1 in 5 people⁸.

The intention of the 11MRTD strategic touring project was not only to continue to bring attention to dance and disability artists, highlighted through the original 11MR photography exhibition, but to develop a model for the furtherance of cultural provision in areas with low levels of dance engagement. As the aims in the chart below highlight, focus is on professional development for emerging and established disabled dance artists, as well as increasing engagement in the arts through new audiences and creating opportunities for disabled people to participate in local dance activities. Another aim was to change the way organisation and venues think about and implement diversity work.

As well as core project aims, ambitions for the project focusing specifically on legacy and impact were designed and organised in to three categories: **capacity-building, opportunity-creation and outreach and exposure**. These encompass the areas of cultural development intended by the aims of the project.

⁷ “The number of disabled people has increased (from 10.7 million in 2002/03 to 11.9 million in 2011/12), as a result of the increasing overall population”

Department for Work and Pensions (2013) *Family Resources Survey: financial year 2011/12*. London: DfWP. Available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-201112>

⁸ “Twenty-one per cent (13.3 million) of people reported a disability in 2015/16, an increase from 19 per cent (11.9 million) in 2013/14. Most of the change...came from an increase in working-age adults reporting a disability (16 to 18 per cent).”

Department for Work and Pensions (2017) *Family Resources Survey 2015/16*. London: DfWP. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-201516>

	AMBITIONS	AIMS	EVALUATION
CAPACITY BUILDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoters and communities to actively engage and to be at the heart of the tour, recording and reflecting on their journeys • Venues and local arts agencies improving their knowledge, confidence and skills in creating bespoke touring models, audience development activity and engagement programmes • Improve logistical barriers and create a model that acts as a precedent for other UK disability projects • Audience Development: developing knowledge and skills to engage with new audiences and diverse communities, particularly in areas of least engagement, and develop their understanding and a robust Evaluation report • Promoters and Managers developing skills and understanding in programming and presenting dance, touring work, creating commissioning opportunities and audience development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to great art created by Deaf and disabled artists through unique partnerships that supports high quality artists to lead the development of new approaches to greater public engagement through participation and touring. • Increase access to the arts by new attenders • Build connections between venues, cultural agencies and new audiences, particularly those from hard to reach communities, diverse backgrounds and first time attenders. Instigate collaborations with the local dance workforce and agencies to build relationships between venue dance programmes and communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Semi-structured partner and venue lead interviews post-project delivery ⇒ Performance and photography exhibition audience surveys ⇒ Researcher observation at performance events and venues during exhibition being up ⇒ Feedback gathered through PD's Evaluation Booth from visitors
OUTREACH AND EXPOSURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the quality of work presented, commissioned and exposed by and for Deaf and Disabled people • To engage with a new audiences and participants in six geographic areas and reach at least 30,000 people through the work. • Fit with National Development including: Establish a new national framework with Shape Arts and Dance for Change to ensure quality and support for the inclusion of disabled participants, artists and audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present new perspectives on how non-dance specialist venues can develop, grow and retain audiences and engage in dance touring performances and events. • Focus on areas of low engagement in the arts, where there are limited services, access routes, training programmes and cultural activities (sources: Active People Survey, Creative People and Places and National Government statistics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Feedback on PD training events gathered through semi-structured interviews and post event evaluation forms ⇒ Engagement participant feedback gathered

OPPORTUNITY CREATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission emerging and mid-career Deaf and disabled artists to present their artistic talents within new locations • Offer employment and professional development opportunities for dance artists located near partner venues that could extend beyond this project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop legacy to support programming disability arts, broadening the range of venues presenting and touring work by Deaf and disabled artists. 	<p>⇒ Legacy plans explored through semi-structured partner and venue interviews</p>
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Overarching aims of the 11 Million Reasons to Dance project:

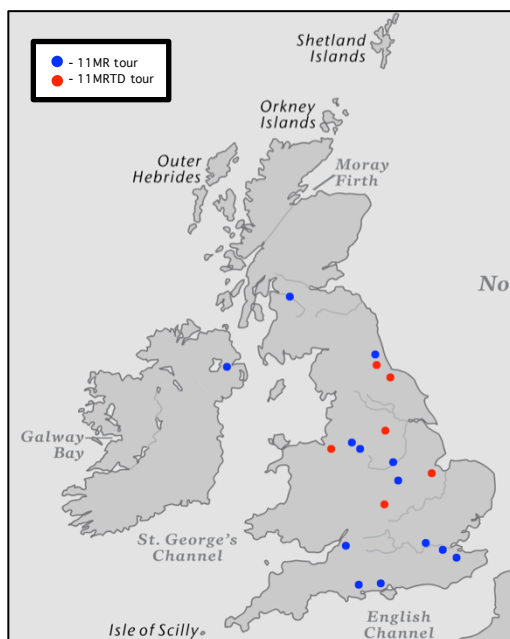
- Provide capacity for Deaf & disabled artists to tour and develop confidence in carrying out new activities in new areas
- Extend PD work across a broader geographic area and share knowledge, skills and experience with a variety of partners
- Increase opportunities for the public to engage in dance and support Deaf and disabled artists to explore new markets and contexts for their practice
- Develop new audiences by implementing a creative approach to securing and retaining audiences.



4.2 DEVELOPMENT FROM '11 MILLION REASONS'

In 2014, with support from the Arts Council and Unlimited, People Dancing commissioned the creation of a series of photographs reimagining famous scenes from films but with disabled dance artists as the performers, including *Dirty Dancing*, *Grease*, *Billy Elliott* and *Black Swan* to name a few. Since then the exhibition has toured both nationally and internationally, reaching thousands of people and attracting a broad audience with an interest in film, photography, visual arts and/or dance.

The map below highlights the number of places the exhibition has visited in the UK as well as mapping the spread of the visits, for both the original solo exhibition and the strategic touring project. In addition to these locations, the photo exhibition has toured internationally to many locations, including Hong Kong, Croatia, Spain and Ukraine⁹.



Due to the success of and response to the photo exhibition in 2014, People Dancing applied for a Strategic Touring grant from the Arts Council, which was successful, thus beginning the 11 Million Reasons to Dance journey. This journey has explored the way in which we work with venues, organisations and communities to present, produce and develop long-term engagement with Deaf and disabled people as participants in dance programmes, audiences for dance, and as artists themselves. The project aims to raise the profile of work by Deaf and disabled artists, exposing their work to local communities and presenting

venues across England in areas of low engagement with the arts.

The focus of the new touring project was on specific regional areas as tour locations and aiming to deliver more activities related to the exhibition to help develop arts engagement and activity in each area. By focusing on developing relationships with local cultural organisations and providing help and resources for them to deliver the project in their area, People Dancing were aiming to enable change and development to occur within the region, investing more in the long-term arts provision in the area and contributing to the project's legacy.

⁹ Some of these locations were selected and organised based on British Council initiatives or PD engagement with organisations who were looking to present the exhibition at their events or in their space.

5.0 PROJECT PARTNERS

The sites selected as touring locations for the project were identified as areas where the level of engagement in the arts by disabled people was low. People Dancing used Government statistics, the Arts Council's Creative People and Places programme and the Sport England-led Active Lives (formally known as Active People) survey in collaboration with ACE to help identify these locations as centres for focus on cultural growth¹⁰. *However, it should be noted that the statistics used in the selection of these locations from the ACE Active People survey were from 2008-2010 (inclusive) and therefore may have changed since they were first published.*

The Brindley Theatre - Runcorn, Cheshire

OVERVIEW and VENUE:

The Brindley is a popular theatre owned by Halton Borough Council and the main centre for arts and entertainment for the borough of Halton. With the aim to entertain, educate and inspire, The Brindley deliver community arts classes, host art exhibitions and design education outreach programmes in addition to programming their popular music and theatre shows¹¹.

Halton was identified in the Active People survey as having only 37.13% of people engaging with the arts in the area. Highly active in the area of gallery project development, The Brindley welcomed the 11MRTD photo exhibition in November 2016, with a performance by local inclusive group 'Ella Performs' as well as showcasing work by Welly O'Brien and Kate Marsh, professional dance practitioners who worked as associate artists linked to the engagement strand of the project.



¹⁰ Creative People and Places (2015) *Creative People and Places* [online] available from: <http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk>

ACE (2017) *The Active Lives Survey* [online] available from: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/participating-and-attending/active-lives-survey>

¹¹ Halton Borough Council (2017) *The Brindley Theatre* [online] available from: <http://thebrindley.org.uk>

LEGACY:

Unfortunately, due to staffing changes and budget constraints, The Brindley were unable to continue with the latter stages of the project following the exhibition visit. However, a group of local dance artists, venues and dance organisations, engaged in inclusive work, was formed in order to address how to develop legacy and deliver the associate artist strand of the project in Runcorn and the surrounding area.

This network has established 'More Reasons to Dance', a practice sharing and artist development programme for dancers with disabilities and practitioners who facilitate or create dance with disabled dancers. Over the next 8-12 months members of Blueroom, Cheshire Dance, Fallen Angels and their practitioners will meet at each organisation's home location, to take part in practice sharing sessions together. The host group will lead a session that everyone can participate in, as well as time dedicated to reflection and development planning. There will be four sessions in total, taking place from early 2018 to autumn 2018.

The practice network offers opportunities for all participants to learn from one another, to develop skills in different art forms and to strengthen the links between the dance and disability communities across Cheshire and Merseyside. Artists (both professional and non-professional) can share and develop their practice, connect with other artists in the region and begin to identify what support they need for their own development and the growth of this community as a whole. It is intended that an online space in which the groups can share thoughts/ideas/resources and keep in touch in between the sessions, will be created.

artsNK - Spalding, Lincolnshire

OVERVIEW:

Working as a community arts deliverer in the North Kesteven District, Lincolnshire and the East Midlands, artsNK believes that the arts contribute significantly to the artistic, cultural and economic life of these communities, helping to build social cohesion and improving the wellbeing of individuals. artsNK deliver projects within local schools, community environments, recreation centres and outdoor festivals, across all performing and visual arts disciplines¹². The development of dance and disability focused work is a key driver for artsNK, who viewed their involvement in the 11MRTD project as an opportunity to stimulate awareness and activity on a local level, with the ambition to develop a full disability dance programme in the future.

¹² artsNK (2017) *artsNK* [online] available from: <http://www.artsnk.org>



For the 11MRTD project artsNK chose to focus their delivery in the Boston and South Holland districts in Lincolnshire. The South Holland and Boston areas were both identified as having low levels of engagement with the arts (35.34% and 37.48%). Being such a rural area, with an agricultural history within Lincolnshire, barriers to participation tend to focus on lack of transportation

and rural isolation. Transported, as part of artsNK, are working to address these barriers by providing opportunities locally, taking art to the people of Boston and South Holland. Transported is also a partner organisation in ACE's Creative People and Places programme.

VENUE(S):

For their work in delivering the 11MRTD project, artsNK partnered with the South Holland Centre for the engagement and performance strands, as well as Ayscoughfee Hall Museum and Gardens. Located in the centre of Spalding, South Holland Centre is a touring theatre and event space, regularly displaying live shows and films as well as delivering community dance sessions and workshops in their studio space. A performance evening, showcasing work by 11MRTD engagement participants, local dance schools and a guest performance by StopGap Dance Company, was held in their impressive theatre space in February 2017¹³.

Ayscoughfee Hall Museum and Gardens is a medieval, Grade I listed building and surrounding gardens, built in the heart of Spalding in 1451¹⁴. Regularly showing art exhibitions, hosting concerts and supporting educational visits, Ayscoughfee Hall displayed the 11MRTD photo exhibition in January 2017.

DARTS - Doncaster, South Yorkshire

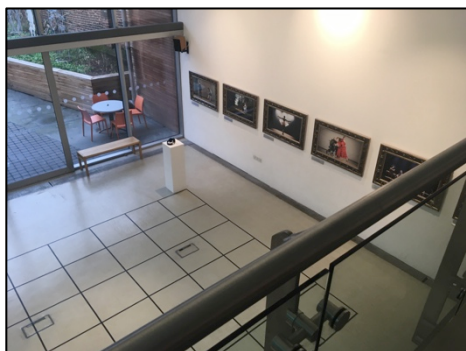
OVERVIEW and VENUE:

Based at The Point, Doncaster Community Arts (DARTS) is a participatory arts organisation that focuses on arts provision within the community in Doncaster. Motivated by the belief that arts can fuel change, DARTS strive to engage hard to reach audiences and participants, designing accessible

¹³ South Holland Centre (2017) *South Holland Centre* [online] available from: <http://www.southhollandcentre.co.uk>

¹⁴ South Holland District Council (2017) *Ayscoughfee Hall Museum and Gardens* [online] available from: <http://www.sholland.gov.uk/article/3324/Ayscoughfee-Hall-Museum--Gardens>

approaches to creative engagement with the arts¹⁵. DARTS' location within an arts venue (The Point) meant that the majority of the project provision took place in one venue and directly where the organisation is based. The photo exhibition was displayed in their gallery space, and the engagement sessions with the participant groups were delivered in their own studio space as well as with local schools and communities across Doncaster.



Identified by ACE as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), DARTS have been working to address the limited cultural offer in Doncaster and contribute to the development of an arts infrastructure. Doncaster was identified by ACE as being eighth from the bottom of the national table in terms of low arts engagement, and bottom of the regional table¹⁶. Loss of

Doncaster's industrial heritage, high levels of unemployment, poverty and the economic downturn have apparently left Doncaster's communities with a sense of despondency, lack of optimism and little aspiration. Doncaster and its many surrounding areas sit in severely deprived areas of South Yorkshire with significantly low engagement in arts activity.

The 11MRTD photo exhibition toured to Doncaster in February 2017, with a performance by StopGap Dance Company taking place in the gallery space, amongst the photo images, on February 9th. Engagement dance sessions took place during the summer and autumn terms. In early September 2017, DARTS invited StopGap Dance Company to perform again in Doncaster as part of the town's DNweekeND, a weekend of free outdoor arts events for families¹⁷.

TIN Arts - Durham, County Durham

OVERVIEW:

As a leading inclusive dance organisation in the North East of England, TIN Arts deliver day and evening inclusive dance classes and workshops, as well as having their own touring performance company, Flex Dance. Passionate

¹⁵ The Point (2017) *Doncaster Community Arts DARTS* [online] available from: <http://www.thepoint.org.uk>

¹⁶ Arts Council England (2010) *Active People Survey: Local Level Arts Engagement* [online] London: ACE available from: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/participating-and-attending/active-lives-survey#section-4>

¹⁷ More information available from: <http://www.visitdoncaster.com/whats-on/dnweekend-festival-2017>

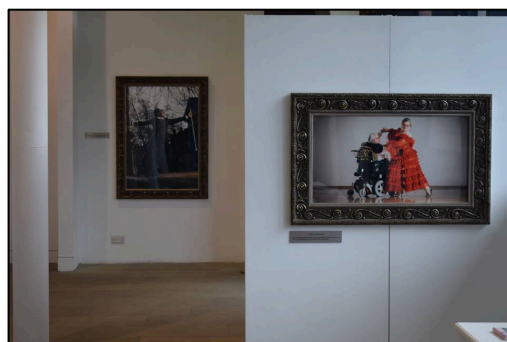
about providing “participatory and progression opportunities for those with least access to the arts”, TIN Arts look to enhance creative ability and support the development of local talent of their participants¹⁸.

Although already a well-established inclusive dance organisation, and an ACE NPO, TIN Arts looked to develop their current provision, such as their annual Best Foot Forward inclusive dance platform, and to explore working with cross-disciplinary art forms through their involvement in the 11MRTD project. In terms of levels of engagement with the arts, Durham scored 46.19%, with Sunderland at 37.49% in the Active People survey.

VENUE:

For the delivery of the 11MRTD project in Durham, TIN Arts partnered with the Gala Theatre in the heart of Durham, along the banks of the river Wear. Presenting popular touring work including musicals and theatre shows, the Gala Theatre is also home to a cinema space and hosts a local book festival, brass festival and the Gala Theatre Stage School¹⁹. Interested in developing their dance performance programme as well as their accessibility and inclusive offer for audiences, the Gala Theatre was host to the 11MRTD project in March 2017.

The photos were housed in a new, specially curated exhibition space in the theatre, and the inclusive dance platform Best Foot Forward was held at the theatre, showcasing work by 11MRTD engagement groups as well as other inclusive dance groups and a performance by associate artists Welly and Kate.



TIN Arts are also leading on the 11MRTD project delivery in Middlesbrough.

Coventry PAS - Coventry, West Midlands

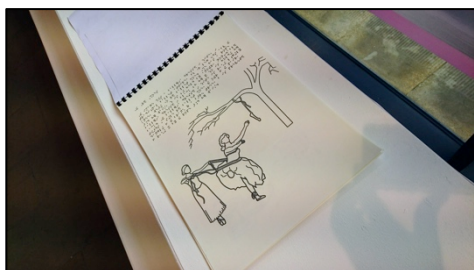
OVERVIEW:

Located within Coventry City Council, Coventry Performing Arts Service (PAS) is the major provider of school and community performing arts activities in Coventry. Working across the arts disciplines of Dance, Drama and Music, PAS offers music tuition, school support and curriculum

¹⁸ TIN Arts (2017) *Our Values: Leading the way in Inclusive Dance* [online] available from: <http://www.tinarts.co.uk/index.php/2-uncategorised/23-our-values-pdf>

¹⁹ Gala Theatre and Cinema (2017) *Gala Durham* [online] available from: <https://www.galadurham.co.uk>

development as well as creative dance/drama performance groups. The dance team are very influential within the special educational needs schools in the area, delivering Sherborne Developmental Movement-based dance sessions for disabled school pupils²⁰.



In 2015 Coventry was identified in a report by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) as the third unhealthiest city centre in the country and deprivation in the city is high²¹. In addition, ACE's Active People Survey identified the percentage of people engaging with the arts in Coventry as 41%.

The collaboration between PAS and the Belgrade Theatre sought to engage with people who would not normally engage with the arts and to offer opportunities for marginalised groups within Coventry.

VENUE:

For the 11MRTD project, Coventry PAS joined forces with The Belgrade theatre, based in the heart of the city. As a dynamic producing theatre, the Belgrade's ambition is to use theatre to enrich the local community, with the aim of changing people's lives for the better²². Regularly visited by popular touring shows and musicals, the theatre is highly active in developing its provision and offer for disabled audiences and performers, with the 11MRTD performance evening being a fully-inclusive, relaxed performance event.

Coventry welcomed the 11MRTD photo exhibition for two months from April to June 2017, displayed in the Belgrade's Burbage Gallery space. The tour finished with a community performance evening in the B2 Studio Theatre, which showcased work by 11MRTD engagement groups from local SEN schools and colleges, a duet by a local disabled dance performer and professional work by Welly O'Brien and Kate Marsh. In December 2017 Coventry discovered that the city had been selected as the UK City of Culture for 2021²³.

²⁰ Performing Arts Service (2017) *Coventry Performing Arts* [online] available from: <http://coventryperformingarts.com>

²¹ Royal Society for Public Health (2015) *Nationwide Health on the High Street* [online]. London: Royal Society for Public Health available from: <https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/health-on-the-high-street-/nationwide-health-on-the-high-street-.html>

²² The Belgrade Theatre (2017) *Belgrade Theatre Coventry* [online] available from: <http://www.belgrade.co.uk>

²³ More information available from: <https://coventry2021.co.uk>

TIN Arts - Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire

As detailed above, TIN Arts were also the partner organisation for the 11MRTD project in Middlesbrough. According to the ACE's Active People three-year survey, Tees valley/Middlesbrough had only 34.65% recorded arts engagement for the area.

VENUE:

To deliver the project in Middlesbrough, Tin Arts brokered a new relationship with Teesside University, whose main campus is in the heart of Middlesbrough. Teesside's mission states how the university strives to "generate and apply knowledge that contributes to the economic, social and cultural success of students, partners and the communities [they] serve. Through education enriched by research, innovation, and engagement with business and the professions, [they] transform lives and economies"²⁴.

In late October 2017, the photo exhibition was displayed in the Constantine Gallery at Teesside University for two and a half weeks. Then at the beginning of November there was a performance evening, showcasing work from local school and university groups involved in the engagement sessions as part of the 11MRTD project, as well as independent artists who have been working with Tin Arts to develop their work.

Associate artists Welly O'Brien and Kate Marsh also delivered a practitioner development workshop at the University, attended by dance students and local practitioners, which sought to develop inclusive practice and class delivery skills.



²⁴ Teesside University (2018) *Teesside University* [online] available from: <http://www.tees.ac.uk>

6.0 PROJECT OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE

This section aims to discuss the data collected, drawing out strengths and successes of the 11MRTD project as well as any areas for development.

6.1 PHOTO EXHIBITION

Numbers

	ALL LOCATIONS TO DATE	RUNCORN	SPALDING	DONCASTER	DURHAM	COVENTRY	M ^I BORO
Estimated numbers	1500	200	500	200	200	200	200
Visitors to Photo Exhibition (approx.)	6328	280	343	888	1700	2529*	588

* estimation based on ticket sales for theatre seats accessible via the exhibition space and from researcher's observations of activity

There was an overwhelming sense of positivity and pleasure concerning the photography exhibition, from the visitor feedback, which is an evident strength.

- Of those who completed the visitor feedback forms, 100% agreed that they enjoyed visiting the exhibition.
- Most locations have exceeded the estimated visitor numbers given in the ACE funding application.
- While some numbers may seem marginal for a visitor venue, when viewed within the context of their regular visitor numbers, these statistics are significant.
- Additionally, some venue staff highlighted that the 11MRTD project has been one of their most popular exhibitions to date, expressing their own gratitude for its visit to the venue.
- At the time of application, and where estimates were made, the detail of the exhibition plans weren't fully known – so this is, perhaps, a relevant factor. For example, Spalding's estimate was higher due to the inclusion of two locations, but Coventry had the exhibition for double the length of time (2 months) with no different estimate and Middlesbrough had the exhibition up for 2 ½ weeks, again with no altered estimate.

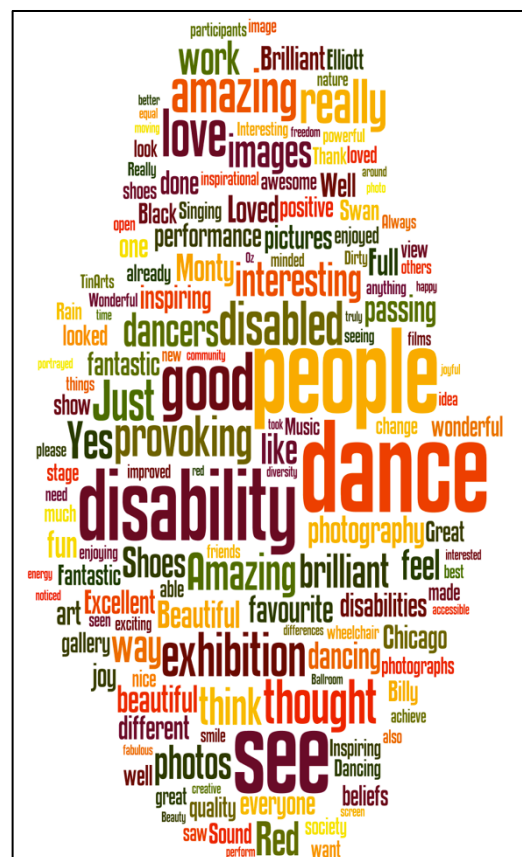
“I was focused on the scene in each case and only noticed the disability afterwards”
Exhibition visitor

Language

Some clear commonalities amongst the visitor comments are evident from analysis of the qualitative data. These commonalities refer not only to the content of what is being described, but also the specific language being used by the visiting public. The most common words used to describe the photographs were “inspirational” and “beautiful”, emphasising how the images captured the audience’s imagination and could be attributed to the popularity of the films the images are based on. By using movies that the public are familiar with, audiences are invited to remember something familiar to them and rethink how this is presented.

One particular comment by visitors to the photo exhibition was that the disability was a secondary thought, only recognised after appreciation of the image as a whole²⁵. It could be argued that one of the priorities of the project was to consciously focus attention on the ability of disabled dancers by placing them within a familiar context, in this case popular films. Therefore, by not initially recognising the disability, the full impact of the photos is not immediate. On the other hand, by looking beyond the impairment, or by not recognising it at all, one is able to judge the performer on their artistic or technical merits alone, rather than being moved by the ‘superhuman’ rhetoric that is regularly linked to disabled performers. Visitor comments²⁶ emphasise a move towards equality hoped for, by the project, in how disabled dancers are considered alongside their able-bodied peers. The overarching aim of the photos is to positively profile disabled dancers and the overwhelming response from the visitor feedback was of positivity, as the data demonstrates.

Nevertheless, analysis of the feedback suggests that there is still a lack of understanding amongst the public regarding the abilities of people with disabilities. Descriptions such as “[My favourite picture was] The Red Shoes



Word cloud created from visitor comments

²⁵ “I didn't notice anyone's disability. [I] think that of all images, art comes first disability second, if not at all” – visitor to the photo exhibition

²⁶ “this exhibition provoke[s] thought and motivation for able and disabled dancers alike” – visitor to the photo exhibition

“[The images] changed my existing beliefs - I was taken by the levels of physical literacy of people labelled as disabled”
Exhibition visitor

- because she only has one leg and she manages to do this image”, “It’s amazing how they do it.” and “Blown away” suggest a sense of shock or surprise at what disabled performers are capable of achieving. Limitations put on their ability, consciously or unconsciously by the visitors seem to be evidenced in the data.

This could be due to people not knowing what can be achieved through dance, irrespective of disability. However, seeing certain movements, such as the Dirty Dancing lift or the Step Up 4

breakdancing balance, photographed in this context brings a sense of realism and feelings of awe regarding the abilities of these dancers.

Dance and Photography

Number of dance and disability events attended in the past 12 month	Percentage
0	39
1-3	56.1
4-6	1.2
7-9	1.2
10+	2.4

One of the unique features of the 11MRTD project is the coupling of dance and photography. A number of attendees, approximately 20%, commented on the nature and quality of the photography and praised the work of photographer Sean Goldthorpe. In fact, some visitors highlighted that they had attended the exhibition due to their interest in photography and not in dance. This is significant as it opens a discussion regarding the cross-disciplinary use of dance and photography in exhibitions. It is clear from the feedback that by engaging in different art forms to explore a topic or theme, new audiences can be discovered, as there is a wider scope of attraction to the project. However, one visitor referred to the dance artists in the images as “models”, raising a potential discussion regarding the impact of using still images to capture a moving art form. As photography is an ephemeral art form, showing a single moment in time, how does that impact on people’s understanding of movement? The audience member who commented may come from a visual arts background rather than performing arts and therefore their understanding of the images is focused more how a single moment in time has been captured, rather than the movement that led in to, and out of, that single moment.

Similarly, being an art exhibition there was some feedback regarding the positioning of the photos in the space at some venues, with attention being paid to the layout of the photos within a particular gallery space. The responsibility of the gallery installation lay with each partner venue, supported by a PD produced installation document, as a skills development aspect of the project. While some partners either had experience of installing exhibitions, had worked with a venue that have a dedicated gallery space or had commissioned a visual artist to curate the exhibition, others were not as proficient in this area. Being new to visual arts exhibitions themselves, People Dancing dealt with the logistics of delivering and storing the exhibition, yet it has been suggested that different framing formats would have made the hanging process for the partners more efficient²⁷. If future art exhibitions are to be toured as part of a Strategic Touring project, a curator who would travel with the exhibition and be responsible for designing the layout in each location, or consultation with a curator during the design stage and training for locations less experienced in housing exhibitions, should be considered.

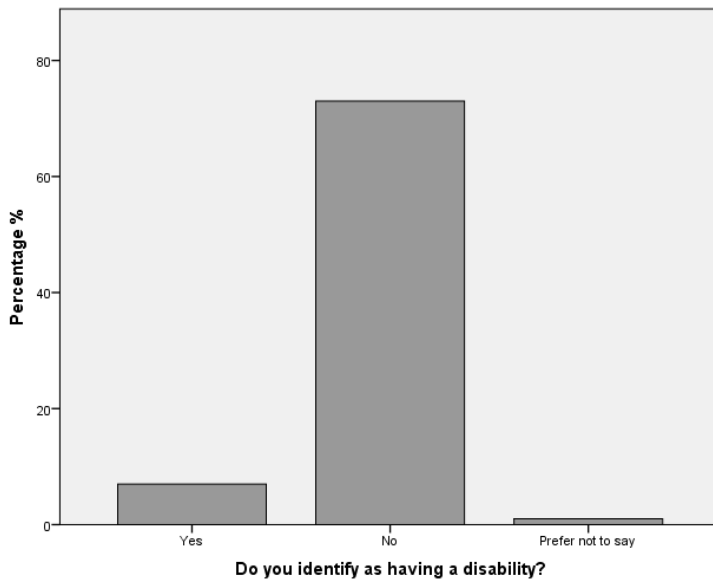
“The exhibition needed a curator and hanging expert to oversee the installation in the space and to consider the audience pathway to visit the work”

Exhibition visitor

New Audiences

Engagement with new and diverse audiences was a key ambition of the 11MRTD project. The demographic information gathered through the audience impact surveys highlighted that 38.5% of those who responded had not attended a dance and disability event in the last twelve months. Therefore, there were a significant number of visitors for whom this might have been their first experience of dance and disability work. The reasons given for people’s attendance revealed that the location and marketing of the exhibition was important in encouraging people to visit the project. Some accredited their attendance to a recommendation by a friend and a number of visitors stated that they were simply passing by and decided to “pop in”, whereas others were attending shows at the theatre venue and used the opportunity to take a look at the exhibition. This suggests that new attenders were engaged with the exhibition due to the partnerships instigated by the 11MRTD project by creating relationships between cultural agencies and local venues. Another contributing factor to the

²⁷ “Practically, about the exhibition, [I’d say] mirror plate it. Don’t put the wires on the back, just mirror plate it, because it’s so much easier to handle. It’s so time consuming to hang something where it’s strung on the back and it’s not secure, so just mirror plating the exhibition.” – partner feedback



Exhibition audience responses

introduction to new audiences could be the length of time the exhibition spent in each location, either 1 or 2 months, compared to many touring dance performances, which only visit for one or two nights in any one location. This length of stay also allows for word of mouth to be effective, and for longer term, more creative

marketing strategies to be designed and financially viable. For example, TIN Arts invested in a window sticker to be displayed on the outside of the Gala Theatre space in Durham to advertise the exhibition, something not financially viable or effective enough for a shorter dance activity project.

I don't take part in a dance activity but would like to...	Yes	51.9
	No	48.1

Booth responses from exhibition visitors (all locations)

The touring aspect of the project and the specifically selected localities allowed for a focus on each geographical area in order to develop and cultivate dance provision for disabled dancers in each particular region. However, it was suggested that there was perhaps a lack of local connection with the series of images that could have been addressed²⁸. Audiences at some locations were able to engage more significantly with the images, for example in Durham one visitor informed me that they could remember when Billy Elliott was being filmed in the area and how they visited the set, adding an extra layer of familiarity for those visitors. However, others were not afforded this connection as explicitly. Therefore, more local engagement with all aspects of the project could help develop a more significant link to the wider awareness of 11MRTD regionally, such as creating another photograph in each location, and in the same style, to add to the collection of images as the tour progresses.

²⁸ "I think [it would have been] nice to create new images at each venue so there is an opportunity for those local audiences to actually have a visual input in to the physical exhibition. And that does become more challenging but actually that does then put the onus on each of those organisations to take the lead on that and to have a deeper engagement relationship with their audience and with participants." – partner feedback

Regarding the accessibility of the photo exhibition, audience members were eager to praise the braille booklet of images and descriptions²⁹. However, it was highlighted that an audio description facility would have been helpful. This was supplied by People Dancing to each of the partners and venues, but not always utilised in the exhibition space. Perhaps more support is needed in the monitoring of the project delivery, to ensure that projects which promote accessibility and inclusion address as many accessibility requirements as possible.

**‘Nice idea –
would have
been good
with audio
description.’**

- Exhibition
visitor

The Evaluation Booth

- The evaluation booth (as described in Section 3.0), was an intriguing and exciting piece of equipment that accompanied the photo exhibition to each location.
- However, there were moments where the booth did not work as efficiently as it could have. This was partly due to venue implications, such as intermittent Wi-Fi reception at Ayscoughfee Hall due to the width of the stone walls, a feature of the building and something that was unavoidable.
- The design of the electronic content and the touch screen was also a significant contributing factor. Project partners and visitors praised the design of the booth as well as the concept, especially the opportunity to take their own photographs. Yet, it was also described as “clunky”, with the touch screen being deemed somewhat temperamental and some groups of visitors, such as the elderly, being very reluctant to engage with the booth³⁰.
- Nevertheless, it has been acknowledged that given the money available for the production of the booth, the information that was obtained by engagement with the booth and the limited space available at certain venues, as well as the space needed for storing the kit, it is a well-intended piece of equipment, with great potential as a prototype for a more sophisticated model, should more funding be available to support the design.

²⁹ “Braille PICTURES and words. Brilliant.” – exhibition visitor

³⁰ “I think the booth was a really lovely idea and it looked beautiful, it really did look beautiful and actually, in the main, it did work but I think it was a really clunky process... It was interesting whenever I spent any time in the gallery that it was kids that engaged with the booth, other people didn’t really, they weren’t interested.” – partner feedback

6.2 ORGANISATION AND PLANNING

The flexibility and adaptability of the project was identified as a significant strength from the organisational side of the project, mentioned by all partners in the semi-structured interviews. Partners felt that they were able to personalise the strands of the project to deliver a programme of activities that were best suited to the needs of their specific locality³¹. This allowed the partner organisation to take ownership of the project, supported by People Dancing, rather than being governed or led solely by a remote organisation. Therefore, some partner leads experienced a journey of progression in their organisation and are prepared for continuing the work started as this project in the future. Some described having the 11MRTD project as a “kick-start” and others referred to the input from PD as being enough to “create momentum”, but allowed partners and venues to learn through doing rather than being bystanders.

One of the aims of the 11MRTD project was to “build connections between venues, cultural agencies and new audiences” and to “instigate collaborations with the local dance workforce and agencies to build relationships between venue dance programmes and communities”. The development of these relationships has been significant for the partners in terms of enhancing their current provision as well as looking to possible future collaborations and the potential projects that can be created utilising a venue and arts organisation partnership³². Although both venue and cultural organisation had knowledge of the other and might have previously worked together, many interviewees highlighted how these relationships have been strengthened greatly by the opportunity collaborating on 11MRTD has afforded them. This building of relationships has been a significant strength of the organisation and design of the 11MRTD-touring model.

While the relationships built within localities have been successful, connecting between and linking the six locations has not been achieved. It was initially hoped that partners from the six locations would be able to meet regularly and that an 11MRTD network or partner hub could be established through these meetings. However, due to time restraints and

³¹ “I think with every project you have to be [flexible], because we know our audiences here and we know what’s possible and we know where we can afford to push...I think [People Dancing] were always incredibly flexible...which was brilliant, and [they] are continuing to be.” – Participant feedback

³² “11 Million Reasons to Dance provided an opportunity to get to know [the local venue] better, so we got to work with them, we’ve become very close partners...and we have a number of ideas and plans going forward about how we’ll work together around producing new work, around dance and disability and audiences” – partner feedback.

unavailability these meetings could not be organised once the tour had begun. With hindsight, dates for meetings could have been established during the earlier stages of the project being developed. The 11MRTD project, especially during the touring stages, is a busy one, with many partners, stakeholders, participants and elements to consider. Nevertheless, it has been highlighted in the feedback that the geographical breadth of the locations of the partners is vast and that creating a hub that spans this distance was ambitious, but would have been beneficial³³. Perhaps smaller networks of agencies, or even mentoring partnerships could be created in order to share experiences of the project and to share best practice. Some partners were considerably more experienced in producing and delivering inclusive dance work than others, so an opportunity to learn from one another was something, highlighted by a partner lead, seen as a missed opportunity. Communication throughout the planning and delivery of the 11MRTD project has been vital. Many partners felt as though communication with the Associate Director/Consultant was regular and encouraging, and good relationships have been built here.

The impact of marketing and social media reach should also be acknowledged. The sharing of activity from PD, partner organisations and venues on social media has ensured that 11MRTD has reached a strong number of people throughout it's lifespan, with 69,941 social media hits (reach and engagement) from People Dancing alone.

Training

To support the delivery of the project, People Dancing

	National Training Event	Practitioner Training Workshops	National Networking
No. of Participants	102	30	30

designed a number of training opportunities for the partners, venues and dance practitioners to participate in. A training session led by Welly O'Brien and Kate Marsh, working in their capacity as associate artists, took place in September 2016. The aim of this session was to help the dance practitioners, who would be delivering the engagement sessions in each location, explore their practice as teachers and facilitators, experiment with workshop delivery ideas and provide inclusive practice support. Feedback from the session was positive, with many practitioners grateful for the opportunity and time to reflect upon their own practice. While some highlighted that they did not necessarily learn anything 'new', the session

³³ "I think wherever [the partners have] managed to get together its been really positive, but I think...people are, even though it's Midlands and North, people are still fairly far flung. So, it's felt fairly tricky to try and get together and that is about everybody's diaries and we have all lots of different responsibilities, so I think moving forwards, that's something to think about" – partner feedback

was seen as valuable because it sparked fruitful discussion with practitioners from other locations and helped to reinforce their own practice, developing confidence in what they currently do and what they were about to deliver in the project.

The second training event hosted by PD as part of the 11MRTD project was ‘Providing Better Arts Experiences for Disabled People: A Training and Development Day for Arts and Cultural Organisations’, that took place in January 2017 at The Curve in Leicester. With keynote speakers from the field of theatre and disability, training sessions delivered by Shape Arts and performances from dance companies and practitioners, the day brought together a mix of people from different backgrounds, with different links to the 11MRTD project. Feedback from the training day has been mixed. While some greatly valued the networking opportunity and the sense of community that was created from being brought together, others felt that the training only focused on what many attendees were already working to provide, rather than offering the training to go beyond current provision. Nevertheless, some participants have highlighted the benefits of attending the day, especially venue staff, some of whom are developing in house training as a result of their learning³⁴.

Similarly, it was noted that some of the keynote talks that took place at the training day, concerning use of language, theatre accessibility and the current landscape of disability arts, might have been aimed at the wrong audience for this occasion. Some felt that the debates were combative, focusing on the problems and issues within the sector rather than the possible solutions and presented to an audience of people already facing these problems and looking to develop solutions³⁵. However, these discussions could be seen as vital in the journey towards a breakthrough and that through debating the issues a sense of drive and determination to make changes can be developed.

“[I am] coming away feeling empowered and confident in what I do and excited to start the project.”

- A dance practitioner discussing the 11MRTD training session

³⁴ “what [the training’s] done is given [us] further resources to be able to bring back, give to [our] own team and look at how we how we best serve an audience that may be disabled...this is part of a number of training sessions we’re having over the course the next eighteen months...which is great because it constantly reinforces that message and that training and those skills” – Venue lead

³⁵ “I have to say [the training] hasn’t actually [developed my skills in facilitating dance and disability work] but I think that’s partly because...I didn’t feel hesitant of doing it anyway...so I felt a little bit like I knew quite a lot...a lot of what they were talking about, how to get over the barriers of what some programmers think, I don’t think I really had really thought necessarily” – Venue lead

Additionally, these differing views from the feedback could reflect the different stages the training participants were at in their journey to delivering a dance and disability programme. Some were looking to start developing an inclusive programme, whereas others already deliver an established programme of dance and disability activities.

Another observation focuses on the demographic of those involved in the planning, organisation and delivery of the 11MRTD project in each location. The majority of associated staff working on this project appear to not have a visible disability (however, this data is not confirmed) and this could be seen as significant in terms of encouraging the development of disabled dance leaders. Some locations are looking to address this either through their legacy offer to the local disabled dance practitioner's community, whereas others have been encouraged to look at the diversity of their board of trustees. However, this is an aspect that should be considered both on a national and regional scale, regarding the diversity of people organising and delivering dance and disability projects.

The final point regarding organisation of the project concerns the drive and commitment from the individual location partners. It could be suggested that from the experience in Runcorn the partner lead and their drive to deliver the project can be vital in determining its success. As each partner takes on the responsibility for the organisation and delivery of the project for their area, they have to ensure the project is marketed, the exhibition is set up correctly, there are practitioners to deliver the engagement sessions, the performance evening is organised and develop the associate artist offer. Therefore, if there are staffing changes within the partner organisation, this could affect the success of the project, but, looking to the future, could also affect the legacy of the project in that area. Similarly, the involvement of internal and/or external organisations as hub partners can have both positive and negative affects on the outcomes of the project. For instance, partners within council organisations may have to use central marketing departments to develop materials for the project in the local area. However, due to time pressures and changes in priorities, and despite the partner leads best efforts, priorities can shift and change meaning that the success of some aspects were out of their control. Nonetheless, some partners have been positively influenced by external organisations being involved in the project delivery, for example, the provision of funds at one location meant that additional attention could be paid to the marketing resources and on funding engagement workshops for exhibition visitors. Thus providing an opportunity to develop relationships with new organisations that are supportive of dance and disability projects, but also contributing to the longevity and legacy of the project.

6.3 PERFORMANCE EVENTS

“The way the dances were tailored to the participants showed fab creativity. I liked the mix of dancers with and without disabilities, promoting inclusivity rather than being a ‘disabled dance show’.”

- Dance performance audience member

The performance events organised as part of the 11MRTD project contain two elements: the professional company performance and the community engagement performance. Some venues programmed two specific events for each performance, whereas most decided to include the professional company performance was part of the inclusive community platform.

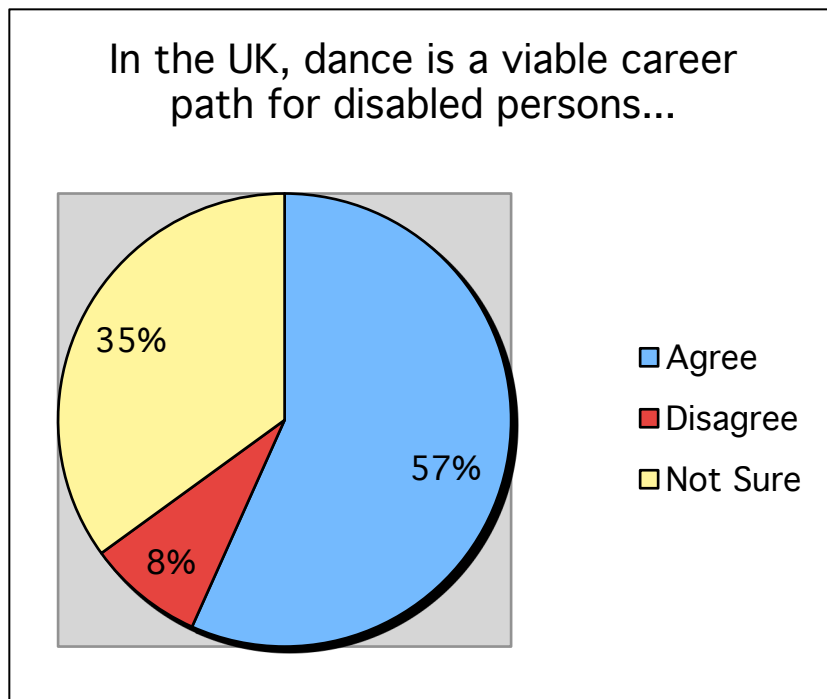
Responses to Performances

With an ambition to change public perceptions of dancers with disabilities, evaluation of the performance events explored audience experiences of viewing the work by disabled dance performers. From the feedback collected from performance audiences, 94.7% described themselves as experiencing a sense of awe during the performance. This could reflect the feeling of ‘inspiration’ felt by the majority of visitors to the photography exhibition, as discussed previously. When speaking with parents and family members of performers in the shows, many linked this sense of awe to having the opportunity for the young dancers to perform on a professional stage and how seeing them perform brought forth a strong sense of emotion and achievement, as performance opportunities can be limited. Other audience members noted that they enjoyed the style of the dance performances and the level of challenge from the choreography that resulted in highly entertaining pieces of work.

During the performance I experienced at least one moment of being in awe...	Agree	94.2%
	Disagree	5.8%

Feedback from performance audiences (all locations)

There was a sense from some of the community performances that the themes and ideas stemming from the photo exhibition images were used as stimuli. One group explored their own reimagining of their favourite movie scenes on stage, another used the experience of visiting a gallery space as their stimulus and another took elements from the photos such as the concept of rain from *Singing in the Rain* and created an abstract piece of dance in response. The most common style of movement seemed to be contemporary, with many of the numbers involving some lyrical or jazz



elements. However, not all pieces could be seen to explicitly link to the exhibition and an opportunity to more exclusively connect all strands of the project seems to be missed.

Presentation of Community Work

A real strength from the performance strand of the project was

the presentation of community and professional work, as the feedback from the partners suggests. It was important for the participants involved in the project to observe the professional dance companies as this presented them as role models and something to aspire to. The sense of progression that was built from having the professional performances was really felt amongst audience members after the show, especially from family members and support staff. This showcasing of working disabled dance artists could also help to highlight how dancing can be a viable career option for disabled people. This is important as 36.1% of respondents from the photo exhibition highlighted that they were unsure if dance is a viable career path for people with disabilities in the UK. This is something that needs to be addressed and communicated amongst dance and disability advocate. Profiling and promoting professional disabled dance artists as well as highlighting progression and training routes for young dancers is vital to help inform that success as a disabled performer is achievable.

Audiences

One thing evident throughout the data is that there seemed to be a distinct difference between the audience visiting the photo exhibition and the audience for the performance events. Audiences for the performance platforms were more likely to be family members or school support staff, whereas visitors to the exhibition were more commonly people who discovered the display during their day-to-day activities. Very few respondents from the photo exhibition knew about the performance events suggesting that more was needed to promote the event and emphasise its

When I perform
I feel free, I
enter a world
that makes
sense to me.

- Community
Dance Performer

connection to the exhibition, with four out of six locations arranging performances to signify the end of the exhibition. In terms of changing perceptions regarding disabled dancers, the experience of actually seeing people moving, rather than viewing stylised, staged moment in a photo, might be more transformative for someone new to performance. Therefore, greater attention should be paid to the audience's journey through the whole project, not only engagement with individual strands. Using this journey to engage audiences new to dance and disability work could provide a more significant opportunity for perception change and transformation to take place. Additionally, this disconnection between the exhibition and the performance events could explain why the majority of the audiences at the performance events were people who were already active in supporting, promoting and attending disability performance events. Many highlighted that they came to the performance with a proactive outlook on disability and being confident in the abilities, not disabilities of the performers. However, it was evident that while some attendees are supportive of disability activities, they may be new to performing arts or a theatre environment³⁶. Therefore, more active communication with these new audiences regarding the facilities available and accessibility of the theatre could really develop relationships with new and more diverse audience and encourage them to more regularly attend dance and theatre performances.

The data collected from the performance audiences have provided some significant findings. Half of the audience members who completed the audience questionnaire agreed that the performance had changed their perceptions of disabled people in their community. This could be linked to the existing expectations of disabled performers or subconscious limitations that some photo exhibition attendees brought with them. Other audience members acknowledged that the challenging movement and development of memory skills had changed their perceptions of what was achievable, even by people they know and support, suggesting that is a valuable activity to

"I act the same to everybody, with kindness. Speak kindly to everyone. But would like more information to be able to support."

- Performance
evening audience
member

³⁶ This was something I experienced interacting with other audience members. A parent at one of the performances did not know where in a theatre to purchase a ticket, as they had not visited a theatre before, but were there to support their child.

participate in, which can develop cognitive and creative abilities³⁷. Additionally, 94.4% of respondents said that they would be actively looking to support future events. This shows that there is an audience for dance and disability work and venue leads should not only continue to programme the work in the future for this audience, but also nurture their relationships with the audiences gained from the 11MRTD project, so that momentum and enthusiasm is not lost.

Programming Performances

With regards to the touring performance aspect of the project, discussions with venue leads revealed how the need to sell shows, coupled with trying to engage with a wide audience means that many theatres have to be very selective with what they choose to programme in mainstream auditoriums. Dance works have to be accessible and attractive to the local demographic, which can sometimes mean that programmers will simply not consider more avant garde contemporary work as it is not appropriate for the regular audience of some mainstream venues. Therefore, it could be said that more attention should be paid to the needs and interests of the local communities in rural tour locations when developing original works, if the intention of a tour is to engage new audiences with dance and disability work. However, others may suggest that more should be done to introduce, frame and support understanding and introduction to more abstract or avant-garde dance works.

The training day delivered by PD in January also focused on Front-of-House training and for many venue staff members, these performances were an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge that was gained from this training. In Coventry, the performance was relaxed with options to enter or leave the space as needed and a BSL interpreter. This is something the theatre is planning for a few of their pantomime performances later in the year. The performance was an opportunity for FOH and technical staff to work directly with disabled performers and audience members.

	ALL LOCATIONS TO DATE	RUNCORN	SPALDING	DONCASTER	DURHAM	COVENTRY	M'BORO
Estimated numbers (from ACE funding application)	1800	300	300	300	300	300	300
Audience numbers for performance events*	1900	288	191	470	539	300	112

*Community performances, plus showcases/workshops/performance events/festivals linked to 11MRTD

³⁷ Incredible emotional [and] beautiful seeing such a change in confidence and memory...[I've noticed] a shift in wanting to be more independent [and a] change in their range of movements” – parent of a engagement participant

6.4 ENGAGEMENT STRAND

Engagement groups for 11MRTD were either created specifically for the project or were already established groups, who worked exclusively on producing work for the performance events for a specific period of time. For some locations this was because involvement in 11MRTD provided an opportunity to create new dance groups and develop their inclusive dance offer for the community. Other partners worked the groups they currently train and took the opportunity to explore different ways of interacting or particular themes stemming from responses to the photography exhibition. One location worked with both their established groups and groups new to them. Some locations liaised with local SEN schools to establish 11MRTD performance groups, building education relationships between the schools and the local arts organisation.

‘They talk about dancing to their friends and teachers at school. I also think their body awareness has improved since they started dancing.’
- Parent of engagement participant

The feedback from the parents/guardians and participants who responded shows a positive response to the dance sessions, with many highlighting a rise in confidence levels and a real sense of achievement for taking part in the final performance³⁸. These features tap in to ideas that stem from a developing area of research, concerning the impact of dance on cognitive abilities, wellbeing and general health and fitness. While we should be cautious not to label these activities exclusively as ‘dance therapy’, there seems to be clear benefits regarding the abilities of the participants through their participation in these engagement classes.

	ALL LOCATIONS TO DATE	SPALDING	DONCASTER	DURHAM	COVENTRY	MIBORO
Participants in Engagement Strand	232	21	51	91	34	9

³⁸ “[The performer was] happier to go on stage than previously when they have been very scared. They talk about dancing to their friends and teachers at school.” – parent of engagement performer

Of the 119 participants who gave consent for their information to be shared we have gender information about 107 and further information from 67 participants.

- Of these 107 participants, 42 were female, 64 were male and 1 did not disclose their gender.
- We know that out of 67 participants who gave more information, 91% were disabled. Out of the 61 participants who identified their type of disability, they amount to the following (some participants have multiple disabilities):
 - o 37x learning disability
 - o 12x mobility/physical disability
 - o 2x hearing impairment
 - o 13x developmental
 - o 6x autism
 - o 1x cognitive
 - o 1x visual
- Of the 55 participants we have age information about 35 were 16 and under, 18 were 17-21 years old and 2 were over 21 years of age.

These statistics demonstrate not only a wide range of people with a variety of disabilities being able to take part in dance classes, but the gender split is also significant. Over half of the participants were male, thus opposing the stereotype traditionally associated with dance activities - that it is primarily for females.

“I think [11MRTD] is a great project and I’m grateful to be involved”
- Participant in the engagement strand

After the exhibition has moved on from the location and the participants have performed in their showcase, focus seems to shift to how the engagement sessions can be sustained, both in terms of continuing enthusiasm and funding. These two areas are important to consider as part of the legacy of such a project as this. With pressure on schools to carefully manage spending due to budget constraints, plus the cost of



resourcing these activities from an arts organisation, perhaps there is an opportunity to work together to come up with a long-term solution. One location has managed to source some funding that will enable them to continue providing dance classes for a newly formed creative group, established as part of the 11MRTD project in the area.

6.5 ASSOCIATE ARTIST STRAND AND LEGACY

This final strand of the project is the most recently developed and for many locations is the last phase of their programme. However, there is plenty of activity to report on that reflects the impact of 11MRTD on the partner organisations, the venues and the local community. This strand of the project focuses on continuing the momentum that has been sparked through the exhibition visit and performance events. The flexibility afforded to the partners in this project is also substantial for this final strand, as locations were able to personalise their offer depending on what was needed by the local disabled dance practitioners and participants, taking into consideration what the venues have to offer, how the partner organisations can support them and how best to utilise new relationships created through the project.

In terms of legacy of the 11MRTD project, one of the significant features is how the partners and venues, in most locations, are planning to continue developing their partnerships, looking to see how they can support one another. As they are both serving the same location, a pooling or joining of resources and knowledge means that the offers developed seem to be more significant and would really give an emerging disabled dance artist the opportunity to gain insight and understanding about the sector as well as, in most cases, practical resources such as time and/or space to creatively explore their own work

There are aspects of legacy activities for this project that illustrate the long-term impact of the project in each area. For example, in one location, the partner lead for the project has been invited to join the board of the theatre venue they partnered with for 11MRTD. This demonstrates a development in thinking from the venue and, more significantly, from the senior leadership team of the theatre in committing to improve their offer for disabled artists and audiences, and this has been attributed to the relationship developed through the 11MRTD project.

As each location has developed their own, bespoke take on the associate artist strand and has its own personalised legacy plans, this report will explore each location's plans separately.

RUNCORN, CHESHIRE

ASSOCIATE ARTIST

Due to the Brindley theatre having to pull out of the project due to staffing changes and cuts to services, new partners from the area had to be sought. After finding a new group of partners willing to carry on the legacy of 11MRTD in Cheshire, it was decided that the associate artist element of the project will be delivered through the invitation of disabled dance



practitioners to join the newly developed sharing good practice network, with money available to support accessibility and travel arrangements. The new 'More Reasons to Dance' network group has been established in Cheshire. Led by Cheshire Dance alongside Bluecoat and Fallen Angels, this network "offers opportunities for all participants to learn from one another, to develop art form skills and to strengthen the links between the dance and disability communities across Cheshire and Merseyside".³⁹

The three sessions, arranged through 2018, will encourage sharing of good practice as well as artist development, with each session led by a different network partner in one of the local studio venues.

LEGACY

What seems most significant about the project delivery in Cheshire has been the success of the latter stages of the project, when it seemed as though full delivery would be impossible due to changes in the partnering organisation.

Relationships formed with local arts organisations and venues, including Storyhouse in Chester and the formation of the network, are likely to be significant in the legacy of the project in Cheshire. Storyhouse is Chester's brand new cultural centre, housing a library, theatre, restaurant and cinema in their new state-of-the-art building. Having opened in Spring 2017, this excellent new venue hosted a disability festival 'Kaleidoscope' in September at which the 'More Reasons to Dance' network delivered an introductory session, which was attended by over 20 adults and young people.

³⁹ More information available from:

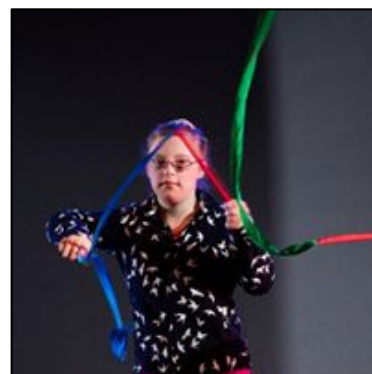
<http://www.cheshiredance.org/diversedance/More%20Reasons%20to%20Dance.html>

The 'More Reasons to Dance' network are looking to develop an annual inclusive dance platform for local practitioners and performers, considering the successful 'Best Foot Forward' model developed by Tin Arts in Durham.

SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE

ASSOCIATE ARTIST

In February 2018 South Holland Centre and Arts NK welcomed renowned disabled dance artist Laura Dajao to Spalding for a practitioner development workshop day as well as some R and D time for Laura to develop her own solo choreographic work, as their delivery of the associate artist element of the 11MRTD project. In addition, Laura delivered a community and schools workshop, which was inspired by music from some of the films included in the 11MRTD photography exhibition.



LEGACY

Spalding held an inclusive dance platform at South Holland centre last March as part of the 11MRTD project delivery in Spalding. In March 2018 this platform will take place again, as part of a strategy that aims to make this an annual event that will enable local dance groups to perform their work on a professional stage.

Also performing in March as well as showcasing at the platform event in Spalding will be professional company Casson & Friends, an inclusive and collaborative company of performers who aim to create accessible dance work, "with a passion for bringing dance to people in new and unusual contexts".⁴⁰ Laura Dajao will be performing as part of Casson & Friends in March. South Holland centre have taken a proactive and enthusiastic approach to programming work by disabled dance artists for the venue, as well as supporting the presentation of the community work created by local dance groups, some of whom were formed as part of the 11MRTD project being delivered in Spalding by artsNK.

Additionally, artsNK are also undertaking consultation with regards to embedding inclusivity, equality and diversity for the development of their business plan and their approach to marketing. artsNK are also interested in developing their inclusive dance platform, in collaboration with the South

⁴⁰ More information available from: <http://www.cassonandfriends.com/about>

Holland centre, taking inspiration for the Best Foot Forward model by Tin Arts.

DONCASTER, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

ASSOCIATE ARTIST

Darts at The Point have been developing new projects and engagement activities throughout the past year. As part of these, they have been active in embedding inclusivity at the heart of their work and are looking to offer a residency as part of the 'Rebel Women' visual arts programme in Spring 2018, linked to the centenary of some women getting the right to vote. There will be a focus on women dancers and hope to programme a performance session in the gallery space.

LEGACY

As stated before, much of the legacy of 11MRTD in Doncaster is embedded or intertwined with new strands of activity, ensuring that accessibility, inclusivity and diversity are at the heart.

Relationships have been formed between Darts and Doncaster Deaf Trust and their Purple Patch arts group, which are continuing and developing as they work together. Darts are hoping to build opportunities for programming or presenting disability dance through their new partnership with Sport England, focusing on barriers to activity and to encourage activity in areas with high physical inactivity.



DURHAM, COUNTY DURHAM

ASSOCIATE ARTIST

Tin Arts have been working with local dancer and aspiring choreographer Becki Parker, using the associate artist remit of this project to support Becki in developing her new solo work 'Hunting for the Unicorn'. This work explores "what it means to be unique, and where crossing your own personal bridge can take you"⁴¹.

Becki presented a scratch performance of the work at the 11MRTD performance evening in Middlesbrough and will be working with Tin Arts practitioner Tess Chaytor to develop the work further and seek out new performance opportunities.

⁴¹ For more information please go to: <http://www.tinarts.co.uk/index.php>

LEGACY

One of the major benefits for Tin Arts and their work in Durham, coming out of the 11MRTD project, is their developing relationship with the Gala theatre. Although the Gala had hosted the Best Foot Forward platform for a number of years, the 11MRTD project enabled the partner and venue to work more collaboratively on the platform and are now exploring future projects and developing long-term ambitions. These collaborating organisations are in the process of developing an original piece of dance work that will tour, which is aimed at children/teenagers with autism, based on a popular children's novel.

Tin Arts were recently successful with their Ambition for Excellence bid, which focuses on talent development for 10 disabled dancers, with learning disabilities and/or autism, who demonstrate the potential to develop as professional dancers.

The next Best Foot Forward dance platform is arranged for 20th March 2018.

COVENTRY, WEST MIDLANDS

ASSOCIATE ARTIST

The Belgrade Theatre, in association with People Dancing have put a call out for a local disabled dance artist who is interested in:

- "Developing sector change around accessibility, ensuring disabled people are central to the organisations' thinking and developments
- Contributing to developing wider and deeper community engagement and growing work for and by disability artists in Coventry
- Working on a site specific theatre project due to be performed in July 2018."⁴²

The closing date for this is the end of February 2018 and the selected artist will receive funding, space and networking opportunities in order to not only have a significant impact on the thinking, planning and programming of disability arts at the theatre, but an excellent chance to develop their own artistic work and skills with support from a professional theatre.



⁴² For more information please go to: <http://www.belgrade.co.uk/about-us/work-opportunities/>

LEGACY

In addition to the artist in residency plans at the Belgrade theatre, the legacy of 11MRTD is evident through the structure, approach and training of theatre staff and processes, at all levels. Yael Owen-McKenna, the partner lead for the project in Coventry, has been invited to join the board of the theatre, asked to specifically focus on the diversity and accessibility of the theatre and programming. Additionally, FOH and BOH staff members attended People Dancing's training event (or were trained by someone else who attended) and the theatre has been using the knowledge and understanding gained to develop their Relaxed Performance shows and how they can work best with disabled performers in the technical and performance process.

In terms of community engagement, the Coventry Performing Arts Service continue to deliver dance classes in local SEN schools across Coventry, maintaining connections with parents and pupils that were created through the 11MRTD project.

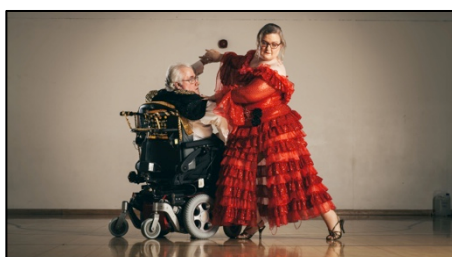
MIDDLESBROUGH, CLEVELAND

ASSOCIATE ARTIST

See Durham for information on how the partner for Middlesbrough, Tin Arts, is supporting local artists.

LEGACY

Having delivered the 11MRTD most recently, the legacy plans for Middlesbrough are still evolving. However, there is potential for continued activity between Tin Arts and Teesside University, including the use of facilities and connecting with the students on the BA Dance course. Again, the legacy of the project in Middlesbrough lies with the work and activities of Tin Arts, so please refer to the legacy details for Durham for more information.



7.0 NEXT STEPS

This report aimed to explore the background, context and delivery stages of the 11MRTD project, looking at the short and long term impact for a range of stakeholders and beneficiaries. In doing this, the emerging outcomes, observations and data-support features of the project have been analysed and discussed in relation to the project's aims and objectives.

Additionally, other aspects concerning the project, which were raised by either project partners or audience members/visitors, have also been discussed, as part of a larger conversation concerning the landscape of dance and disability work more generally. These aspects included the logistical features of touring, the mixed media focus of the project and issues concerning virtuosity, style and subliminal messages in dance.

The conclusions detailed below have been developed through careful consideration of the findings in this report, and linked to the original aims for the project in order to continue with the purpose and priority of this work.

1. Engage with a new media format for future exhibitions, building on and going beyond the photography focus of 11MRTD
The use of photography in a dance and disability project is a relatively uncommon approach to this area of work, but has been evident from this project has been how this engages with new audiences. Those who are interested in photography may visit the project and be introduced to dance, and vice versa. Therefore, if this area is explored further there is the potential for building a bigger audience base for dance and disability performers. For example, a follow-up exhibition could explore the practitioners in this project's own artistic style of performance, demonstrating their own abilities in dance.

2. Developing hubs or networks, with a focus on sharing ideas and resources as well as using locations as tour sites for new work
What is clear from the feedback from the partners is how much they have valued the opportunity 11MRTD has afforded to build new relationships with local venues and other arts organisations across the Midlands and North of the country. Therefore, establishing a network that works to keep these connections established and nurturing opportunities for organisations to support one another would be extremely valuable.

3. Clarification of aims and objectives for future projects, perhaps undertaking smaller macro projects stemming from each phase or larger projects with specific and detailed intentions.

This was a large-scale project, with many facets and intricate details with a big remit for each strand of the project. Therefore, the aims and ambitions were ambitious. While the project has been a success, there is the potential for the project to be repeated or divided in to macro projects, which might accompany the photo exhibition as it tours to locations. This might be the performance element or a touring workshop programme, it may even be a resource pack of activity that is supplied with the photo exhibition and details the learning from this first phase in how to engage the local community in dance and disability activities, linked to the themes and ideas from the photography exhibition. Nevertheless, clarity of the priorities for future projects or activities related to 11MRTD should be clear, simplified, but containing sufficient detail.

4. Consider the possibility of engaging with new locations, where there are currently low levels of engagement with the arts amongst people with disabilities

Newer statistics regarding physical inactivity and lack of engagement with the arts could soon be available and new locations could be identified from these as benefitting from being involved with the 11MRTD project. It may be that a smaller, micro version of the project could be designed and delivered, but the evidence in this report suggests that the project makes a positive impact on arts organisations, local venues and local communities within the selected locations, which suggests that a new cohort of locations could benefit from the activities involved in the

5. Ensuring there is a clear legacy structure in place for this phase of the project, including monitoring of activity to record long-term impact

Legacy is an important aspect within this project, both for the means of receiving funding and for the longevity of the investment made in each area. It seems to now be a priority to ensure that measures are in place to ensure that legacy plans can be established and/or delivered in each location. These may be the bespoke legacy plans personalised for each location, legacy plans for the photography exhibition and 11MRTD for People Dancing or legacy activities that are collaborative between PD and partners. Whatever the plans, it is important to establish them without losing the momentum built up during the tour and the enthusiasm that is tangible for the project activities currently.

6. Developing sector change around accessibility and diversity ensuring disabled people are central to the organisations' thinking and developments and presentation of work

While this is the thinking and focus of much of the work that People Dancing do, the findings from this project just reiterate the need for continued activism within the dance sector. Discussions concerning programming and the styles of work that should be presented to rural locations needs to be continued, as there is value in presenting both popular, mainstream work as well as more contemporary, avant garde pieces. Thinking, discussing and exploring new interventions have the potential to initiate and encourage bigger change in the sector, surrounding dance and disability.

The features that have been discussed here could be developed as furtherance of the 11MRTD project or brand, continuing discussions regarding dance and disability, aiming to change perceptions and working to promote professional artists within the field and beyond.

