



Transforming lives through dance

Annual Review
2022/23



Introduction

2022/2023 marked Dance United Yorkshire's 11th year of operation. We have remained dedicated to furthering our reach to disadvantaged and marginalised communities whilst producing high-quality work. We are proud of our achievements, and we thank everyone who has worked with and supported Dance United Yorkshire (DUY) this year.

*Front Cover image:
DUXY Boys Project Performance
Photo: Brian Slater*



'Breaking the Mould' – Resi/Dance Youth
Photo: Elly Welford





Our Vision and Mission

We are a Bradford-based charity and distinctive cultural leader connecting the best of the professional contemporary dance world with marginalised communities. We increase access to high-quality, contemporary dance for children, young people and adults who are 'hard to reach' and living in challenging circumstances. We produce contemporary dance performances that engage members of the public who would not traditionally encounter this art form. We commission emerging and established choreographers to create high-quality artistic work and offer regional dance artists professional development opportunities with culturally disengaged people and communities. We provide creative experiences that will have a positive and lasting effect on the lives of socially excluded people. Our commitment is to reach across the region whilst maintaining a high-quality choreographic vision, bespoke artistic training opportunities and ongoing progression routes for children and young people.

Artistic Provision

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



DUXY Boys Project Performance – Resi/Dance Youth Company
Photo: Brian Slater



Intensive Projects

In November/December 2022, DUY delivered a 5-week intensive project with vulnerable and disengaged young people referred from education partners. The intensive project was based in **Holme Wood, Bradford**, targeting 'hard to reach' young people from the local area. The project culminated in a performance at The Riley Theatre, Leeds. Working with existing partners, 17 referred young people completed the project with a Bronze Arts Award Qualification. Renowned filmmaker and star of MTV's 'Catfish', Max Joseph, joined us for the first two weeks. Having read an article about DUY in the New York Times, Max is interested in exploring our work further, with the ambition to create a documentary series.

"Some of the skills I learned during the project are how to truly focus, be resilient and have better time-keeping skills. I can now cooperate better with others and have learned the importance of being a part of a company."

(Participant)



'Breaking the Mould' – Resi/Dance Youth
Photo: Elly Welford



Lea Anderson R&D

In the summer, we had the pleasure of working with renowned choreographer Lea Anderson MBE. Our artistic team spent a week learning about Lea's choreographic process, exploring the use of film, photography, vocabulary, mixed media, and installation. The week led to the conceptualisation of a new piece – 'Replica' – which was later developed by Helen Linsell and Romina Thornton with BTEC Performing Arts students from Bradford College. The two-week intensive creative period culminated in a sharing at the college.

"I spent a fascinating week working with Dance United Yorkshire. It was an important insight for me as an artist who works with a wide range of professional and non-professional people to understand the kind of work Dance United do and the challenging contexts in which they carry out their work. The team was extremely passionate about dance and totally engrossed in all the work we tried out in the studio. I discovered that not only are they skilled facilitators, but also practitioners with a strong sense of curiosity, willing to take artistic risks.

I enjoyed my week immensely."

(Lea Anderson MBE – Choreographer and Artistic Director)

*Lea Anderson – Intensive Week
Photo: Romina Thornton*





*Leeds Beckett Students – Intensive Week
Photo: Romina Thornton*

NSCD Partnership

DUY has continued to work with NSCD over the year. Helen, our Artistic Director, has been a Guest Lecturer for both 2nd and 3rd-year undergraduates to share DUY's practice working in social inclusion. This included her delivering practical workshops around our distinctive methodology and behaviour management.

We also provide placement opportunities for NSCD students as part of their teaching modules.



Leeds Beckett Partnership

Across the year, our partnership with Leeds Beckett University flourished. Our artistic team spent two weeks with 2nd year BA (Hons) Dance students, creating a new piece for our Leeds intensive project in April. The piece – ‘Seventeen’– was inspired by ‘The Jigsaw Maker,’ a poem written by Dalton Harrison. The poem explores the emotions and inner turmoil of being held back by difficult circumstances and trapped in a system with nowhere to turn. Sometimes, we feel broken and alone, but with baby steps and the ever-important ‘jigsaw makers,’ we slowly but surely fit ourselves back together one piece at a time.

At the end of the creation process, the piece was performed to peers and guests at the university theatre, and five students went on to undertake placements on our Leeds intensive project.

“Working with Dance United Yorkshire as part of my university placement has been an insightful experience. I have learnt so much about community practice and working with vulnerable people. Observing how DUY uses dance to create an uplifting and positive experience for the participants has been helpful. The spaces they create are completely non-judgmental, which I will take into my future work.”

(Placement Student)

DUY was privileged to work with Dalton Harrison throughout the creative process, and he performed ‘The Jigsaw Maker’ as part of the final event at The Carriageworks, Leeds, in May 2023.

Leeds Beckett Students – Intensive Week
Photo: Romina Thornton



DUXY Project

In January 2023, we initiated the DUXY Boys Project with funding from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. Students from Bradford Academy, Bradford Forster Academy, Carlton Keighley, and Bradford College received weekly sessions building towards a new performance piece, bringing all four groups together. From there, we organised a boy's day of dance, which saw boys and young men across Bradford come together to participate in workshops led by a Bradford-based artist, **Vince Virr** and **Motion House**.

March 2023, at the Alhambra Studio, our young men took to the stage to perform in a packed-out theatre full of friends, families, and teachers. Most of these boys and young men had never danced before; it was a new experience to encourage dance. The dancers fully engaged and showed such strength and power in their performance.



DUXY boys' day of dance
Photo: Brian Slater

“An amazing experience for students to be active and develop skills away from their desks such as confidence, teamwork, and communication skills. The project helped to break down stereotypes of what dance is and inspire a new generation.”

(Teacher at Bradford Academy)



Resi/Dance Project

Our community-based initiative in Holme Wood, Bradford, continues to demonstrate DUY's commitment to reaching those least engaged in the arts. The four-year Resi/Dance project (2019-2023) – funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – offers a range of free opportunities for the residents, including weekly classes, school workshops, bespoke performance projects and partnership initiatives.

A highlight of the year occurred in July 2022, with the premier of our 'Hopes and Dreams Festival'. Partnering with Cecil Green Arts, we brought the Holme Wood community together with a mini-festival featuring performances by local children and young people. We designed a series of workshops for local primary school children and created dance work for a colourful parade. Led by local band – Samba Jamba, children, young people, and local volunteers paraded around Holme Wood with scarves, banners and puppets. The young people performed to an audience of over 300, after which everyone enjoyed burgers and ice cream.



*Holme Wood – Hopes and Dreams Festival
Photo: Elly Welford*

“DUY have worked with my daughter to help her understand her self-worth, allowing her to express her emotions and share her angst. Since starting, she has been calmer in school and at home. She can now reflect and identify when her behaviour has not been appropriate and how to prevent it from happening again. I am so grateful for the opportunity they provide for her to learn about herself and her well-being.”

(Parent)

We were delighted to be shortlisted for two ‘One Dance UK Awards’ – the Community Champion Award and Dance Changemaker Award for the work we have carried out in the Holme Wood Community. We enjoyed a lovely evening at the ceremony in Bristol, celebrating all the outstanding dance work in the UK.

Youth and Women's Dance Provisions

Our evening provisions in Bradford also continued to gain momentum. The DUY Performance Company and Bradford Youth Company increased their numbers across the year with an influx of new dancers whilst maintaining excellent retention levels with existing company members.

DUY's production on the 16th of July at the Alhambra Studio allowed all our community groups to perform choreography created in response to a common theme, 'Breaking the Mould'. This event consisted of 5 dance pieces and was performed to an audience of 180.

Our work with vulnerable women experiencing domestic abuse and/or poor mental health expanded this year, reaching more people across the Bradford district through outreach workshops and attending events by 'Staying Put' and 'Together Women.' We celebrated International Women's Day by hosting a performance at the Kala Sangam Arts Centre with women from across the district. We also offered a female-only audience.

'Breaking the Mould' – Women's Company
Photo: Ely Welford



"I am 64 years old and was in a bad place when I joined Bradford Women's Company three years ago. I was welcomed and accepted with no questions about my past; it has been the best thing that has happened to me for years. I have regained and increased my confidence, made friends, and had fun. It has been a life saver."

(Participant)



Gradient

Gradient Dance Company continues offering talent and professional development to young adult dancers (19+), fulfilling our aspiration to retain new and diverse dance talent in Yorkshire. Meeting for bespoke choreographic projects, Gradient's latest piece, 'Shifting Form,' was inspired by the work of Barbara Hepworth and the punk movement of the late 1970s.

Highlights of the year included:

- Resi/Dance Youth Company, Performance Company and Bradford Youth worked with Rendezvous Dance Company and performed a curtain raiser to their latest piece at Kala Sangam Arts Centre called 'What songs may do.'
- Nationally acclaimed choreographer Paul Smethurst worked with our Performance Company to create a piece for FRESH 2023, which was performed at the Leeds Playhouse.
- Akiem Toussaint Buck and Crystal Zillwood worked with our Performance Company and Resi/Dance Youth to create a curtain raiser for their newest piece 'Souls and Cells.'
- All our Resi/Dance groups, 4-7's, 8-11's and the youth company, performed at the Holme Wood Christmas Festival for family and friends.
- Bradford Youth, Performance Company and Calderdale Youth performed a curtain-raiser in the courtyard of Lawrence Batley Theatre to accompany the UK tour of National Dance Company Wales. Blue Moose Company led the workshops leading up to the performance.
- In July, we hosted an Evening with DUY at the Alhambra studio called 'Breaking the Mould,' which included all our weekly youth dance companies.
- The DUXY boys dance initiative and the final performance event at the Alhambra Studio. Their piece 'Resurgence' was also supported by the Resi Dance Youth Company.

'Breaking the Mould' – Gradient Company
Photo: Ely Welford

Primary School Initiatives

This year, we continued to facilitate outreach sessions in primary schools across Bradford. This formed part of our recruitment strategy for Bradford Youth Company and Resi/Dance Youth Company.

We were also part of the **Boy 87 event** in partnership with 6 Bradford-based primary schools. Boy 87 is a book exploring the refugee crisis, which every year 6 pupil in Bradford is given to read. The event took place at Valley Parade football ground involving poetry, music, and dance. 2,700 year 6 pupils attended the event. DUY delivered workshops to all schools, teaching them a fun, energetic piece of choreography to perform on the day. It was a vibrant celebration of the arts across Bradford.



DUXY Boys – Project Performance
Photo: Brian Slater

“Dance United created a fantastic opportunity to the boys who took part in the workshops and performances. The growth in confidence and dance ability was a joy to see and they have created memories that they will cherish forever. We cannot thank everyone at Dance United and the funders enough to allow students who would never be able to gain these skills and opportunities if it was not for them.”

(Teacher at Bradford Forsters Academy)

In addition, we delivered a week-long summer school for 9-13 years in Holme Wood, which led to an informal performance at the TFD Centre.

Over the year, DUY reached **1,442** primary school-age children, all of whom participated in our programme during 2022/23.





Arts Award

DUY has been offering the Bronze Arts Award (Level 1), validated by Trinity College London, as a fundamental element of our intensive projects for over ten years. Although the work required to gain a Bronze Arts Award is substantial, this particular qualification successfully engages young people struggling within mainstream education, many of whom may not achieve more traditional qualifications. We delivered **34 Bronze Arts Awards and 1 Silver Arts Award** across the district.

During this year, DUY has also delivered a series of primary school initiatives that incorporated the delivery of the Discover Arts Award. These short-term projects targeted schools based in Bradford's most deprived areas, providing access to high-quality creative dance to children aged 8-11 years. We delivered **191 Discover Arts Awards** this year.

During 2021/22, DUY delivered **226 Arts Award qualifications**.



Intensive Project – Arts Award Qualification
Photo: Abbie Padgett

“The Arts Award delivery was superb. The activities engaged all the children, and it was accessible to everyone. It brought a real togetherness for the cohort and allowed them to be part of each other’s successes. The positive impact on their mental and general health has been evident.”

(Vice Principle)



Partnership Development and Advocacy

We are a development organisation aiming to reach marginalised people and communities locally, regionally, and nationally. To succeed, we recognise the importance of nurturing current and past relationships and developing new ones. During 22/23, we created new partnerships with Leeds-based organisations in preparation for our upcoming Leeds Intensive Project. We partnered with organisations that help young people in housing, youth justice service, CAMHS, arts organisations, women, and refugee organisations and many more. These partnerships helped us develop new contacts and interactions with hard-to-reach people in the community, allowing them to explore creative dance.



*Leeds Beckett Project
Photo: Romina Thornton*

As well as developing new partnerships, advocacy is vital to share our practice and inform people about our working methods. Over the year, DUY's Artistic Director Helen Linsell has spoken at local and regional events regarding DUY's methodology. Helen was invited to join Saturday Morning Live with Dave Gorman, where she talked about changing lives through dance with approximately 2 million listeners.



Overall Impact

DUY engaged **4,775 children, young people and adults** in projects, classes, workshops, and training.

DUY's audience was **2,001,563** (2 million listeners to BBC 4 Radio Saturday Morning Live featuring our Artistic Director Helen Linsell), and the company created **10 new pieces** of choreography.

The feedback received from participants, audience members, partners and funders has been overwhelmingly positive throughout 2022/23, with many recognising how valuable our continuing work has been during one of the most challenging times our society has experienced:

“What DUY does is truly remarkable, and there is a need for their work to continue. The team create essential bridges between the arts and disadvantaged communities and removes significant social barriers for marginalised children and young people. I am proud to be affiliated with the organisation.”

(Industry Artist)

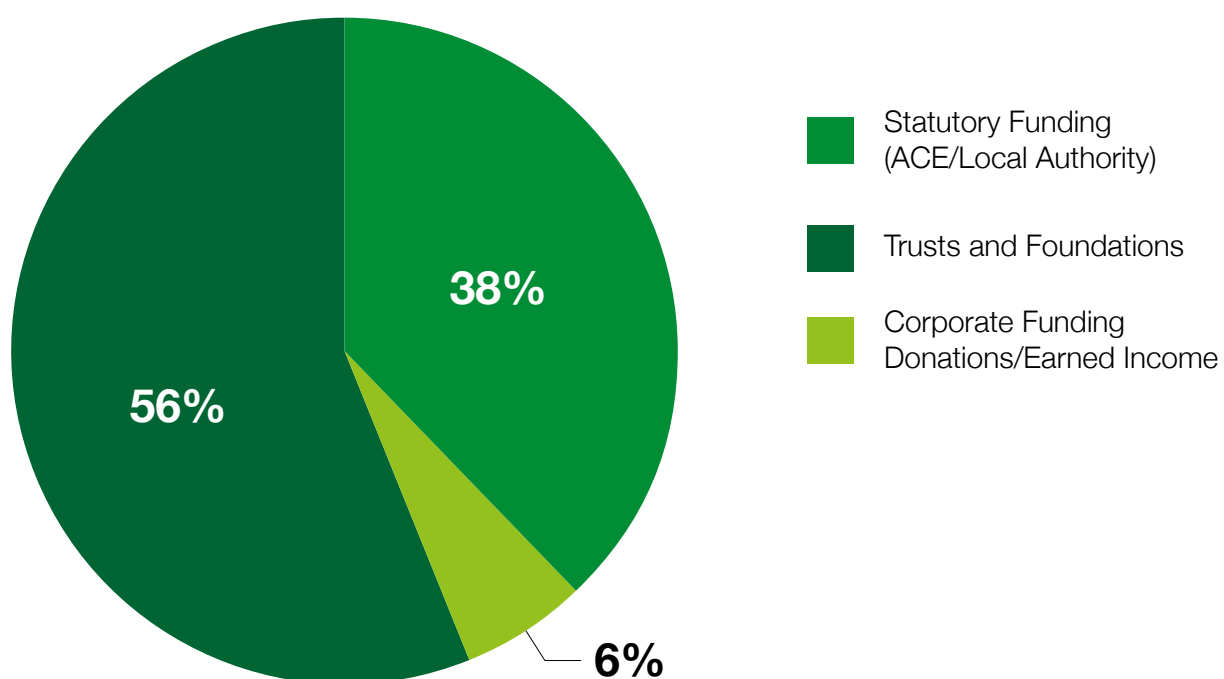
DUXY boys' – Day of dance
Photo: Brian Slater

Finance

	2022/23 £	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Income	265,714	262,900	293,012
Expenditure	254,593	273,269	222,089
Free Reserves	40,516	40,090	31,178

Funding and Donations 2022/23

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



Staff and Governance

Dance United Yorkshire Team

Artistic Director:

Helen Linsell

Executive Director:

Duncan Bedson

Senior Dance Programmes Manager:

Romina Thornton

Dance Programmes Manager:

Adrienne Melling

Projects Manager:

Abbie Padgett

Freelance Support Worker:

Emma Robertson

Photography:

Elly Welford and Brian Slater

Board of Trustees

Ann-Marie Teed (Chair)

Blair Davies (Previous Chair)
(January 2014 – December 2022)

Nikki Crane

Stephanie Derrick

Keira Martin

Anne-Marie Teed

Gemma Pearson

Julia White

A charity delivering
radical dance with
socially excluded
and marginalised
communities

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