



Get Scotland Dancing Literature Review

Executive Summary

May 2014

Introduction

Get Scotland Dancing [GSD] is a Scottish Government policy and one of the Legacy 2014 programmes. The initiative is led by Creative Scotland and the programme is a component of 'Culture 2014' the nationwide programme connecting people and communities to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. It aims to encourage more people to get active through participating in dance.

The purpose of the literature review is to provide an overview of relevant reports and statistical publications, summarise patterns of participation in dance activity, motivations for and barriers to participation and evidence of links between dance activity and health and well-being outcomes.

The full literature review can be found [here](#). Below is an executive summary of the findings.

Executive Summary

The Get Scotland Dancing Literature Review explores dance as a multidimensional artform - a physical activity (physiological), an expression of culture (cultural) and emotion (psychological); a creative art form and process (aesthetic) and as a reflection of human behaviour and society (sociological). The literature review gives an improved insight into:

- A national overview of health and well being alongside a summary of population demographics
- Levels of participation in dance, and
- Factors impacting on dance participation.

Documents from Scottish, UK wide and international contexts were used relating to participation and attendance in physical activity, arts and culture, dance, games and festivals and health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on Scotland.

Key findings

1 National overview of health and well-being

Key national statistics and indicators were explored to gain an understanding of where dance might contribute.

Well-being: The Scottish Health Survey (2012) found that 74% of adults and 95% of children aged 0-15 report their health as 'good' or 'very good'

Life Satisfaction: The mean life satisfaction score in Scotland is 7.7 out of 10 however 37% of adults rated themselves below average (0-7). There is a significant difference in life satisfaction between 16-24 year olds with a mean score of 7.8 compared to a mean score of 7.4 for adults aged 45-64 and 8 for those aged 65 to 74.

Physical activity among adults: The recommended physical activity (RPA) levels are 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week for adults and at least 60 minutes physical activity per day for children. The Scottish Health Survey reported that 62% of adults meet activity levels. This includes 83% of males and 64% of females aged 16-24, compared to 31% of males and 21% of females aged 75+.

Physical Activity Among Young People: Physical activity levels are higher among young people with 69% of boys and 62% of girls meeting RPA levels. However levels reduce during teenage years with 70%-72% meeting RPA levels up to age 10 reducing to 50% aged 13-15. The gap widens with age between genders with for example 59% of boys aged 15 meeting RPA levels compared to 41% of girls.

2 Participation in Dance

The Scottish Household Survey (2012) reports that dance is the fourth most common cultural activity adults participated in, with 12% of adults indicating they had taken part in dance in the previous 12 months (15% females and 9% males). Similarly 9% of adults have attended a dance show or event (7% males and 12% females).

Inchley et al (2008) found levels of participation in dance were considerably higher among those of senior school age than can be said of adults; with more than a third (35%) taking part once a week (58.7% of girls and 11.4% of boys), although levels are higher in S1 among girls at 62.4%.

Like other cultural activities the Scottish Household Survey (2012) found those more qualified are more likely to take part in dance starting at only 3% for those with no qualification, rising to 16% for those with a degree or professional.

Dance is undertaken less frequently than other cultural activities with only 24% of respondents who danced stating they dance 'at least once a week'.

Dance was also included in the Sport questions of the Scottish Household Survey and 8% of respondents stated they participated in dancing in the last four weeks.

Renfrewshire has the highest levels of participation in dance as a cultural activity (37%) but only 7% taking part as a sporting activity. Aberdeen has the highest levels of participation in dancing as a sporting activity (12%). Shetland has higher than average levels of participation as a cultural activity (19%) and as a sporting activity (10%). North Ayrshire has the lowest levels with 5% participation in dance as a cultural activity and 2% as a sporting activity.

3 Factors impacting on dance participation

Individual

Age - studies relating to dance often focus on particular age-groups either because of the intrinsic motivation to take part (e.g. adolescent girls) at a time when interest in other physical activities wanes, or because of the therapeutic benefits of dance (e.g. among older adults).

Gender – unlike sport, there is a stigma that prevents men from getting involved in dance. The opposite is true for women therefore dance is perceived as a way for women, particularly young women, to become active and as a means to addressing inactivity in older women; although overcoming barriers to male participation will significantly widen participation in Scotland.

Motivations – typical dance participants show up in research as those that already liked dance, therefore attracting new people to dance requires seeking out those that don't admit to liking dance or are less motivated to watch or take part.

Accessibility – dance is most accessible when perceived as a social experience e.g. a night out. Accessible social dance type activities may attract non-typical participants.

Social & Cultural

Availability of facilities – or lack of, does not appear to explain regional differences but sufficient accessibility, appropriate venues and changing facilities are important to girls, LGBT communities and those with disabilities.

Social benefits – are often referred to with improvements in skills, teamwork, behaviour and attitudes cited, including reductions in offending behaviour. Similarly social interaction, learning and fitness are recognised as being inter-related factors that promote continued participation.

Parental influence – plays a role with more encouragement from parents leading to greater participation in adulthood, especially when childhood experiences relate to active participation.

Equalities – and underrepresentation of certain population characteristics are most common among low socio-economic groups; people with low educational attainment, disabled and mobility impaired, BME communities, and males. LGBT issues are largely undocumented.

Well-being

A number of reports identified social, physical, psychological, learning and behavioural improvements in young people who participate in dance. The arts are believed to impact on people's sense of wellbeing while attendance at dance performances is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction.

Dance has a positive influence on health and well-being such as higher resilience and lower risk taking, re-engaging inactive girls, making improvements in physical activity levels, sustaining involvement and improving mental well-being and self-esteem. Specific dance forms and activities have targeted those in difficult circumstances or with certain conditions to boost self-esteem, confidence, enjoyment, sense of belonging and deal with difficult emotions.

Artistic

Reasons for not attending more dance performances and activities include confusion, lack of understanding, lack of preference for the art-form and lack of interest; however they only affect a small proportion of those taking part. Good music, costumes and set and a clear narrative improve the artistic experience and levels of enjoyment for wider audiences.

Environmental

The number of dance companies and performances is rising along with delivery and participation in education and outreach. International work is growing, but is still a relatively small proportion of activity. Growth opportunities also exist in TV/film/video/music collaborations.

Get Scotland Dancing is already recognised for having filled gaps in areas without dance development posts, although establishing longer term investment is reported as being key to sustainable success.

Continuing to build dance as an integral part of the curriculum is a priority to the sector. Pioneering work on equalities is set to continue, with improvements in equalities monitoring being critical to monitoring progress.

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