



Impact Report 2020

Who we are

Safe space to
express
themselves in
the form of
dance

Care to Dance is a social enterprise that is driven by a passion to ensure that every young person in care has the opportunity to enjoy the benefits that come from being involved in dance. Our mission is to pioneer new ways of using dance to improve the wellbeing of young people in care.

The children have a place to go on a weekly basis that provides a space to safely express themselves in an understanding and caring environment that is focused on developing confidence through dance.



Our dance mentor is a qualified social worker (HCPC Registered) with 3 years experience working with children and families as well as many years experience in street and contemporary dance. This allows us to combine the *professional and emotional attributes* of social work practice so as to provide a *safe and meaningful environment* for children who would like to learn how to dance. This unique balance of social work and dance is based on a holistic approach that takes young people through various styles of dance, builds their confidence through learning a new skill and ends with a performance that family and friends are invited to attend.

The need

In 2018,
approximately
73,000 children
were looked
after in the
United
Kingdom.

Evidence shows there is an intrinsic link between children engaging in leisure activities and improvements in their mental health and educational attainment ([Department for Education and Skills, 2006](#)). Our programme aims to significantly improve the confidence and wellbeing of children in care by providing purposeful dance classes that enable young people to develop skills in dance, perform to an audience and develop meaningful relationships.

In 2018, approximately 73,000 children were looked after in the United Kingdom. Many professionals have highlighted the barriers young people in care often face when starting a new club or activity. Care to Dance aims to overcome such barriers by providing a safe and inclusive environment for all young people in care and leaving care.

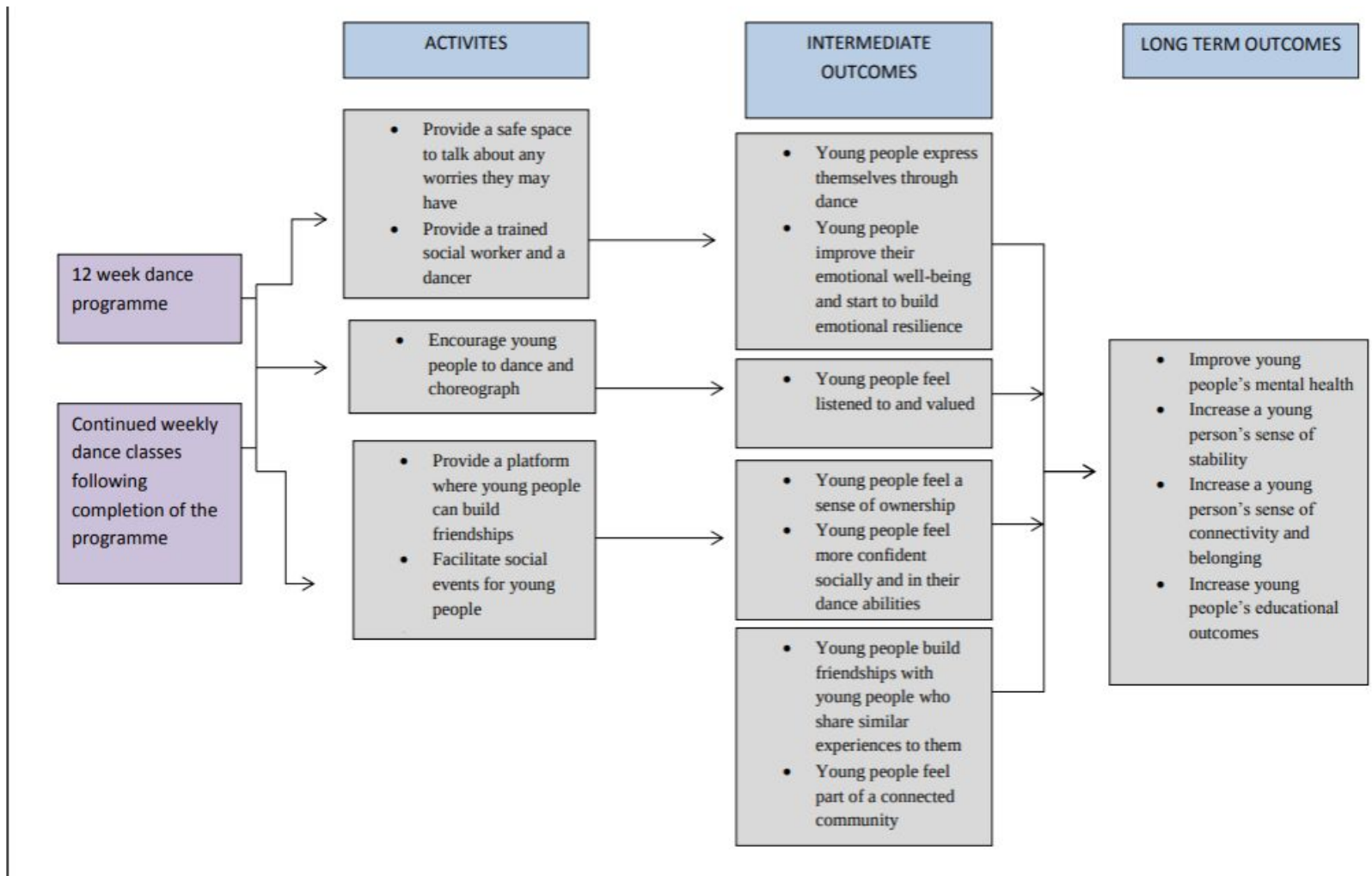
"During my time as a
Social Worker, many
young people have
expressed barriers in
joining extra-curriculum
activities and clubs"

- Lisa Ford, Social
Worker



[Research and national statistics](#) consistently show that educational participation and achievement in young people in and leaving care is significantly lower than in the non-care population. Research has shown the positive impact that social, leisure and informal learning activities can have on the educational participation and achievement of young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Children in Need Review ([Department for Education, 2019](#)) explores the educational outcomes of children and young people who are care experienced.



Intermediate outcomes

Young people can express themselves through dance

When asked to quantify the influence that Care to Dance has had on their mood (on a scale of 0-10), on average, young people say **9.2**.

When asked to quantify the influence that Care to Dance has had on their self-confidence, on average, young people say **8.8**.

Young people feel valued and listened to; feeling a sense of ownership

Young people make meaningful friendships and feel a part of a connected community

When asked to quantify the contribution that Care to Dance has had in helping them make new friends, on average, young people say **10**.

When asked to quantify the improvement that Care to Dance has made to their dance ability, on average, young people say **9.8**.

Young people feel more confident socially and in their dance ability

What people say

“Completing the Care to Dance programme has been absolutely amazing! For me, I feel like I finally learned to love dance again with the mentors’ coaching and support. It’s been truly a great experience being able to interact with so many different people I can relate to within dance and a place I feel comfortable in. Since I started the programme I feel like my confidence has improved so much and my general wellbeing and I can’t thank the coaches enough!”

- Ambassador of Care to Dance

“

My confidence has improved because I met new friends. I have become a stronger person.

- *Young person*

“

She is a lot more engaging with people, her confidence has grown. She looks forward to class every week and is comfortable with the dance mentors. I feel she would open up to them if she needed to.

- *Carer*

“

Care to Dance has impacted young people enormously in a positive way. Socially, emotionally and in their skills, not just dancing skills but peer and adult relationships, team work, punctuality, reliability, confidence and meeting new people/friends and trust in others.

- *Teacher*

Long term outcomes

Dance can have a long-lasting and meaningful effect on a young person. Care to Dance aims to improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people, to increase their sense of stability, to enhance their sense of connectivity and belonging and to improve their educational outcomes.

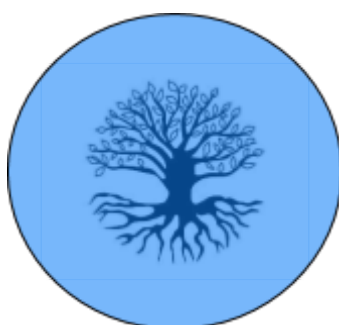
Improving the mental health of young people

Children in care are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues (DfE, 2014). The benefits of dance are extensive; it encourages *creativity, collaboration with peers, concentration, motivation and physical wellbeing*. Building on dancing skills allows young people to apply their natural innovation, imagination and individuality. Crucially, dance enables the children a *safe space* to express themselves through the creativity of dance.



Increasing a young person's sense of stability

Care to Dance offers young people a time to dance and connect every week, offering them *routine and security* within this space.



Increasing a young person's sense of connectivity and belonging

Children who have experienced being in care often talk about the importance of building *positive and lasting friendships* whilst having the opportunity to meet other children and young people who have shared *similar experiences* to them. Care to Dance brings children and young people together who share the same passion for dance and have similar care experiences. This provides a platform for the young people to *connect with one another, build lasting friendships and relate to each other's experiences*, helping them feel less alone.



Increasing young people's educational outcomes

Being in care can have a great impact on a young person's ability to concentrate in school and can have a ripple effect on their future attainment. Care to Dance aims to improve young people's *mental health, motivation and subsequently their educational outcomes*. When asked to quantify whether Care to Dance has improved their ability to concentrate in school, on average, young people say **6.8**.



Care to Dance commenced its pilot in September 2019. As we expand and evolve, we will strive to measure the long-term impact that the initiative has on young people, with particular focus on the above four areas.

Looking into the future

Delivering the programmes across the UK

Care to Dance intends to expand across the UK, providing programmes for Local Authorities. Care to Dance aims to have a positive, meaningful and permanent impact on young people whatever their geographical location.

Growing the ambassador role

We strive to encourage the young people to take on responsibility and have an active role in the development and facilitation of Care to Dance by volunteering to become Ambassadors. We aim to empower young people by giving them responsibility and a platform to showcase talents such as leadership, coaching skills and creativity. We aim to grow the number of ambassadors within Care to Dance. This can be done in the following ways:

- Young people can share their dance skills among the classes with support from the dance mentors.
- Young people can use their creativity to influence choreography.
- Young people can continue to provide invaluable input into the development of Care to Dance.
- Young people can continue to share their experiences and views with professionals.
- Young people can continue to facilitate positive change within the sector.

Providing an evidence base surrounding the impact of Care to Dance

Care to Dance is a social enterprise that aims to facilitate positive societal change. We will develop an evidence base showing the effectiveness of this programme on the mental health and wellbeing of children with care experience. We will strive to continue to measure the impact of Care to Dance on young people in care, emotionally, socially and educationally, with the aim of expanding the geographical spread of this project and encouraging similar initiatives to flourish.

Thank you

North Tyneside Local Authority, South Tyneside Local Authority and Stockton Local Authority for being pioneers and commissioning our programmes.

UnLtd for providing funding to Care to Dance, supporting it's development and facilitation.

The Care Leaders for supporting the development of Care to Dance during the initial stages of creation and now its expansion.

Frontline for their support in raising awareness of the initiative and supporting the development of this Impact Report.

To the ambassadors of Care to Dance for all of their support with the development and facilitation of the programmes.

To the Social Workers and Teachers who support the young people in attending the programmes.

To the carers of the young people who support the young people to attend the dance classes.

To our guest teachers; Kloe Dean, Director of Myself UK Dance and Alyssa Lisle.

To our dance mentors who share their knowledge of dance whilst supporting the children through positive and meaningful interaction.

A special thank you to all of the children and young people who attend the classes and showcase their creativity through a number of performances.



Get involved

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