

WANNA DANCE?

How might we dance together...?

We can't believe that the Wanna Dance? Artist in Residence programme is well into its second year at **Canal Street** and **Lightfoot Lodge** (time flies when you are having fun!) and delighted that additional funding has allowed us to extend the programme to **Coronation Centre** as well.

Wanna Dance? is about creating dancing opportunities with people with Profound Intellectual & Multiple Disabilities (PIMD). Led by dance artists, Ruth Spencer and Jane McLean (Cheshire Dance) the project asks IF participants would like to dance and if so, how that dance might be? Practice in this field opens a myriad of questions, many ethically charged concerning inclusion, access, consent and ownership in relation to methods, policy and practice.

People with PIMD are non-verbal, sensory specialists with idiosyncratic communication styles and as dancers, we have much to learn from them of sensory being, intention and communication. Wanna Dance? explores this dance and seeks to create care environments that are sensitive to lived body experience.

Through 1:1 co-created movement sessions, this project is founded upon a commitment to involve people with PIMD in decisions about their engagement in dance, providing opportunities for their preferences to impact upon their experience.

What else have we been up to?

- 25th September '23 - Dance and PIMD Practice sharing network with dance artists and teachers from across England
- 27th September '23 - Wanna Dance? Film premiere at Storyhouse
- 12th October '23 Invited to attend Cheshire and Wirral Partnership PIMD subgroup meet
- November '23 - February '24 - Wanna Dance? images and film included in Choreographies of Care exhibition at Univeristy of Central Lancashire
- 14th November '23 - Wanna Dance? film screening and talk for University of Salford dance students and staff focused on co-creation
- 15th November '23 - Meeting with [Dr. Jill Goodwin](#), Visiting Research Fellow with the Centre for Research in Inclusion at the University of Southampton
- 29th November '23 - Artist exchange meeting with sensory theatre company [Frozen Light Theatre](#)
- 5th December '23 - Wanna Dance? film screening and talk at University of Chester Creative Futures event
- January-Feb '24 Wanna Dance? Film presented as part of The PMLD Conference IV (by [Joanna Grace](#), [Sensory Projects](#))
- 24th January '24 - invited to meet with [People Dancing](#) (the UK development organisation for community and participatory dance) to discuss the development of the Wanna Dance? Programme

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Wanna Dance Film

“This is the most exciting thing! I hope this becomes a widespread practice, it is communication at the most fundamental and honest level. Bravo!”

Conference attendee:
Peter Blaker - adult PMLD specialist teacher

“A beautiful poignant & uplifting film. I can't tell you what as parents this means to us.”

Lesley Halliwell, Parent

“The joy elicited by your dance has radiated in a magnificent way from this film. I can no longer count how many people have in the real world, or in a virtual world kind of a way, grasped my arm, given it a squeeze and said how good this film is. It is perfect in so many ways, and an utter utter joy. Thank you for sharing it all with us.”

Joanna Grace, founder of the Sensory Projects and PIMD researcher

What a powerful and inspiring film about the impact of music and dance!

Conference attendee: Lila Kossyvaki -
Autism Centre for Education and Research: Birmingham University



“Conversations of the most awesome delight. Many words I could lay down. But this needs to be felt... the video is a gift to the world.”

Sheridan Forster, Creator of the 'Hanging Out Programme' - international expert in interaction with people with PMLD.

The Wanna Dance? film was premiered at Storyhouse on 27th September '24

The Wanna Dance? film is a celebration of dancing together, exploring communication and connection beyond words through dance. The film has been created by dancers with PIMD from Vivo Care Choices with Dance Artists Ruth Spencer and Jane McLean, filmmaker Sam Ryley and composer Gary Lloyd.

With 50 confirmed guests and with many more stumbling upon the premiere, the event was a resounding success. Feedback was overwhelming with written reviews citing the work as moving, powerful, joyous and emotional. A particular highlight was seeing the dancers faces respond to seeing themselves on screen and on the wall displays.

The film was also selected to be part of the online **PMLD Conference IV** run by doctoral researcher and Sensory Projects founder, Joanna Grace, focusing on sharing ideas and information relevant to the lives of people with profound disabilities.

The film is now being shared more widely via: <https://youtu.be/geMGLPX4Gks>

**“It was difficult to get him to stay in the group dance session
but he loves the 1:1 session – he really keeps focus”
(Staff Member)**



**“It’s really developed over the weeks as he’s got to
know Ruth”
(Staff Member)**



'A sparkle in your eyes, a smile
You really see... me... the
tambourine
A pause, another sparkle, a
smile
You hear the rhythms

I breathe deep, slowing down,
focusing in
I notice feet tapping
tap, tap... tap
I notice hand shaking
shh shh shh shh
I notice spine lengthening,
head gliding side to side
shake+shake+shake+shake

A dance of rhythms, of pauses,
of sparkles
Pauses full of promise'

(Dance Artist session review
sheet)



“The sessions give me ideas that I can incorporate into other sessions that we run like music.” (Staff Member)

“The sessions have a calm, reassuring effect on her. It de-stresses her massively.” (Staff Member)

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“I’ve never seen C like this before. So enjoyed the session! And his focus, that’s incredible – he never focuses for that long. I can’t wait to tell his mum, she’ll be made up.”

(Staff Member)



“As staff, we look forward to the dance session. We enjoy it because we like seeing them engaged. We do things with them and can’t always see the return. You do with the dance. It’s very accessible. This is something that works”.

(Staff Member)



‘His hands are becoming more articulate too...when you are with him and ask him to open his hand, he is trying so hard that he can’t. In dance, he relaxes and can open his hand.’

(Staff Member)

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Coming up next

Coronation Centre

Ruth continues her residency at Coronation Centre and is beginning the second phase of 1:1 sessions with 5 more people who use Vivo Care Choices services at Coronation Centre.

Canal Street and Lightfoot Lodge

Since January, Jane has been able to return to her weekly residency at Canal Street and Lightfoot Lodge. This means we are able to keep all the dancing partnerships from year 1 going and begin working one new person.

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership PIMD sub group

Ruth joined the Cheshire and Wirral partnership PIMD sub group meeting online on 12th October. The group have asked Jane and Ruth to give talk on the Wanna Dance? programme as part of their next meeting on Thursday 13th March 2024.

Northern Chamber Orchestra

Northern Chamber Orchestra have approached us offering a day at Storyhouse with a string quartet! We are in discussions about how this might work and who might like to explore dancing with live music.

Choreographies of Care Symposium: University of Central Lancashire

On the 18th June '24 Wanna Dance? will be part of a symposium exploring how embodied practices support and challenge us as dance artists to care for ourselves, for each other and for those who we work with.

Creative Project

We are in planning phase for this year's Creative Project that will take place in June/July '24. We are exploring the idea of making another film as the first Wanna Dance? film continues to have significant impact across dance, social care and education sectors.

Funding Update

Funding from the Anne Duchess of Westminster Fund, The Marjory Boddy Trust and the Postcode Lottery alongside ongoing support from Vivo Care Choices and Cheshire Dance enables us to continue the residencies in Chester and Ellesmere Port until September '24.

Work is underway to try and secure funding for the continuation and development of the project from October '24 onwards.



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DANCE & PEOPLE WITH PIMD

KEY DATES:

WHAT

PIMD Sub Group

Phase 2 sessions at
Coronation Centre
(Wednesdays)

Ongoing sessions at
Canal Street and
Lightfoot Lodge
(Mondays)

Vivo's Got Talent
Coronation Centre

Next steps:

WHEN

14th March '24 - sharing Wanna Dance Project

Getting to know you sessions: 21st Feb, 28th Feb &
6th March '24

Sessions start: 13th March '24

Last sessions: 10th June '24

Weekly sessions continue until June '24

Ruth invited to Judge 3rd June '24

May: TBC Northern Chamber Orchestra day at
Storyhouse

July: Creative Project

September: End of current funding



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DANCE & PEOPLE WITH PIMD

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Wanna Dance Programme is a partnership between Cheshire Dance, Vivo Care Choices and University of Central Lancashire.

February 2024 Update

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Cheshire
Dance



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