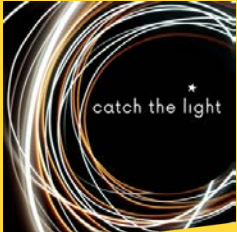




EVALUATION

Prepared independently



by Catch the Light

REPORT



CLIVE
GLASS
OF WOOD

year 3
2023

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Introduction

About YDance

YDance is a national dance organisation that engages with young people through a range of programmes and performances. They facilitate dance development through classes, workshops, and projects for children and young people, as well as professional development opportunities for teachers, youth workers, dancers and choreographers. YDance also produces and tours innovative contemporary dance performances across Scotland and internationally.

About GLASS performance

GLASS Performance is a Scottish performing arts company that specialises in creating immersive experiences. The company has produced a range of shows, events and installations across Scotland, including theatre productions, live music events, and interactive installations. They also offer workshops and training programs for artists and performers. GLASS Performance is dedicated to creating unique and engaging experiences for audiences and performers alike.

About CashBack for Communities

The CashBack for Communities fund in Scotland is a unique government initiative that uses confiscated money from criminals to support community projects that benefit young people. It has been in operation since 2008 and has invested over £110 million into more than 2,900 projects. The fund seeks to reinvest money back into the community and support young people in a variety of positive activities.

About the CashBack for Change Programme

Funded by CashBack for Communities, CashBack for Change uses dance and drama to positively influence those 10 to 21 year olds that are most at risk of anti-social behaviours or entering the criminal justice system. The project is led by Y-Dance accompanied by Glass Performance Theatre Company as delivery partners in strand one. There are three strands to the programme, which are:

Strand 1 - HMYOI Polmont: Weekly dance and drama sessions in partnership with Barnardo's and the Scottish Prison Service. YDance has set up a new Youth Dance Company in HM PYOI, while Glass Performance continues an existing Youth Theatre Company there. Participants are released from confinement to learn theatre and dance techniques, improve their physical fitness, learn skills and gain accreditation as well as take part in an annual performance piece.

Strand 2 - Alternative Education & Secure Unit: The outreach programme targets young people in alternative schools or secure accommodation through weekly dance sessions that encourages young people to express themselves in a safe environment with some participants gaining an SQA Personal Achievement Award (SCQF Level2).

Strand 3 - Community Diversion: Through community outreach sessions, workers deliver dance sessions in a range of communities in Scotland. The activities are designed to remove barriers to access by making dance sessions safe and accessible whilst building confidence, communication, coordination and commitment in participants. This strand also contains access to achieving awards and working on performance elements that engage with wider families and communities.

About the Report

The following pages report on the third and final year of the most recent - phase five - of CashBack for Communities funding that was awarded to YDance and Glass to undertake the 'CashBack for Change' programme. Fortunately, funding has already been secured for phase six, giving YDance an opportunity to build on the lessons, skills and experience gained over the past three years.

This report is therefore written with the intention of sharing progress made on the outcomes achieved over 2022 to 2023. Given that it is the final year, the consultants also provide information on overall impact, where relevant.

Cognisance is taken of the fact that years one and two were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown measures introduced by the Government. Although the third year saw a return to some normality, YDance and Glass deserve much praise for their agility and ability to adapt and provide good services, within difficult circumstances.

The report begins by outlining key benefits identified in research and reports on the arts, particularly dance and drama. There are also examples cited of the benefits that the arts brings to work with people in custody.

There is a summary of all programme delivery, including a breakdown of equalities characteristics. This section concludes with an overview of the year in numbers, with details of progress in relation to each of the Government's funding outcomes, namely:

- 1. *Increased confidence and resilience***
- 2. *Young people develop their physical and personal skills***
- 3. *Young people's health and wellbeing improves in relation to the SHANARRI indicators***
- 4. *Young people participate in activity which improves their learning and employability options***
- 5. *Young people contribute positive to their communities***
- 6. *Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system***

The summary of data is supplemented by feedback on outcomes that provide a richer insight into how participants felt whilst taking part and what difference taking part in the project has made to them. Case studies are presented from each of the three strands, which include interviews with participants and stakeholders.

Finally, the section entitled 'Lessons Learned' summarises the key lessons for round six. It is only YDance that will be involved in this next round. Nevertheless, the report also contains highlights and strengths for Glass to build upon in work they undertake in future. Furthermore, the lessons touch upon key points for all arts providers with an interest in delivering arts related or wider projects within communities and with young people that experience poverty and crime-related risks or trauma.

Known Benefits of Dance and Drama

There are well documented benefits to engaging young people in arts related activities, such as dance and drama, as summarised here:

- **Improved Well-being:** According to a report by Creative Scotland, young people who engage in the arts experience improved physical and mental well-being ([Source](#)). Physical improvements are strongest within dance, as it involves a range of movements that can help to build strength, endurance, and flexibility. Dance and drama both positively impact on mental health, such as improving mood and giving participants tools for reducing anxiety and depression, and boosting self-esteem ([Source](#)). Research has also been conducted which confirms the arts have positive impacts on young people's self and future perspectives when leaving the care system ([Source](#)).
- **Increased Creativity:** Reviews of the arts often find that young people who engage in the arts develop increased creativity that can be applied to other areas of their lives ([Source](#)). Dance and drama are reputedly fun and enjoyable ways to learn about different cultures, express oneself artistically, and simply have a good time.
- **Better Academic Performance:** A report by Education Scotland found that young people who engage in the arts have better academic performance in areas such as literacy, numeracy, and social studies. ([Source](#)) Dance and drama can be used to alleviate stress for example during exam periods as well as add to individuals accreditation through different arts and leadership awards.
- **Enhanced Social Skills:** A report on the value of cultural learning identified that those who engage in the arts develop enhanced social skills such as communication, teamwork, and empathy ([Source](#)). Dancing and drama are highly social activities, providing opportunities for individuals to connect with others and build a sense of community, whether through working in pairs, group classes or large-scale participation and performance events.
- **Increased Career Opportunities:** The Scottish Government recognises that the creative industries contribute over £5billion to the Scottish Economy each year. Examples include, work in the community, in education, in theatre, TV and film industries and in other entertainment and tourism industries ([Source](#)).
- **Reduced Risks:** There are reports that arts engagement can reduce risky behaviours and incidence of recidivism in custody contexts ([Source](#)). Evidence in international studies highlights that engaging in dance and drama can help individuals develop a greater understanding of the consequences of their actions, leading to more informed decision-making and a reduced likelihood of further engagement in risky behaviors. It can also provide participants with positive role models that may have been absent in their lives ([Source](#)).

Connections therefore exist between findings from research on the benefits of dance and drama, and the CashBack for Communities outcomes prioritised here. Consequently, the purpose of the evaluation is to examine the extent to which this project was able to demonstrate these benefits, in alignment with the specified outcomes.

PROGRAMME

DELIVERY



Locations

The map highlights the locations used for project delivery in year three. They were selected for having higher densities of deprivation, or having a Young Offenders Institute or Alternative Education Centre. In year three the highest concentration of delivery was dedicated to Strand 1, in Falkirk (24%). This is matched by delivery of strands 2 & 3 in North Lanarkshire (24%). Medium level distribution was in East Dunbartonshire (17%) and Renfrewshire (14%). Lower distribution levels were in: Glasgow (3%); West Dunbartonshire (3%); Perth & Kinross, Dundee City and Angus (6% combined) and North Ayrshire (2%).



Equalities & Risk

breakdown

This page presents an overview of the equalities information that young people consented to provide over the three year term (n=265)

Percentage of Participants with Impairments and Health Conditions



Some participants have more than one, which is why the total is over 100%.

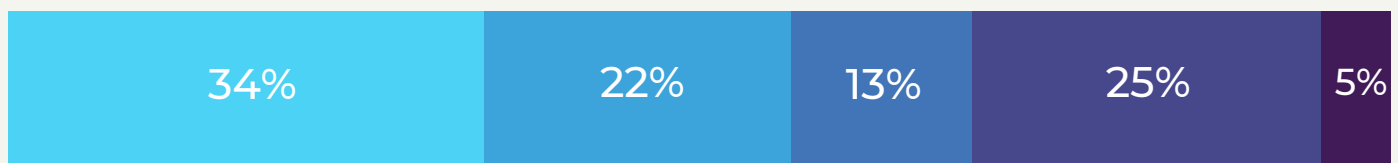
Gender Identity



2.3% identify as non-binary and 1% prefer not to say or don't know

Ages

10-12 13-15 16-18 19-21 22+



Risk Profile

1,164

Participants over three years

29%

Say that their life is affected by crime

25%

Have done something considered to be against the law

24%

Have been involved (or at risk of involvement) in antisocial behaviour

OUTCOMES

ACHIEVED



Year Three

in numbers

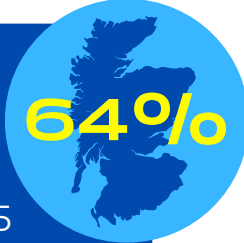


611 Participants in year 3

611 new participants took part this year, which concludes that over three years **1,164** participants aged 10-24 years have engaged in dance and drama through the CashBack for Change programme.

Areas of deprivation

64%



Almost two-thirds, 64% of participants live in the most deprived 20% of datazones in Scotland (deciles 1&2). 8% are in deciles 3 to 5 (20-50% most deprived zones)

28% are in the least deprived datazones (deciles 5 to 8 : 50% to 100% datazones)



1. Capacity & Confidence

Increased confidence

84%

+4% above target

77%

Feel more resilient

+7% above target

Able to do new things

84%

+4% above target

2. Develop Skills

83%

Report increased skills

+13% above target

Increased personal skills,
Achieved accreditation

37.5%

-2.5% below target





3. Health & Well-being

81%

Reported improvements against the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

+1% above target

4. Learning & employability



29%

Achieved a positive destination.

16% below target

Improved attendance*

41%

+27% above target

20%

Took part in training

+6% above target

Results are within the context of prison or secure units in strands 1 and 2.



5. Community contribution

84%

Have a heightened sense of belonging to their community. **56%** Feel that their community contribution is improving. **50%** have an improved perception of their neighbourhood/setting.

6. Diversion from crime

55%

Feel less inclined to participate in anti-social or criminal behaviour

+5% above target

18%

Report that their participation in anti-social or criminal behaviour has reduced

-31% below target



Results are within the context of prison or secure units in strands 1 and 2. Overall few participants were engaged in criminal behaviour or offending prior to or whilst taking part.

Further Details

These details further explain the previous numbers. Participants undertake a range of awards through the dance and drama activities on offer, which contributes to outcomes two and four, as follows:



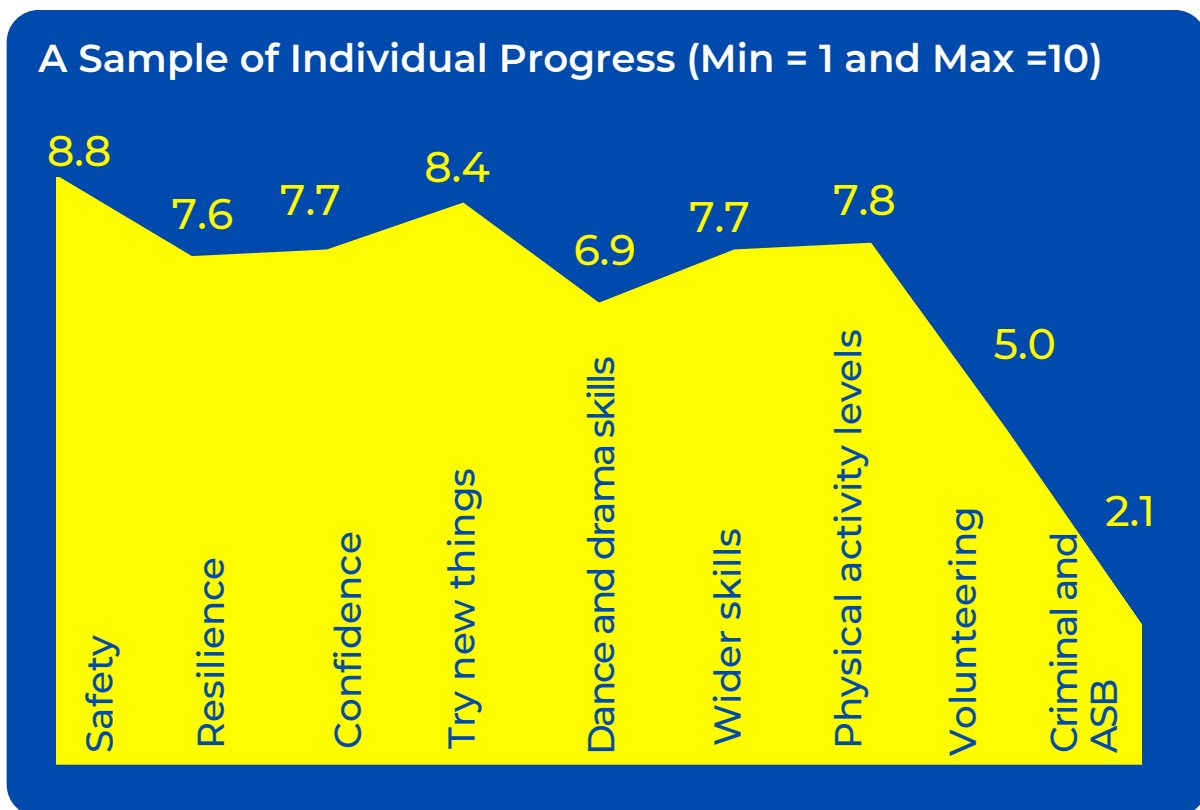
263

Awards Achieved in Year 3

In year three several participants completed a Personal Achievement Awards - SCQF Level 2 award (225), some achieved a Level 3 award (21) and a few achieved a Level 4 award (10). Another 7 participants also achieved non-accredited awards. This adds significantly to the three-year total of **492** awards gained.

The higher level awards tend to be for those that go on to complete the Dance Leadership Award. As part of the community-based strand of delivery - strand 3 - a number of participants used their dance activities to contribute to other accreditation such as Dynamic Youth Awards and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

The chart below illustrates feedback from a sample of participants (n=27) over the three year span of the project to determine how individuals felt they have progressed as a result of taking part in the project.



When asked which of the SHANARRI indicators they have improved the most, 82% of the sample group felt that they had made the biggest improvements in relation to being active, achieving and included.

Thematic Benefits

The infographic below refers to the themes that emerged from young people's feedback, relating to the benefits of taking part in the 'CashBack for Change' project. The next page covers the main areas of creativity being developed among participants.



Making and performing in a show has made me feel better about myself and what I can achieve. Also I am more confident.

Young Person

IMPROVING OUR CONFIDENCE



My confidence has improved. I am more willing to try new things and stick with them and I am more directive.

Young Person

Creative Benefits



They are up for trying things I suggest. They are getting pushed out their comfort zone and most are keen to challenge themselves but at times that can be too much for others and feel they need to sit out and take time to come around to different ideas of movement and songs.

Open Mindedness



They have been actively asking questions and seeking clarification on choreography and techniques, which has led to a better understanding and execution of the dance steps. They have also been experimenting with different movements and styles, and have been open to trying new things.

Curiosity



The young people have been showing an ability to think outside the box and come up with creative solutions when faced with challenges in the choreography. They have been using their imagination to develop their own personal style and bring a fresh perspective to the group's performances.

Problem Solving



The young people, wrote, directed and performed the Christmas performance. Using the initial idea of Oliver Twistmas, the young people created the storyline and characters and wrote original text for the performance. Two of the young people also wrote an original song that they performed in the show.

Imagination

Creative Skills

Here is an overview of the creative skills developed by participants, as observed by Dance and Drama Workers.

Curiosity

- Inquisitive questions 90%
- Noticing patterns and anomalies 94%
- Using previous knowledge 98%
- Eager for more 100%

Open Mindedness

- Taking different viewpoints 90%
- Adapting to change 98%
- Thinking through options 98%
- Coping with uncertainty 96%

Imagination

- Exploring things 98%
- Generating ideas 96%
- Inventing a new reality 90%
- New ways of seeing things 92%

Problem-solving

- Understanding challenges 98%
- Identifying solutions 96%
- Able to bounce back 96%
- Refining strengths 96%

Feedback

Throughout the year dance and drama workers have observed and kept track of progress made on the outcomes. Here are some of their observations, including quotes from young people (initials are used to protect individual identities):

Outcome 1: Young people build their confidence and resilience, benefit from support networks and reduce risk taking behaviour

B grew in confidence throughout the course, this was evident in increased eye contact with Dance Artists and her peers, more involvement in social activities during breaks/lunch, and more willing to share ideas and thoughts towards the end of the course.

Overall, it appears that A has made significant progress in terms of increasing their confidence in their dance abilities. They have been displaying more assertiveness in choreography and performance settings and have been taking on more leadership roles in group numbers.

We have seen a massive boost in M's confidence. M came with an idea that the group decided to make a section in the sharing. M then led the group through this idea and worked out how to introduce creativity into mind mapping. He then visually set up the space. He had a vision and patiently led everyone else step by step through a process to get to his vision.

LM is in residential care and also struggles in school. She has been suspended and therefore she is being home-schooled. Since she doesn't have the support system of family and friends in her day-to-day life, coming to the YDance sessions allows a safe place for her to contribute ideas without a fear of judgement; to be respected and included."

J has grown in confidence throughout the weeks, and this was clear today in his desire to be an active part of the sharing, giving his ideas and putting these into practice.

"I took part for one year, three months. I have learned hip hop, jazz, contemporary and group tasks. It gives me good moves and people are nice here. I like to dance because it gives me courage."
Participant

Outcome 2: Young people develop their personal and physical skills

J has definitely shown increased skill when coming to PYT and shown real passion in creating short scenes and with generating ideas for a new show. J, G and C met and planned a new plot idea for the next performance outwith the sessions and then presented their ideas to the rest of the group.

We have had conversations together about the importance of committing to the process, collaboration and teamwork. The young people have gained many transferable skills such as planning, organising and listening to others and have been motivated to learn. 5 young people from the Theatre Lab team will gain their Dynamic Youth Awards and as part of this learning process were able to identify their goals and reflect on their learning journey and what they had achieved over the 10 weeks.

K had never danced before, but was keen to learn. She was very open to trying a variety of styles, and reporting gaining a love for contemporary dance due to the course. She is now attending one of our community sessions as part of the CB4C project.

Participants watched each other's creative work, often throughout the week. They would then reflect and analyse while noticing patterns and anomalies. They would also make use of previous knowledge while giving one another feedback.

AM has shown increased physical skills in terms of coordination, balance, and knowledge of style-based and creative movement. He had never tried dance before and was slightly apprehensive to start but despite his uncertainty, he has persisted with the sessions.

E contributes lots of music ideas in addition to staying behind very often to have a chat with me. She is performing in front of the class much more than what she used to and has liked making new friends.

Outcome 3: Young people's health and wellbeing improves

JA has autism and so he struggles to communicate with new people. The development in his communication skills and his confidence in YDance sessions has been outstanding. He also suffers with self-harming. I've noticed that he seems happier and more outgoing each week in the sessions. Therefore, I know that the joy these sessions bring must be making a positive difference in his mental health.

C has been vocal about his struggles with feeling down, but he has also acknowledged the positive impact Theatre Lab has on him and the way he feels. He is beginning to feel anxious about performing the sharing in front of an audience, however he has persevered through this, and I can't wait to see him perform next week

She becomes a whole new person. I can tell how passionate she is about dance. She has also been attending the gym much more since she started YDance. She tells me that she'd love to be a professional dancer one day.

MM showed an increase in cheerfulness, energy and respect during the sessions. Her improved well-being each week was clear to see.

TI often begins the session feeling quite low. You can see this in her facial expression, her body language and in the way she communicates. However, as soon as we start dancing, I see a transformation in her demeanour. I see her smiling; she carries herself with positive energy and enthusiasm.

SM lives with mental health difficulties and has stated that the YDance sessions really do help them to feel more positive and healthy.

Outcome 4: Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations)

Ch has been a member of the Theatre Lab group since the beginning, and as a result has gained skills that have led to him taking a leadership role in the group and coming up with his own games and tasks to work through in the session - with more confidence about leaving.

The pupils are mostly on "behaviour cards" which all teachers must complete in relation to their progress/behaviour in each class. The pupils and schoolteacher has relayed that the pupils' cards are much more positive since being part of the YDance sessions.

SM has told me that she wants to be a dance teacher when she grows up. Her passion for dance is clear to see and so she seems very happy in the sessions. The chat in the group is now about what they will do next.

JA managed to pass his PE qualification due to his time at YDance. He was so happy when he found out. He was very sad to hear that the project is ending and even suggested to put his pocket money towards bringing us back.

F talked about struggling to get up during the holidays in time for activities and said that she was making an extra effort for the course because it was so fun and she did not want to miss out on the opportunity. This is transferrable to other parts of her life.

The pupils have stated that they participate in more general school activities due to their increased confidence and skills. they also see YDance as an incentive to participate more across other class activities.

Outcome 5: Young people contribute positively to their communities

The guys are very open minded now more than ever, they are open to discussing difficult topics, to listening to each other even when they don't necessarily agree and are working together to problem solve.

Participants explored the theme of 'belonging'. They created some personal writing on this topic. They then used this writing as a stimulus to create movement. Therefore, they created new ways to express their lived experience- through movement, writing and discussion.

Although CK joined later than most of the participants, the group have rallied to help include him and get him up to speed with the content. He feels like he has always been here now due to this.

There is a definite sense of belonging in the group, this was heightened when participants received their CashBack for Change t-shirts. It gives them a new and positive identity where they have really pulled together.

C is always positive, energetic and willing to give things a go, traits which rub off on his peers and allow the whole group to give it a go and work together to create high quality material. C shares his thoughts and ideas which influence the drama sessions and the material created, and he is always able to reflect in depth on his own learning and development. He brings a brilliant energy and is a joy to work with.

I like it on Wednesday's because I know I'm coming here because instead of going home it gives me something to do and I like all the people here. It just makes gives me a boost.
Participant

Outcome 6: Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system

RA is a creative thinker and a calming and supportive influence in the group. He excelled at improvisation, coming up with ideas for scenes that were challenging and funny.

JL is the longest serving member of the group and has continued to develop his confidence and performance skills. He has been a real leader of the group from the very beginning, and been incredibly clear on how important the group is for him in terms of staying away from anti-social behaviour and how he is less likely to engage in that behaviour as he wants to be part of the group.

LH's behaviour has improved drastically. She used to disengage quickly and refuse to continue with the sessions, this is now a thing of the past. Her resilience has grown, and she now perseveres even when it seems difficult.

JB's behaviour has improved so much! On the first week he was one of the harder to reach young people. Now he is so much more engaged, well behaved, and motivated.

D has reflected on his behaviour where he was previously being reckless. Appreciating and acknowledging this and sorting it out with SPS Officer has made a big difference. He is really trying to make adjustments to his reactions to stressful moments in the space has been really noticeable.

"It's been one of the things I've looked forward to the most during the year I've been in here. It's really helped me get through it. Having something to look forward to every week and having that structure."
Participant

Feedback from Stakeholders

Stakeholders were invited to reflect on what difference it made, having dance and drama activities in their setting. Positive endorsement was received, along with support for doing more similar partnership work in future, if funding permits.

It has been recognised that the young people taking part in Ydance have had the opportunity to take part in a new learning experience that they would not get the opportunity in the community. The young people were supported to learn new dance moves improving their fine motor skills.

Several of the pupils were initially very unsure about participating, two of them in particular being very shy. However, they have really come out of their shell and are enthusiastically taking part, enjoying the sessions and have made new friends in the group.

Great to see young people accessing these courses through partnership working and young people will continue to get benefits from it from sustainable funding for YDance to deliver the course.

Young people participated in FREE dance! Something very uncommon in Perth, therefore it removed the financial barrier for some young people to attend. The dance leaders were hugely motivational, fun, inspiring and encouraging, we absolutely loved the sessions!

The YP at Kibble have really enjoyed the project. This is evident in the fact that they keep coming back! The girls are really thriving in lessons, not only their dance skills but their communication skills both with each other and their instructor. The tutor has built excellent relationships with all of the young people she has worked with.

This group has been a great and creative way for young people to learn about positive socialisation and feel respected. Great teamwork - thank you!

CASE STUDY

HIGHLIGHTS



Kibble Case Study



About Kibble

Kibble in Renfrewshire, provides a safe, secure and supportive environment to help young people through a period of crisis. The centre supports young people aged 12–18, providing residential care, education and ongoing support. They help highly vulnerable individuals to overcome past difficulties, open up future opportunities and positively re-engage with their communities. Young people are either referred by the Children's Hearing System or a court order. They often have a history of trauma and/or neglect. Due to their experiences, young people can display tendencies of self-harm, or harm to others.

About the Qualification in Dance Leadership and the Participants from Kibble

The programme engaged two young women, *Susie aged 15 and *Kate aged 17 who had previously participated in larger group sessions during year two of the programme. In response to their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn Susie and Kate were deemed to be appropriate and ready to take part in a Dance Leadership course. The fact that many of the young people in the secure unit are impacted by childhood trauma the staff are careful when organising groups and find that working with small numbers has more impact in terms of personal and social development. At the start, the course provides practical experience, periods of reflection and written work to explore and practice the skills and qualities that are required to become a good leader. At the end of the course, the girls complete three assessments where they have to work together to team teach a dance session (warm-ups, routines, cool-downs) to other participants. Whilst dance is the engagement activity they are assessed and given feedback on their teamwork, their confidence, their organisational skills and communication.

Context

Taking part in any programme is challenging when you already have circumstances in your life that affect your mood, behaviour and self-perception. In this case study, without disclosing too much about the individuals concerned, there was a known history of absconding, self-harm and an eating disorder.



An element of the leadership course focuses on the health benefits of exercise and diet along with the negative impact alcohol and drugs have. As part of the programme, the girls devise strategies to help their own lifestyle choices when it comes to what they eat, drink and exercise. As the sessions developed there was evidence of self-learning with the girls researching different healthy diets and tips on healthy living. A lot of the dance we do is fitness based and as a smoker, [one girl's] cardio has improved week on week.

Dance Worker

About the Dance Worker

The dance teacher from YDance has extensive experience of working in similar settings (secure accommodation, education or prison). In these circumstances participants understandably use the dance programmes as a means to get out of their rooms or cell. In this instance it was noted that the participants had cultivated a genuine passion for dance. The three hours a week dance session offers them a welcome respite from the pressure they are usually under.

Below are extracts from an interview with the Dance Worker on outcomes and progress:

Positive Destinations

The majority of the written work [in the leadership programme] refers to skills participants learn as part of the course and how they are transferable to other aspects of their life and relevant to an employability pathway. Participants explore circumstances that they may face when explaining to people how they work as a team, how they communicate, motivate and direct people when taking on a task. They detail the different aspects of communication: for example the use of verbal and nonverbal skills. Susie **secured a job in a kitchen**. Also **Kate was accepted on to a college course**. The leadership course gave them opportunities to reflect on what they were learning through dance training and learning leadership skills in dance that they would be able to transfer to these new contexts. It is clear that the process assisted in some way to motivation and ability to secure these positive destinations.

Young People Contribute Positively to their Communities

The girls are generally part of a 'restricted' community that puts limitations, rules and constructs around what is permitted, for the safety of the individuals. Here they can be part of a community of interest in dance that includes me as their teacher. But it goes beyond that. I hear them talking outside of the classes about meeting up to do positive activities together. The connection they've made also extends to the staff who attend their assessments and that's helped build positive relationship back the wider Kibble school community.

Diversion from Criminal and/or Anti-social Behaviour

Absconding has stopped for one of the girls, since getting involved in the Leadership programme. Recent chats have focussed on the future and getting a job. The level of engagement has matured. Previously, when asking the girls to make some simple decisions, for example choosing the music and a theme for a routine they wanted to teach it created a high levels of anxiety for the girls, as they couldn't handle having control over decision making. When I checked this out with the staff they confirmed that the girls life experience has been such that they have never been given the opportunity to influence many aspects of their lives so when they are given the chance to take control it is often too much for them to handle without support from staff.

GLASS Case Study

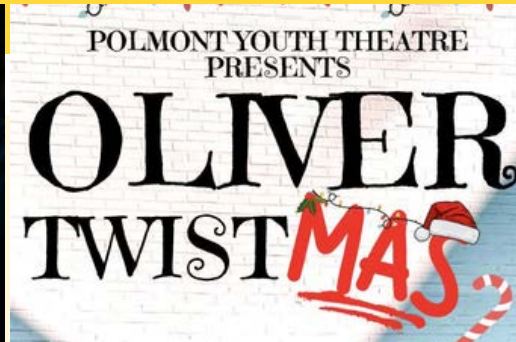
GLASS
ARTS

About GLASS

GLASS Performance is an award-winning Scottish arts organisation led by Jess Thorpe & Tashi Gore. It uses theatre arts techniques to work with young people in Polmont Young Offenders Institution. Watch [this film](#) which shows an earlier iteration of the Polmont Youth Theatre Company, currently funded by the CashBack for Change project. The project has already achieved awards earlier in phase 5 for a pioneering radio programme, which now has dedicated funding.



Images copyright of GLASS



About the Interviews

Interviews were carried out face to face with two males that have been regularly involved in the Polmont Youth Theatre. Below are extracts from the interviews, in the voices of the young men.

Interview A

Young male, aged 21. Serving five years for knife crime, assault and robbery. Has a father and three siblings. His mother died when he was aged 11.

Interview B

Young male, aged 20. Serving seven years for culpable homicide (4 months added for having a sim card). Has a father and three siblings. His mother died whilst serving his sentence.



Involvement in the programme has made me realise that sometimes I can come across as being overconfident and that is often my way of hiding my feelings. I have been able to use some of the skills I have learned like problem-solving and working in a team in other aspects of my life in here and when I get out it'll help me plan for the future. I am in a totally different place now and this has really helped me realise there's more to life than prison.

Interview A

Experiences of the GLASS Programme

When I got in here I signed up for as much stuff as possible and to start with my main reason for getting involved in this programme was to get out of my cell. But the more I got involved I realised the benefits of the programme like socialising with other lads in a safe environment and increasing my confidence. There are things I do now like share ideas and lead sessions that I never thought I'd do. (A)

To be honest I had no idea about it or what to expect. At the start it was about people coming together to chat, do some activities and have a laugh it was really good. That then developed into doing stuff to put on a performance for audiences and I really enjoyed it. (B)

Unique Qualities

This is different to other projects on offer here [in Polmont HMYOI] because this is more active there is loads of variety as it's different every week. You also get to talk things through, and people listen to your opinion. (A)

The workers [from GLASS] just create a different environment they really connect with the group and there are guys here that act in ways they'd never act outside of here, people thrive in here. This is one of the best things I do in here and I wouldn't stop coming. (B)

The Impact and Difference Made

It has opened my eyes to what's possible. I'd also say it's made me more resilient for example in here there's loads of testosterone flying about, and people would question why I got involved in a theatre programme. But instead of losing the nut and getting angry, I put it right back at them reminding them that they come to see the shows, so it can't be all bad. (B)

Due the distance from my home to here, the visits are virtual, and people have said I'm a lot calmer and don't go mental as much. The prison staff have also seen a difference. When I first came in, I'd take drugs all the time and get involved in fights. This programme has helped me become calmer and I haven't been in trouble for ages. (A)



I'd say I'm quite a confident person, but I definitely flourish when I am here. When it comes to the shows, I like to say my piece and I do a bit of directing and helping people and I've noticed I am doing more of that back in the hall. I like to have an input in things, and I enjoy seeing that I can have a positive impact on other people. I think a lot of that came from being a young carer [as I was for my Mum]. The confidence I have gained has helped me try new things and I've found out that I'm good a cutting hair so when I get out, I might do that.

Interview B

St. Philip's Case Study



About St Philip's

St Philip's in Airdrie is a School Care Accommodation provider supporting young people between the ages of 12 and 16 from across Scotland. The young people have experienced a range of adverse childhood experiences and have additional support needs. The school provides young people with a safe place to live, learn and develop alongside a group of caring, supportive and committed adults.

Below are extracts from an interview with a teacher, two female participants (aged 14 and 16) and one male (aged 14).

Interview with the Teacher

Many young people have issues with their confidence, particularly with trying new things. My involvement includes taking an active part in the sessions and participating in the classes. The environment of the sessions provides a great opportunity [for me as a teacher] to check in with the young people and see how things have gone over the week and pick up on any challenges they may face. This has helped strengthen my relationship with them. The impact of the sessions has been great. The young people really look forward with anticipation to [the YDance Teacher] coming in. They benefit from the consistency of the sessions and it gives them something to look forward to over the course of the week.

The Process

The facilitation of the sessions has helped the young people's confidence and developed their understanding of the benefits of working together, problem-solving, taking responsibility, building trust and overcoming challenges. For example, young people were involved in creating themed activities such as the Thriller Dance at Halloween. Young people get to choose their own music and work in groups to come up with their own dance. Some of the things they came up with included lifts that required high levels of individual and group trust.

The Benefits

The sessions take young people out of their comfort zone and through dance they are learning about themselves and how to positively interact with their peers and adults. The other huge benefit for the girls, in particular, is they don't get involved in PE. But through dance, they improve their physical and mental wellbeing. The positive experience is down to the relationship YDance has built with the young people. It's things like bringing them treats, treating them with respect and valuing them as individuals.



The young people we work with have experienced a whole spectrum of trauma and this has an impact on their confidence and sense of self. It is important to recognise that behavioural change takes time and the sustainability of the programmes YDance delivers needs to be supported..

Teacher

Interviews with Young People

Getting Involved

It was a chance to get out of class and give us something to do. It was also an opportunity to learn something new and although there are activities that let you socialise with young people from other classes and House Units this lets you mix with people during school time.

Unique Qualities

You experience a lot of change in here: different staff, social workers changing all the time and young people moving in and out. You won't survive here if you can't get used to those changes. The classes get you used to new people. It's a smaller group and it gives you an opportunity to get to know people a bit better. Also in my house, there are a lot of younger kids are less mature so it's good to be with people my own age. The fact it's dance-focused gives you a chance to get fit and have fun. There are not a lot of opportunities to show people what you've learned but in the classes, we get to do that through making up and performing dance routines and that helps you to be more confident. Its something that you look forward to.



There was a time when I injured my arm, and I could have got out of not going to the sessions, but I loved it so much that I still went along.

Female aged 14

Transferrable Skills

I used to take part in lots of group activities but when things fell apart in the home I stopped going. I was in different placements but still refused to get involved in things. Sessions like YDance have helped me get into things I stopped doing when I was 10 years old.



You need to pay attention to what the dance teacher is saying and what others are doing and then work out how you are going to work together. So it's helping with listening, following instructions, teamwork, being patient and problem-solving.

Female aged 16



The programme YDance has delivered has been brilliant. The young people have loved it and we are looking forward to working with them in the new term .

Head of Education

LESSONS

LEARNED



Lessons Learned

The report confirms throughout that both YDance and Glass Performance have delivered on the CashBack for Communities outcomes in year three, and throughout phase five. Delivering the project during the pandemic has meant that in year three the partners were finally able to carry out what their original intentions for year one. Nevertheless, it was different as so much has been learned through years one and two. For instance building relationships with stakeholders and more importantly forming important positive connections with young people benefiting from taking part.

Consequently 611 young people participated in year three and 1,164 engaged in the project over the full three year term. Importantly almost two-thirds (64%) of participants are from within the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland - the main priority for the funding. This is remarkable given that the results are skewed by the residential locations of Polmont Young Offenders Institution and the Alternative Education Units used in strands one and two.

The review of outcomes indicates that most of the outcome indicators were rated above the original targets. There were two exceptions. Those achieving a positive destination were below target by 16%. This is due to strand one participants being in custody where they do not necessarily have the freedom to move into training or a job. Albeit much of the anecdotal evidence confirms that the project has given them new hope and ways to plan for a new beginning when they are released from their sentence. Outcome six was also problematical throughout the programme as although strand one participants are serving a sentence for offending, they do not necessarily admit to it. Or they simply recognise that the opportunities to commit further offences or antisocial behaviour have been restricted as a consequence of being in custody. Likewise for young people in strand two that attend an alternative education centre, they are often there as a result of vulnerabilities which may not be related to crime or anti-social behaviour. Hence, the results should be read as a positive rather than a negative outcome of the project. Where participants acknowledged prior or current involvement in offending or antisocial behaviour, there was evidence that the dance and drama activities have caused them to rethink and reassess their behaviour.

Although this funding does not have creative outcomes as part of its criteria, there was evidence that the process of creative arts engagement has unique ways of engaging young people in being curious, opening their minds to new ideas and new ways of thinking, finding innovative solutions to problems and opening up their imaginations. It is clear from the feedback that creative processes are welcomed and appreciated by the participants and the stakeholders alike.

The case studies reiterate that regardless of the circumstances young people find themselves in, funding invested in projects like 'CashBack for Change' act as a catalyst for change. They bring experts into different institutions and community settings and open new doors for skills development, character building and for some being able to advance on to new levels of competence and achievement that would not otherwise be open to them.

Hence the dance and drama model of delivery used in this project have proved to be effective in bringing about a positive benefit to young people at risk. It is reassuring to the project providers that both GLASS and YDance have secured funding to advance different aspects of what was achieved and continue to build on the lessons learned. Much of the credit for success of the project is owed to the dedicated dance and drama workers that attend the activities and take a special interest in the young people they work with.



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