



DANCE TO HEALTH ON ONE PAGE

Dance to Health (www.dancetohealth.org) aims to be an effective falls prevention programme, offering older people the choice of a dance-based alternative to existing exercise-based programmes. It is run by Aesop.

Falls are traumatic for older people and a major challenge for the health system. They are the most frequent type of serious accident. Falls destroy confidence, increase isolation and reduce independence. They cost the NHS £2.3 billion per year.

Dance to Health began with a £350,000 pilot programme and the first UK older people's dance activities survey. Findings included:

- 90% of older people's dance groups are ongoing and regular and so have achieved financial sustainability.
- Dance to Health 'Dance Artists' (these are the programme session leaders) can be trained in the evidence-based programmes, PSI/FaME and Otago.
- PSI/FaME and Otago can be smuggled into creative, social, fun dance activity.
- Dance artists find the requirements artistically stimulating, not restrictive.
- Dance to Health was attractive to older people and had waiting lists.
- 73% of participants completed the final two programmes.
- Dance to Health can be associated with lower overall costs of managing falls.
- One PSI/FaME session and one Otago session were inspected for fidelity to the evidence-based programmes. Fidelity was confirmed.

A £2.3 million 'test and learn Phase 1' early roll-out has begun. Key elements are:

- A sustainable model consisting of: Improvement Programmes – dance versions of PSI/FaME and Otago commissioned by health ('treatment'); leading to Maintenance Programmes ('social prescribing'); leading to a growing family of sustainable Dance to Health groups ('health as a social movement').
- Health partners: ABM University Health Board (Swansea), Cheshire East Council, Active Norfolk/Norfolk County Council/ Norwich CCG, one NHS Vanguard (in Birmingham) and two other NHS CCGs (Oxfordshire and Sheffield).
- Dance partners (all Arts Council-funded and expert in working with older people): Birmingham Royal Ballet, Cheshire Dance, DanceEast, National Dance Company Wales, South East Dance and Yorkshire Dance.
- 'Dialogue partners': Age UK, Arts Council England, Arts Council Wales, Centre for Ageing Better, NHS England, NHS Horizons, NHS Improvement, One Dance UK, People Dancing, Public Health England, Social Prescribing Network, Sydney Medical School and University of Oxford Institute of Musculoskeletal Studies.
- Evaluation by Sheffield Hallam University Sport Industry Research Centre.
- Funders: Big Lottery, Nesta/DCMS, Ministry of Defence and four foundations.

Phase 1 will involve over 800 participants and 800 volunteers. It aims to show:

- Effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and fidelity to PSI/FaME and Otago.
- The case for Dance to Health to be commissioned by the health sector.
- With support, maintenance programmes can evolve within 12 months into self-run Dance to Health groups affiliated to Aesop.
- Strong demand from older people and the health sector.
- Dance to Health could be a national service.