

**Dance Network Association (dna) is searching for a**

**Board of Trustees**

Founded in 2015by CEO Gemma Wright, the **Dance Network Association** (**dna**) is a dance organisation that enables people to live more connected, joyful, and aspirational lives through dance. Dancing with **dna** provides opportunities for people to improve their confidence and physical wellbeing, nurtures creativity and independent thinking and enhances friendships through social interaction.

**dna** has built inclusive dance communities and provided access to those most underserved, including people on low income, older adults, school aged, people living in rural locations, and more generally, people in need of support for their physical and mental health and well-being. Examples include: our innovative early years programme in Barking and Dagenham (an area of multiple deprivation) in which we deliver dance to teachers and families; our Dancing with Parkinson’s programme provides access to movement classes for people living with this degenerative condition; and our Youth Dance Companies enable those at the start of their dancing careers to develop their talent and perform. Alongside community and participative activities, we help to train the next generation of dance teachers and freelance artists.

In our strategic plan, wedetail our ambitions as we move forward for the next 5 years, to increase people’s health and well-being through dance in the east of England.

**The Organisation:**

As part of the five-year vision, our first significant step is to change our organisational structure from a Community Interest Company (CIC) to a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO). As a CIC project-funded organisation, we are reliant on projects to cover core costs.

With the support of a newly-created board, we will achieve wider growth and the further development of our services. The change will offer us more financial stability, as well as receive charitable donations (to attract Gift Aid).

As part of our vision, we will be looking for a more robust financial management cycle which will inevitably help us to sustain our core staff, enhance project grants from other trusts and foundations, and build on our strong strategic position nationally.

As an organisation, we are administratively based at the Mercury Theatre in Colchester but our work lives and is delivered in communities across Essex.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has been a difficult period for **dna**, we remain in a strong position to go forward with confidence, thanks to the resilience of our experienced team. For example, despite the barriers associated in accessing care homes and residents’ relative isolation, **dna** is well-positioned to deliver key programmes, partnering with other health services to meet much-needed gaps in community support.

The pandemic has meant that we have had to quickly pivot our services to online platforms and find other ways to stay connected with our communities, for instance through sending out creative postcards and DVDs. We anticipate that some of these new methods of delivery will continue post-COVID-19, to ensure we carry on leading the dance for health conversation in Essex. As such, early in our next five-year vision, we will continue to test and develop new ways of working, making more use of technology and those ideas that came about during the pandemic, to ensure our sustainability as an organisation. Positive outcomes from this and other best practice will be rolled out across our county-wide projects and shared with other organisations nationally to raise the profile of our work.

We will continue to expand our workforce by recruiting new, on-the-ground co-ordinators in different districts across the county who can connect with their local communities. This will increase our engagement and ultimately the wellbeing of the people of Essex.

In our five-year activity plan, we have expressed that we will focus and engage with one area of Essex county per year, and year-on-year develop and build on these relationships. The aim is to increase participation numbers in dance across the whole of the county and move towards representing the east of England as a whole.

At **dna**, we believe our projects are ambitious and valued at the forefront of innovation and collaboration. They generate a creative and cultural environment for all. No other organisations such as ours delivers this kind of work in Essex. Despite historically operating a county dance agency (Essex Dance, and later the merger of Essex Dance and Herts Dance to form dancedigital), Essex has been a cold spot for dance. Since 2015 and the closure of dancedigital, Dance Network Association has filled this provision, especially offering dance experiences to older people as well as those at risk of isolation and/or poor health.

We now offer an array of dance programmes reaching people of all ages and abilities. **dna** currently connects with approx. 30,000 people every year across Essex and our neighbouring counties, and is a leader of the market share for dance for health and wellbeing in the county.

**Who we are looking for:**

To enable the first step in our plans, we are seeking a voluntary board of trustees to help us with the structural change to the organisation’s governance. You will join our current board, alongside Gemma Wright (CEO and Founder of **dna)** and Elsa Urmston.

Long term, we are keen to house a diverse board of five to eight trustees in total that bring a wealth of knowledge to the organisation and support us with our ambitious objectives. Currently we seek two trustees to fulfil the roles of Treasurer and Secretary. However, if the roles of Treasurer or Secretary are not for you but you would be interested in investing your time over the next 5 years as a trustee, please do still apply.

**We want people who:**

* Have a particular interest and knowledge of community dance, educational dance, physical activity, health, and the NHS and particularly those with a legal and HR background.
* Are able to implement governance.
* Have experience as a trustee of another organisation or charity.
* Can advocate for the organisation’s work to support us to raise our profile.
* Are willing to offer information.
* Have strengths in fundraising and writing funding applications.
* Have financial planning and management experience.
* Have integrity and objectivity, are open and willing to be accountable.
* Can demonstrate a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
* May have experience of changing company status from a CIC to a charity.

We want the board to be representative of the communities we serve and to reflect a wide range of views and life experiences. We are particularly interested in hearing from you if you can answer yes to one or more of the following:

* Are you an ‘older’ adult with an interest in dancing?
* Are you Black, Asian or consider yourself to be from another minority ethnic group?
* Do you have a physical or learning disability?
* Do you consider yourself to be working class or from a working-class background?
* Are you LGBTQI+ or do you consider yourself to be part of a marginalised group?

**What is the commitment?**

Initially, we envisage two members to join our board as the Treasurer and Secretary. These two people will be in place for a commitment of at least two years to help support the structural change of the organisation from CIC to CIO. We would like these people in place as soon as possible to ideally make this change before our new financial year in August 2022.

If you are interested in becoming a trustee but these roles are not for you, please do apply. Please be explicit that you would not like a role as **Treasurer** or **Secretary,** but tell us what skills you can bring that can help us achieve our ambitions. Once you have applied, you will be asked to an interview with both Gemma and Elsa.

The board are expected to meet for a minimum of four meetings per year. Meetings will be approximately two hours in length; one of these meetings may include an away day for more strategic conversations and last up to 8 hours over the course of the day. This will be discussed with you prior to dates being put in place to ensure this is possible for all. In general, some preparation time will be necessary in advance of the meetings to read background papers and other associated information. You will also be invited to attend **dna’s** sessions and/or performances from time to time to help celebrate and experience the work first-hand. We would also expect the board to provide times outside of these meetings in which they would be available to be able to support with fundraising opportunities and other key documents which require advisory skills which will be discussed with you.

Meetings will be held over Zoom or at a venue in Colchester, Essex.

While the role is voluntary, we can offer reasonable expenses. Please speak with us further if you wish to claim expenses.

**How to apply & deadline:**

Please email Gemma Wrightwith the reference **‘Board Application’** in the subject line,outlining:

* why you would like to join **dna’s** board.
* which role you are applying for – Treasurer, Secretary or other.
* what skills and experience you feel would be relevant to the role.
* an up-to-date CV or summary of recent work experience.
* we would also like to hear about the time you would be willing to offer alongside the meetings (i.e 1 hour a month). If your time is limited, please do let us know.
* Please fill out the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form 2022 and attach this to the email.

If you have concerns around accessibility or have other questions before applying, please contact Gemma for a confidential, informal conversation.

Email: gemma@dancenetworkassociation.org.uk

**Please note you will receive an ‘out of office’ notice from this email account as Gemma is currently on Maternity Leave – please ignore this, your email will be picked up on closing.**

The deadline for applications is **5pm, Monday 9 May 2022**

Online interviews with dna’s current board will take place in the evenings and you will be invited to attend a date in late May early June 2022. If you have any access requirements for interview, please let us know.

We are also keen for you to see and experience our work. If you would like to attend as class, please do get in touch.

Successful applications are subject to a 6-month review to ascertain suitability of the role, after which positions are confirmed on a permanent basis or terminated.