

## Who we are



Care to Dance is a social enterprise, led by qualified social workers and dancers, that supports hundreds of care-experienced young people across England through trauma-informed dance communities. We give them a sense of belonging, freedom and connection, a space where they feel safe, supported and can develop relationships built on trust so they have people to turn to. We provide the stability and consistency they likely missed growing up, and find creative ways to help them process their experiences. As their self-belief grows and mental health improves, we equip them with both the attitude and skills they need to overcome challenges, we find them opportunities to develop and show them what they can achieve.

By engaging with these young people through a trauma-informed lens, we can begin to break the cycle of exclusion and instead create spaces where they feel seen, heard, and safe. This is how we move towards a more equitable society, one where every young person, regardless of their past, has the opportunity to belong, to grow, and to flourish.

We focus on three key things to help achieve our mission  
**unique programmes, relationships and skill development**

### 1 Unique programmes

By bringing together a unique combination of social work and dance expertise, and by taking a trauma-informed approach, we provide tailored workshops to meet the needs of each individual young person - both mentally and physically.

We take responsibility for ensuring they stay engaged in the programme, checking in on them outside of classes and working with other professionals and adults in their life to take a holistic approach.

And we offer a range of programmes to match their needs and motivations - from fun and relaxed to more challenging dance skill.

### 2 Relationships

We provide safe, inclusive spaces where young people can build relationships and feel a real sense of belonging. A place they can come to be completely themselves, and where they can come to for support. We invest in building 1-1 relationships with our young people inside and outside of classes, check-in if we think they might be struggling and use our social work skills to best support them.

We hold social and celebration events and that help them bond with us and each other, that celebrate their achievements and ensure they feel valued. By improving their social skills and building new friendships, we aim to reverse the isolation they might have experienced and grow their support network.



### 3 Skill development

We support young people to develop new skills, not just in dance but a range of other transferable leadership and communication skills.

This includes finding them work experience opportunities and connecting them with organisations who can help them develop, as well as showing them that they can overcome challenges they face and help develop their mental resilience. We also support many of our young people to complete Dance Leadership qualifications and are proud to have been awarded Centre of Excellence status by the Leadership Skills Foundation in recognition of this.

By helping our young people achieve goals and taking a gradual, step by step approach, we build their confidence and show them what they are capable of achieving.



### More than a movement: dance as a voice for change

This year our ambassadors from 10 different Care to Dance programmes across the country stood together, many of them meeting for the first time, to perform and speak in front of over 500 future social workers at the Frontline Summer Institute. Their shared love of dance and lived experience became a powerful bridge, connecting student social workers with the voices, stories, and realities of those they'll go on to support.

Together, our ambassadors co-created a powerful video, delivered a moving performance, and one young person gave a moving speech that brought the entire room to its feet in a standing ovation. These weren't just performances, they were acts of advocacy.

At Care to Dance, we believe dance is far more than performance, it's a language. A way to express identity, process experience, and communicate meaning without words. In a world that doesn't always listen, dance offers young people a platform to be seen, heard and felt. Creating safe, creative spaces is essential to nurturing leadership. When young people are supported to thrive, they develop the confidence to step into their power, not just as performers, but as leaders, advocates, and changemakers. What we witnessed at the Summer Institute was a living example of this. Our ambassadors didn't just dance; they led. They shared insight, challenge, and hope with a profession that has shaped many of their lives.

Their courage moved people deeply: "Their words will stay with me for a long time and spur me on to be the best social worker I can be." This is system change. This is community. This is what happens when we create spaces where young people are not only safe, but trusted, empowered, and celebrated.

**"So here's what I ask of you, not just as professionals, but as people. Don't promise things you can't keep. We remember every word. Don't disappear without a goodbye. That kind of silence speaks louder than you think. Listen to us, not just with your ears, but with your hearts. Ask us what we want, not just what the system says we need. See us as people, not problems. You have power, real power. You can be the one safe adult in someone's entire world. Don't waste that. It may be too late for me to fully rebuild my trust in the system, but it's not too late for the next kid who's still waiting for someone to believe in them. Please be better for them. They deserve it."**

**Scarlet, ambassador and dance teaching assistant**