

1. Introduction – National Dance Company Wales

Fulfilling our responsibility as the national company for dance, at NDCWales **we aim to produce great work** that compares with the world's finest, acting as a strong advocate for dance and the arts in Wales. In doing that **we show the world what modern Wales is** – a nation of cultural excellence and diversity as we innovate to push the boundaries of what can be imagined on stages across the world.

In Wales we **open up opportunities for people** to express their lives and values through dance, with societal and health benefits for mind and body growing a **happier, healthier nation for future generations**. To achieve this, we work in every corner of Wales, from small towns to the cities, working flexibly with partners in their communities to **bring dance to people in their own neighbourhoods** across the nation.

In a time of increasing international tension and insularity, we aim to reflect modern Wales. We're an open and inclusive company of people from **many nations and backgrounds**, working with Welsh people and communities in Wales and looking outwards, representing Wales's values of openness and tolerance overseas.

As a Company which earns income from touring extensively internationally, the shift in relationships with partners in **EU countries through Brexit** has been profound. Some EU countries are less willing to book a UK-based company, it takes longer to plan and administer our tours, and there are substantial additional costs.

2. Committee questions:

- a) The impact of the new relationship on artists and creative workers
Dance companies have international groups of artists at their heart. NDCWales has been proudly internationalist in its search for talent, having had, over the past five years, dancers from Wales, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Australia and Singapore, with choreographers from Wales, Spain, Greece, Germany, Ireland, and South Korea. Of particular concern, as artist mobility has become more restricted, is the fall in the number of dancers applying for roles who hold EU passports and the outward flow of European dancers who aren't staying in the UK. This challenges our aim of ensuring that we are a company where the diverse and varied experience of multiple nations comes together in a meeting of talent and different dance cultures. That is part of our reputation, and why we are successful in securing international touring and collaborations.
- b) The impact of new trading arrangements relating to cultural activity
When Wales' arts companies work internationally, by collaborating with others, or in taking their work overseas, they can represent Wales and form a powerful sense of a modern nation, communicating our values as a place where culture matters, and where we seek to engage with people beyond our borders. The increased costs and complexity of working in Europe has diminished the ability to represent Wales in this way, as organisations make choices to avoid countries where there are added, or perceived, barriers to working.

Organisations like NDCWales have lost significant income due to Brexit. There is greater reluctance on the part of many EU-based promoters to book UK-based companies (partly due to fear of travel complications), and our costs are higher due to the added costs of touring. These costs relate to work permit requirements in some countries for certain types of arts workers; the new haulage or ‘cabotage’ rules and costs, and the need for additional time to travel via ports. In addition, the extra time resource needed to manage the process of working in the EU and with EU-based presenters reduces both the profitability and benefit of that work.

- c) The availability of guidance and support for the sector relating to the new relationship between the UK and EU

Our industry lead bodies in the performing arts have some, but limited, capacity to provide information and intelligence on the practical implications of working with EU-based partners and artists. The network Arts Infopoint UK makes a useful contribution to the dissemination of information and advice and the Arts Council of Wales’s and Wales Arts International’s leadership in that is welcome. Whilst we now have a better understanding of the framework we need to work within, there are many new and emerging artists and companies who won’t yet have experienced the complexity of what is required. The need for clear guidance and support remains paramount to the longer-term prospect of regaining lost ground and lost income.

- d) The impact on access to funding programmes and networks

The inability to apply for Creative Europe funding (a resource which could have been left open for the UK had a different path been taken) has significantly diminished partnership working. UK dance companies have, in the past been part of networks of companies, festivals and agencies which have shared work (thereby reducing cost and climate impact), explored new ways of working (championing innovation) and created inter-cultural exchange and understanding. Whilst many European centred networks remain open and committed to UK members, Aerowaves for example in the dance field, the opportunities to build tangible, progressive collaborations out of those connections is far harder to achieve. There would be widespread support for any attempt to get the UK back into Creative Europe in the same way as has been achieved with Horizon Europe and we would urge this be considered.

- e) Any changes or improvements needed for cross-border working

As we navigate the shift in international relationships, and adopt ways of working which take into account the demands of climate justice, collective learning and sharing of knowledge and experience would be useful both within the sector and beyond, where there are many industries seeking to work more effectively post-Brexit. Investment in knowledge and expertise would be especially helpful, so that we have local centres of expertise to call on.