

An Evaluation of the Elders' Dance Company Programme – Phase 2



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Figure 1 – The Elders’ Dance Company



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Executive Summary

In January to March 2020, the Elders' Dance Company programme was delivered as a pilot programme. This pilot contemporary dance programme was funded by Northamptonshire Community Foundation and was for people aged 65 years and over. Dancemind facilitated and organised the programme, working in partnership with AGE UK Northamptonshire and the local theatre (the Royal and Derngate), which was the venue for the weekly dance sessions. The programme was evaluated to answer the following question: *What is the impact of a 10-week contemporary dance programme on participating individuals over the age of 65 years?* Findings revealed that there were not only the physical and cognitive benefits associated with the practice of dance, but also psycho-social elements that appeared to be just as important to the dancers. Being active and creative within the group appeared to promote positive feelings and indeed, relationships. Belonging to this 'exclusive' group had an observed psychological and social benefit. Furthermore, future ambitions shared by the dancers included performing within the community for the benefit of others ([click link for full report](#)).

Unfortunately, the pilot programme was cut short in March 2020 with the start of the first National lockdown, because of the coronavirus pandemic. However, due to the popularity and success of the pilot programme, Dancemind secured funding from Northampton Borough Council – small projects grant for a further 8-weeks (Phase 2), starting on 20th May 2021. The dance sessions were hosted again by the Royal and Derngate but with a smaller number of eight (8) dancers in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Aim

Continuing from the pilot programme, phase 2 evaluation aimed to answer the following question:

What is the impact of a contemporary dance programme on participating individuals over the age of 65 years?

Methods

The following methods were used:

Weekly diary entries

- Two (2) dancers completed weekly diary entries which were emailed to the researcher. Dancers were asked to share their reflections on each weekly dance session.

One to one semi-structured interviews

- Four (4) dancers participated in one-to-one online video interviews. The interviews followed a semi-structured schedule which addressed the research question.

Key Findings

Age is more than a number

In addition to the physical benefits of dancing in the weekly sessions, dancers also found that the commonality of age contributed to a non-judgemental and unintimidating environment in which they could comfortably enjoy the social and creative process. For the dancers interviewed, there is a sense that the Elders' Dance company leads to reminiscing and re-connections with dance from their childhoods, a chance to dance again, and to experience the enjoyment they fondly remember.

A friendly bunch

The social element of the dance group remains a highly important part of the Dancers' experiences. This was highlighted even further in phase 2 when returning from the 3rd national lockdown. Whilst dancers were apprehensive about COVID-19 and the imposed restrictions, which meant the weekly dance sessions were a different experience to the pilot programme, there was still a very clear sense that being part of the dance group and the friendships formed and continuing to grow were extremely valued by the dancers. The dancers hope that once it is permitted, the time to chat at the end of the dance sessions can be resumed.

'It lifts my spirit'

Following on from the pilot programme's finding of the dancers' love of dance, the dancers discussed how they experience the dance sessions as a way to escape all that the real world is throwing at them. It's a way to relax and forget, almost meditative. Furthermore, one can dance

anywhere and often dancers engage in the routines and warm-ups at home because they enjoy the feelings that dance ignites in their mind and body.

Learning: Contemporary dance routines and things about yourself

Learning contemporary dance routines is challenging to the dancers and they notice the difference between this dance style and others that they have participated in. The dancers see this cognitive challenge as a positive element of the dance group and suggest that a video of the dance routine can be produced at the beginning of the next phase so that they can practice the routine between sessions. The dance sessions also led to several dancers surprisingly learning more about themselves, often bemused about this new understanding of themselves. Certainly, the Elders' dance programme supports development as a life-long process.

Conclusion

This evaluation of phase 2 extends from the pilot programme findings and further supports the positive impact that a contemporary dance programme has on individuals of 65 years and over. It is perhaps even more prominent in this 2nd phase when the nation was emerging from a long lockdown where many had experienced social isolation, loneliness and limited physical activity. The Elders' dance group offers a friendly environment where dancers are of similar ages and come together to share in the experience and enjoyment of dance. It is uplifting whilst being cognitively challenging. The weekly sessions are a reason to get out of the house and offer a way to escape daily realities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that this programme continues, to allow for the dancers to continue friendships and build upon the physical and cognitive skills and opportunities that this programme offers. It is recommended that further groups could be created at the local level through a targeted marketing campaign which reaches individuals over the age of 65 years.

Local and/or online dance performances by the Elders' Dance group should continue to be a future ambition as the group develops and grows.

Once it is considered appropriate, half an hour extra for refreshments and chat at the end of the weekly dance sessions would be welcomed by the current Elders' Dancers.

Further evaluation and research continues to explore the benefits and values of contemporary dance programmes for older people.

Figure 2 – The Elders' Dance Company, partner work



1 Introduction and aims

1.1 Background

COVID-19 has shocked the world. It has affected us all and according to the Centre for Ageing Better (2020), the pandemic has reached far beyond infection and mortality. Age UK (2020) reported that many older people have observed a deterioration in their health due to the national lockdowns, which have led to isolation and a reduction in social interactions and physical activity. One in three older people report having less energy than before the pandemic, one in four older people are unable to walk as far as pre-pandemic and one in five reported feeling less steady on their feet (Age UK, 2020).

Further, the pandemic has shone a spotlight on a key public health question in contemporary western societies: how do we live healthier lives for longer (Alessi & Rashbrook, 2016)? According to the Centre for Ageing Better (2019), more than half of all people over the age of 65 years in the UK have at least 2 chronic health conditions. As the ageing population continues to grow, this results in an enormous strain on the NHS as well as care services and public spending. There are vast disparities across regions in the UK, with life expectancies and healthy life expectancies varying greatly (Public Health England, PHE, 2019). In Northamptonshire, between 2015-2017 life expectancy at 65 for a female was 20.9 years and healthy life expectancy at 65 for a female was 9.9 years (10 years in poorer health) (PHE, 2019). To improve quality of life in later years, public health messages focus on changing lifestyles to include stopping smoking, reducing alcohol consumption, improving diet and increasing physical activity (Alessi & Rashbrook, 2016). In 2019, the UK Chief Medical Officers' published updated physical activity guidelines which reports that physical activity for adults offers protection from chronic diseases such as diabetes type 2, coronary heart disease, mental health problems and social isolation. For older adults over 65 years, the guidelines recommend 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week with some weight bearing exercise to help maintain bone health (Department of Health and Social Care, 2019). Indeed, the current public health challenge appears to be how to tackle the increasingly sedentary lifestyles, with the overall message being that some activity is better than none.

According to Connolly and Redding (2010), dance can have many positive effects on an older person's physical and psychological wellbeing as well as the social benefits of being part of a dance group. Despite the small amount of research conducted into dance for older people, there is evidence to suggest that many forms of dance can improve physiological functioning such as balance, gait and muscle strength (Keogh *et al.* 2009) and psychological wellbeing such as enhancing mood, lowering anxiety and increasing social interaction (Connolly & Redding, 2010). Furthermore, Fancourt and Finn (2019) reported that dance is an activity that can reduce the risk of falling in later life and has the potential to reduce the fear of falling in older adults. Whilst dance styles such as social and aerobic dance have received greater

research attention, contemporary dance for older adults is lagging (Connolly & Redding, 2010).

Guss-West and Jenkins (2019) acknowledge that the benefits of dance to physical health are now widely known but further benefits such as improving communication through social and creative cohesion can be just as important to the health and wellbeing of the individual. Engagement at a physical, social and creative level can contribute to improved health and wellbeing and that dance can be used effectively in the prevention, treatment and management of mental and physical illness (Guss-West and Jenkins, 2019). Like 'health', wellbeing is a concept with a broad definition but generally, it is referred to in terms of hedonic (pleasure, happiness) and eudaimonic (life satisfaction, self-actualisation). For this qualitative evaluation of the Elders' Dance programme, the understanding of wellbeing as 'a positive state shaped by subjective feelings as well as social experiences' (Daykin *et al.* 2020, p. 1) will be applied.

From the Elders' Dance pilot programme findings and the existing literature, dance has the potential to positively impact on many areas of an older adult's life and increase activity levels through an enjoyable and supportive environment. Therefore, it is important that the Elders' Dance programme continues to be evaluated to explore the impact it has on the participating individuals. There continues to be potential to develop this programme locally and nationally in the future as more information is gathered from ongoing evaluations and as the Elders' Dance company increases in recognition.

1.2 Evaluation aims

The aim of this study was to evaluate phase 2 of the Elders' Dance Company 8-week programme for people aged over 65 years. The dance programme was provided by a local organisation (Dancemind) – Dancemind is a dance and health organisation promoting health and wellbeing through dance, movement and collaborative arts.

AIM: To continue to evaluate and capture the impact of a contemporary dance programme on people over the age of 65 years.

Research question: What is the impact of a contemporary dance programme on participating individuals over the age of 65 years?

2 Methods

To answer the question - What is the impact of a contemporary dance programme on participating individuals over the age of 65 years?

- Participants were asked if they would like to participate in an online one-to-one interview. Four (4) dancers participated in semi-structured interviews which were conducted between weeks 5 and 7 via Blackboard Collaborate (a real-time video conferencing tool) and were recorded securely. Interview data was transcribed and analysed by the researcher.
- Participants were asked if they would like to write a weekly diary entry via email. Two (2) dancers participated and the content of the diary entry emails were copied and pasted into a secure document. This data was analysed by the researcher.

2.1 Online one-to-one semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted between weeks 5 and 7 of the 8-week dance programme. Due to COVID-19, the interviews were completed online using Blackboard Collaborate. The 4 interviews varied in duration from 39 to 46 minutes. The interview schedule was developed to explore the experiences of the Elders' dancers, their perceptions of the programme and the impact it has had on them. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and analysed by the researcher.

2.2 Weekly diary entries

Two dancers volunteered to complete diary entries by email. One dancer completed diary entries every week and the second dancer completed three entries in total. Once received, the contents of the emails were copied and pasted into a secure word document and the emails then deleted. The instructions were to reflect upon the weekly dance session and a template was supplied for dancers if they required prompts for content – again, exploring their experiences and their perceptions of the programme. The diary entry data was analysed alongside the interview data.

2.3 Ethical considerations

Consent was obtained and recorded for all dancers by way of a written consent form sent via email (again, due to COVID-19). To inform the dancers about what was being asked of them, an information sheet was emailed to each dancer before gaining consent. This allowed each dancer time to comprehend the information and make an informed choice. Dancers were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time up to the final weekly dance session, without affecting their attendance or experience of the dance programme.

The consent form requested permission to audiotape the one-to-one interview. Once the research was completed, the audio recordings will be permanently deleted. Data collected was anonymised. However, all dancers gave verbal consent for photos and videos taken by

the dance organisation (Dancemind) to be used for marketing and promotion purposes. Ethical approval to conduct this evaluation was gained from the Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology Research Ethics Committee, University of Northampton (May 2021).

2.4 Dancer demographics and recruitment

Dancers were recruited for this 2nd phase of 8-weeks through the Royal and Derngate theatre, where the weekly dance sessions took place, under strict COVID-19 guidelines. The participating dancers were all aged over 65 years but not considered a vulnerable population. Criteria for participating remained the same as the pilot programme - over 65 years and can move independently. Eleven (11) dancers attended the first week of the programme. Three of the dancers did not continue, 2 for reasons unknown and the third participant felt that the content was very similar to another class they attended. The final number of dancers in attendance was 8. Six of those dancers had participated in the pilot programme and 2 were new to the Elders' Dance company. Table 1 below shows gender, age and health notes of the final 8 dancers. These details were recorded at registration by the Royal and Derngate. No further demographic details were requested.

Table 1 – Dancer Demographics

	Male/Female	Age (at registering)	Health Notes
Dancer 1	Male	82	No health conditions.
Dancer 2	Female	65	Hay fever, anxiety, glaucoma, hearing impairment.
Dancer 3	Female	77	Very occasionally can faint if standing up for too long, migraines.
Dancer 4	Female	76	Slight hearing loss in left ear. Tinnitus. Hypertension. Cholesterol.
Dancer 5	Female	87	Anxiety. Hearing problem.
Dancer 6	Female	74	Left knee oblique tear, posterior horn – horizontal and lateral. No arch in left foot. IC.
Dancer 7	Female	69	Allergy medications taken. Irregular heartbeat.
Dancer 8	Female	67	Hay fever. Back pain from previous injury.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews and weekly diary entries were analysed using thematic analysis, following the six stages outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021): data familiarization; data coding; initial theme generation; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining and naming themes; writing up thematic analysis.

Figure 3 – The Elders’ Dance Company rehearsing



3 Research Findings

This section presents the findings from the online one-to-one interviews and the weekly diary entries. Four themes were generated from the data: Age is more than a number; a friendly bunch; 'it lifts my spirit'; learning: contemporary dance routines and things about yourself.

3.1 Age is more than a number

Following on from the pilot programme findings, the dancers continue to observe the physical benefits of the dance programme. One dancer who was suffering with sciatica found that the warm up exercises were more effective, and less painful than exercises provided by a physiotherapist.

"I've been doing the warm ups throughout the day for 10-15 minutes at a time - these are making me feel better in myself than just walking (I often get pins & needles from the sciatica) and physio exercises that hurt!" (Elders' Dancer, weekly diary entry).

Further physical enhancements reported were that of feeling more mobile, flexible and energised. "I just feel like I'm more able to move and more flexible..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 1), "...when you've done an hour of that (Elders' dance group), it energises you..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 4).

The fact that the dance group is for a certain age cohort means that the dancers feel comfortable in the weekly sessions. This shared commonality of age contributes to an environment that feels free from judgement, intimidation and competition.

"...going to this dance, it's like, we're all of the same age, none of us competing..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 1) "...I'm really glad I found a class that you can just go to and you don't feel out of it, because it's (Elders' Dance company) all older people, yeah that's one of the nicest things..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 4).

The Elders' Dance Company offers the opportunity for a group of people of a certain age to come together to share in the experience of contemporary dance. One dancer emphasized that this genre of dance is particularly beneficial to this age cohort and felt that the dance group has the potential to expand with targeted marketing at the over 65's.

"I think it's (Elders' dance group) very, very needed and I think it's a good thing. I think contemporary dance is a good medium for this kind of activity for this age range, for any age but particularly for this age range...I know that they (people over 65 years who enjoy dance) exist in my small little bubble and in a bigger bubble there must be loads more out there so they're there, it's just getting to them." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 2).

Further, there is a sense that the Elders' Dance Company is an opportunity for the dancers to reminisce and to re-connect with their childhood experiences of dance. The four dancers who participated in the interviews spoke about their childhood memories of dance classes. Time passes so quickly but dance has the power to transport oneself back to a younger age. The ageing body does not represent the internal person.

"...it (Elders' Dance Company) is very good for older people, for their wellbeing. I think it is very good for that, socially, physically and mentally because you forget that when you get older, inside you don't think you're any different, you know, you don't feel any different and of course, when you get in a group like that with people of the same age, so you don't feel intimidated, then you might as well be 7 years old again [laughs]"
(Elders' Dancer, Interview 4).

One dancer explicitly spoke about time and that as she ages, she becomes aware of having less time to do the things that she has always wanted to do, "...I suppose you think you haven't got a lot of time left as well [laughs]. You probably think you're running out of time, so you think 'well, I've always wanted to do this'..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 4). Motivations for joining the Elders' Dance Company varied but there is a shared commonality of grasping the opportunity before it is too late; that our ageing physical bodies are a reminder of our mortal lives. One dancer was fulfilling her late husband's request for her to live her life to the full, "...since losing my husband, one of his, one of the last things he said, 'now don't go sitting in a corner and moping when I'm gone, yes, go out and do things, join things', so I did." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 3).

3.2 A friendly bunch

The social element of the Elders' Dance Company continues to be an important part of the programme. The 2nd phase of the dance programme commenced as the country emerged from a 3rd, long lockdown. The dancers were keen to re-commence and despite some anxieties more generally about COVID-19, most were extremely pleased to get out of the house and be socially active again. "...I joined the dance group. I thought, yeah it gets me out, meeting people, it's a reason to get the lipstick on and go out the door..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 3).

For those dancers who had started with the pilot programme, this 2nd phase was a different experience with the face masks and social distancing. As the weeks progressed, Tina and Lucy (Elders' Dance company facilitators) tried out various ways for dancers to enjoy the creative process with mirror work and improvisation. However, dancers also noted that the half an hour for refreshments and chat after the sessions in the pilot programme was missed by the dancers in the 2nd phase.

“...it (phase 2) was a bit different because obviously because of COVID, we’re suddenly wearing masks and having to wait outside, and we haven’t got that bit at the end which, the chat at the end is actually quite important if you want to interact with other people.” (Elders’ Dancer, Interview 2).

Several of the original dancers did meet for coffee in a local cafe after some of the dance sessions, but this was not the same as staying in the dance venue to chat directly afterwards. One dancer felt that the new members of the group were disadvantaged by the absence of the time to chat after the session.

“...meeting up afterwards. Yeah. So, I’ve put the invitation out to people, but I don’t think the new ones saw that as any part of what we were doing whereas last time (pilot programme), for us, it (coffee and chat) was a part of it (weekly session).” (Elders’ Dancer, Interview 1).

Following on from the pilot programme, the theme of group cohesion and belonging continues to be meaningful in the dancers’ accounts of their experiences. One dancer explained that she was a naturally shy person and that the Elders’ dance company has helped her with her shyness and pushed her out of her comfort zone. Again, a picture emerges of a group of people coming together to share in the experience of dance.

“...I think, at the beginning, I was shy and not terribly good at mixing in with people but I try, I do try and I talk to people and they’re a friendly bunch and the more times I’ve met people the more I’m able to talk to people and yes, I don’t know how much we share in any other interests but we share this dancing...” (Elders’ Dancer, Interview 3).

Another dancer commented on the enjoyment of being part of the group and observed the positive effects it was having on another member of the group.

“I enjoyed feeling part of the group and relaxed into the session realising that we are all doing our own thing - I noticed one lady looking far more positive and outgoing than I’ve seen before.” (Elders’ Dancer, weekly diary entry).

A reflection from a weekly diary entry poignantly captures how appreciative the dancers are to be part of this dance group when first emerging from a global pandemic, “Overall, it’s good that I have this (Elders’ Dance session) to go to each week as I lead a pretty solitary life, all the more so with the pandemic.” (Elders’ Dancer, weekly diary entry).

3.3 'It lifts my spirit'

Not only does the Elders' Dance company benefit the participants physically and socially, but also the dancers noted the difference it makes to their emotional wellbeing. Sometimes when their physical bodies might not respond to the dance moves in the way that they would like, the dance movement and accompanying music is enough to improve mood.

"I was somewhat achy having had a poor week with my back and a couple of days ago wondered whether I would be able to attend. However, the lift I get from the movement and music made me determined to go even if I was watching as much as taking part." (Elders' Dancer, weekly diary entry).

After a year of COVID, in and out of lockdowns, the dancers reflected on how participating in the dance sessions makes them feel; that focusing and physically engaging in the dance routines was an escape from reality. They find the hour of dance to be physically rewarding, relaxing and meditative.

"...physically obviously, the exercise and you feel stretched and physically, and I find that it's also, it's like a meditation really because when I'm in there, for that hour, I don't really think of anything else so it's really quite relaxing..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 4).

By participating in the Elders' dance company, the dancers observe an improvement in social and physical confidence, with one dancer reflecting on a sense of achievement. "Driving home I felt I'd accomplished something and felt good about that." (Elders' Dancer, weekly diary entry). There is an overwhelming sense of enjoyment that emanates from the dancers' reflections of the Elders' dance company. They thoroughly enjoy the dance classes and they experience a definite lift in their mood. As one dancer so eloquently states, "...you may forget how to dance but you never forget how you enjoyed it..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 4).

3.4 Learning: contemporary dance routines and things about yourself

The main challenge that the dancers experienced was remembering the dance routines. All four of the interviewed dancers commented on this, and whilst they could usually do the dance moves individually, putting them together into a routine tested their memory skills. Two of the dancers also found that participating in the Elders' Dance company had revealed new things about themselves. One dancer became aware that her balance was not as good as she had thought, and a second dancer found that she could not mirror the dance teachers.

"...what I've noticed, apart from obviously that I've noticed that my balance is a bit rubbish um I find that although I love the individual steps, I'm managing those, it's the sequences... It's my memory really, it's my memory..." (Elders' Dancer, Interview 4).

“...I’ve discovered that I’m absolutely no good at mirroring and it took me a while to realise that that’s what everybody else was doing and so if the tutors raise a right arm, I, in my head, think they’re raising their right arm, ok I must raise my right arm only to look around to find that everyone else has mirrored, so they have raised, they’ve elevated their left arm...it took me quite a while to realise because by the time I’ve figured that out, I’m behind a beat so [laughs]...” (Elders’ Dancer, Interview 3).

Contemporary dance routines appeared to cognitively challenge the dancers more than other types of dance with two of the dancers observing this: “...I’ve joined the line dance class and remembering those sets of 8, I find really easy...” (Elders’ Dancer, Interview 1); “...I was going to tap, ballet and modern class and I was starting to find that, that the tap wasn’t too bad but it’s memory with me...” (Elders’ Dancer, Interview 2). However, whilst it is challenging, dancers implied that this was a positive challenge. For one dancer, a motivation for joining the Elders’ Dance company was personal, appreciating the combined benefits of the cognitive and social aspects of the dance group.

“...I mean, they do say, to ward off Alzheimer’s and horrible things like that, it’s important to be socially easy, to go and mix with people and to learn something new in that sort of context where you’re with other people. That supposed to be good for your brain. I mean my mum got Alzheimer’s in her 50s and once turned to me and said, ‘have you any news of [daughter’s name]?’ she’s asking me, her daughter, so you know, I’m terrified of getting Alzheimer’s so I’m doing my best to...” (Elders’ Dancer, Interview 3).

In the future, dancers asked if Tina and Lucy could video record the dance routine at the beginning of the weekly series so that the dancers, if so inclined, could practice the routine in their own time. Dancers felt that this would then allow them to concentrate more on perfecting the routine during the dance class rather than spending their time trying to remember what movement comes next. Three of the four dancers interviewed said that they practice what they can remember at home, allowing the enjoyment of dance to extend beyond the hour they spend in the weekly class.

4 Conclusion

This section draws out the key findings of the evaluation of phase 2 of the Elders' Dance company programme. The evaluation set out to extend upon the findings from the pilot programme and to better understand what impact the contemporary dance programme had on the participating individuals. Data from the weekly diary entries and one-to-one interviews continues to support the positive impact that the dance programme has on the dancers' health and wellbeing.

The physical benefits of the contemporary dance programme are observed in the accounts and reflections of the dancers, with many referring to improved mobility and flexibility.

The social element of the dance group is meaningful to the dancers and continues to be a primary motivator for participating in the programme. This is even more transparent in phase 2 as the dancers emerged from a 3rd national lockdown. Coming back together as a group to enjoy the dance was a dominant theme that ran throughout the dancers' interviews and diary entries. Moods were uplifted, confidence in the physical and social abilities was improved and the challenge of remembering the dance routines was embraced.

The ambition from the pilot programme was to be able to share the outcomes of the dance programme through performances at a local community level, but because of COVID restrictions, this performance sharing opportunity was not viable in the 2nd phase of the programme. As an alternative, a short film (see the link below) was created, with the dancers' consent, to celebrate the work of the group and to offer each dancer something to keep as a positive memory. The film also allows for an opportunity to share the work beyond the group, raising the Elders' Dance Company profile and furthering potential for generating future interest.

[Elders' Dance Company - Dancemind](#)

5 Recommendations

This section provides recommendations which have been identified through the evaluation.

- The overwhelming positive benefits of the Elders' Dance company are evidenced in the accounts of the current dancers. It is recommended that the Elders' Dance company continues to flourish and grow with potential for further local groups to be formed with targeted marketing to those over the age of 65 years.
- Future groups could be formed for specific purpose. In the pilot programme, the ambition was to perform dance routines to local communities. Dancers in phase 2 suggested that the Elders' Dance company could be developed for non-performance and performance groups. There is also the possibility for the Elders' Dance company to be offered to individuals through local social prescribers. This would be possible with further funding which would allow for the programme to run continuously throughout the year.
- For future, when possible to do so, dancers requested that the extra half an hour for coffee and chat be included at the end of the dance sessions.
- For future, dancers suggested that dance routines are video recorded at the beginning of each phase so that they can practice in their own time.
- The two evaluation projects have reported on the Elders' dancers' self-perceptions of their experiences. Whilst these are valuable insights into the dancers' experiences and their health and wellbeing, it could be that physiological measurement of the dancers would further support the perceived physical benefits that the dancers have reported. Further research methods to evaluate the dance programme will continue.

A final note of thanks goes to Tina and Lucy (Dancemind) who make the dance sessions welcoming, encouraging and enjoyable. In the words of an Elders' Dancer, "... I think we're very privileged to have such experienced, professional dancers to teach us. They're just a delight, the pair of them...it's a great pleasure".

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Figure 4 – The Elders’ Dance Company rehearsing



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For:

Dancemind

The logo for Dancemind features the word "Dancemind" in a bold, purple, sans-serif font. A stylized, curved graphic element in shades of green and yellow arches over the letters "m" and "i", resembling a dance move or a wave.