

Charity's Environment Week Inspires Climate Action Through Dance

Friday 1 August, 2025

Lancashire-based inclusive dance charity DanceSyndrome has successfully delivered its first Environment Week (Monday 28th July – Friday 1st August 2025), using the power of dance to spark conversations and action around environmental responsibility.

DanceSyndrome is a multi-award-winning charity, founded in 2009 by Jen Blackwell, who has Down's syndrome, after she found it difficult to find opportunities in community dance that were accessible to people with learning disabilities. All DanceSyndrome sessions are disability led, with people with learning disabilities taking visible Dance Leader roles to inspire people to see what can be achieved when we all become more inclusive.

Throughout Environment Week, regular dance sessions were transformed with creative, environment inspired themes. Dance Leaders with learning disabilities have been working with professional Dance Artists to come up with themes that lead participants to explore environmental issues through movement and music.

Participants also got involved outside the dance sessions, taking part in independent sustainability challenges. These included joining litter-picking events, preparing meat-free meals, upcycling household items and switching to plastic-free alternatives.

Environment Week was co-produced by three passionate Environment Champions from DanceSyndrome. Communications Manager Sarah Calderbank, Professional Development Manager Kate Battersby and Dance Leader Lucy Burgess spent several months developing a week of fun, meaningful activities that were accessible for all.

Lucy Burgess, Dance Leader Environment Champion, said *"I'm proud to be an Environment Champion at DanceSyndrome. Environment Week was really exciting. I have loved encouraging people to join us and think about helping the planet through dancing. The week was fun and made me feel proud of all the work I have done."*

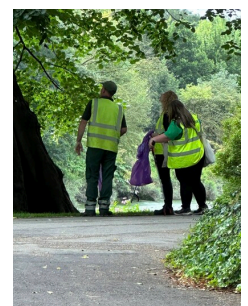
Sarah Calderbank, Environment Lead said *"We wanted to show that small changes can be enjoyable and achievable and that everyone, no matter their ability, can find ways to create a better future for our people and planet. Our team rose to the challenge, with Dance Leaders and Dance Artists co-delivering fun and engaging sessions with environment themes based around wildlife, plants, the ocean and recycling. They also took part in workshops themselves, which were delivered by other Arts organisations to challenge their thinking about how dance can create change for a better environment. It's been a week full of learning and challenging perceptions for **everyone**, which is what DanceSyndrome is all about!"*

Kate Battersby, Dance Artist Environment Champion, said *"We have offered some really interesting activities this week to encourage Dance Leaders to think about the environment. On Monday we went to Miller and Avenham Park in Preston to contribute to our community through some litter picking. Then we enjoyed a mostly plastic-free and meat-free picnic and did a dance workshop outdoors surrounded by nature. On Wednesday morning our DS Collective performers worked with poet Claire Beerjeraz to develop some environment themed poetry, which they then used as a stimulus to inspire dance movements. Then in the afternoon, Sima Gonsai Films joined us to show her short film about climate change. After the film, Dance Leaders were encouraged to ask questions about the film's creative process and the ideas that it raises. It was an interesting and creative way to think about environmental issues, and it was a real success."*

DanceSyndrome's commitment to Environmental Responsibility is part of its work as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. By embedding sustainability into its daily activities and creative work, the charity hopes to challenge the way the people think, making environmental responsibility and dance accessible to everyone in society.

To learn more about DanceSyndrome or to get involved, visit www.dancesyndrome.co.uk or follow @DanceSyndromeUK on social media.

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