

DANCE



MAMA



IMPACT REPORT 2025/26

Contents

Welcome to our impact report 25/26

Dance Mama™ is a Community Interest Company advocating and celebrating professional dancing parents, highlighting the issues that they face and providing inspiration, information and support.

Creating a growing community beyond dance, Dance Mama is a UK-based 'unique and vital resource,' pioneering research, information share, content and resources, learning activity, professional development and mentoring online and in person for parents in dance.

From April 2025 to March 2026 Dance Mama persevered with its mission in the face of the on-going, challenging landscape for dance. This arduous terrain has continued to increase competition for smaller funding pots, closure of companies and courses across the sector and wider external crisis of climate emergency, further wars and political turmoil. In spite of these issues, Dance Mama continues to support and empower parents who dance to continue being active either professionally or recreationally.

3. Retaining talent matters

4. Change agent - brief background of Dance Mama

5. How our mission manifests as Community, Learning, Stories and Research

6. Impact in numbers

7 - 9. Membership development

10. Championing evidence-based information for the dance sector

11. Continuing to raise awareness of applied science research

12 - 13. Collaboration: Dance Mama Moves with Surrey Sports Park and the University of Surrey (supported by Sport England)

14 Commission: Royal Ballet & Opera Family Sundays

15. Networks International Parenting and Dance (IPADN) and Critical Dance Pedagogy (CDP)

17. Organisational Development

19. Future plans 2026+

20. Contact information

Sincere thanks and gratitude go to our participants, partners, guest specialists, advisors and supporters.



Retaining talent matters

7 out of 10 parents and carers (72%) are considering abandoning their career in the performing arts.

This alarming statistic that came out of PiPA Campaign's 2021 COVIDg1 survey continues to reflect the stark reality of the challenges parents face in order to continue their vocational careers in music, theatre and dance. In 2024, PiPA released another report using data collected in 2021-2022 led by Professor Angela Pickard, 'Identity Crisis and Talent Loss', which further captures the challenges dance professionals face when raising a family:

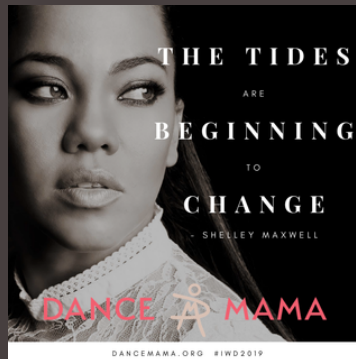
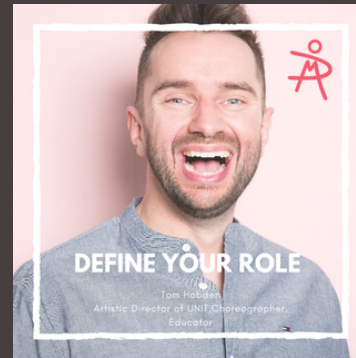
- **71% of mothers reported extensive deliberation before starting a family, fearing repercussions on their careers.**
- **75% of mothers in the study returned to work within six months after giving birth.**
- **Two-thirds of mothers reported struggling with work-life balance**

With the dance sector haemorrhaging talent, this research continues to evidence the challenges we are seeing:

- Under-valuing parents leads to poor practice, lack of research and discrimination
- Loss of skill, experience and talent across the sector
- Under-representation in female choreographers and leaders, generation after generation



Change agent



Since 2014, Dance Mama has recognised these challenges. Dance Mama originated from Founder/CEO, Lucy McCrudden's (pictured below giving her [TEDx](#)) lived experience becoming a parent in the dance sector. The huge gap in provision she experienced at this important life-changing moment has driven her to found this organisation within a suite of activity of research, learning events, information dissemination and mentoring, hailed a **'unique and vital resource'** by One Dance UK. The purpose of which is to increase the percentage of those who continue in their careers, giving their rich and much-needed talent and creativity to the art form and society.



Mission manifests as...

Community



Learning



- Tiered membership: Bronze (free) and Silver (fee-based) for individuals continues to grow accessing our library of over 50+ hours of CPD (Dance Mama Live) and regular webinars.
- Companies including Rhiannon Faith and Scottish Dance Theatre became Gold level members (orgs).
- Online reach of over **5650** across social platforms.
- Chloe Power (University of Surrey) joins as volunteer.

- Mentor Mama, one-to-one specialist mentoring sessions.
- Dance Mama Moves Surrey programme delivered in partnership with Surrey Sports Park, University of Surrey and Atma Alchemy, supported by Sport England.
- 'How to Support a Parent Who Dances' and 'This Mum Moves' webinars delivered to raise awareness to companies and train staff.
- Commissions included Royal Ballet & Opera and AWA Dance's 'Girls in Dance Festival'.



Stories

- **80+** published interviews on our website and **30** podcast episodes (incl. Dancers & Motherhood USA)
- New stories this year included USA dancer, Elisa Toro Franky and Royal Ballet First Soloist, Isabella Gasparini. The Dad Shift and dancer-entrepreneur, Denise Duffield-Thomas were welcomed on to our **podcast**.



Research

- International Parenting and Dance Network and Critical Dance pedagogy Network continued.
- Rachael Kuik (Research advisory Group Member) won One Dance UK Award for 'Dancing Beyond' clinical guidelines
- Lucy McCrudden continued with her PhD at CCCU.

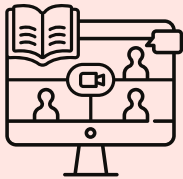


Impact in numbers



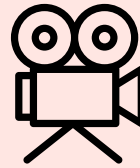
International Parenting And Dance Network (IPADN) grew to **185** members.

185



Dance Mama delivered 12 monthly, 1-hour, online webinar sessions with guest specialists including Rachael Kuik with Dancing Beyond clinical guidelines. The **first** hybrid 'How to' webinar including 'This Mum Moves' took place and **1** additional webinar for USA dancers was delivered.

14



Gross views across tracked content was **109,412** views by March 2026 - impacted by our pause on activity on X.

109,412

Additionally we featured in a USA news item with Ali de Bona with an additional 15,698 online views.






The Bronze Membership grew to **557** people.

1142

1142 people engaged with us in total (online and in person), including in person opportunities with AWA Dance's Girls in Dance Festival, Royal Ballet & Opera Family Days and presenting at ENB's working parents group and Royal College of Music .



Membership development

	 BRONZE MEMBER FREE when you subscribe to site	 SILVER MEMBER £8.99 PER MONTH* engage in our community *Discounts available	 GOLD MEMBER From £500 / bespoke tailored package for organisations
ONLINE BOOKING ABILITY & REGULAR E-UPDATES	YES	YES	YES
MONTHLY CONTENT DROP (INCL. PERIODIC LIVE WEBINARS)	X	YES	YES
20 HRS WEBINARS & WORKSHOPS DANCE & PERINATAL CPD REPLAY RECORDINGS DANCE MAMA LIVE SEASON 1	YES	YES	YES
50+ HRS WEBINARS & WORKSHOPS DANCE & PERINATAL CPD REPLAY RECORDINGS INCLUDING: SILVER MEMBERSHIP CONTENT DROP REPLAYS DANCING BEYOND CLINICAL GUIDELINES FOR PERINATAL PROFESSIONAL DANCERS DANCE MAMA LIVE SEASON 2	X	YES	YES
DANCE MAMA NECKLACE	X	YES	YES
MENTOR MAMA SERVICE	FULL PRICE	20-min included Mini Mentor Session with 30% OFF subsequent mentoring sessions	20-min included Mini Mentor Session with 30% OFF subsequent mentoring sessions per employee
DANCE MAMA COURSES, WORKSHOPS & EVENTS	FULL PRICE	30% OFF	30% OFF
CONSULTANCY	X	X	YES
ASSOCIATE BENEFIT 15% OFF SOMA MOVEMENT HYBRID TRAINING	X	YES	YES
ASSOCIATE BENEFIT 20% OFF RE CENTRE HYBRID HYPOPRESSIVES	X	YES	YES

Dance Mama launched a tiered membership in Summer 2023, building on the success and need identified during the ACE-funded projects “Dance Mama Live” delivered under the Dance Mama banner in 2021 - 2023.

The growing 50+ hour library of unique content of webinars and workshops delivered by experts on a range of topics specific to parents in dance (such as nutrition, self-management and mental health) form the basis of resources that Bronze and Silver members can access to different levels, dependent on membership.

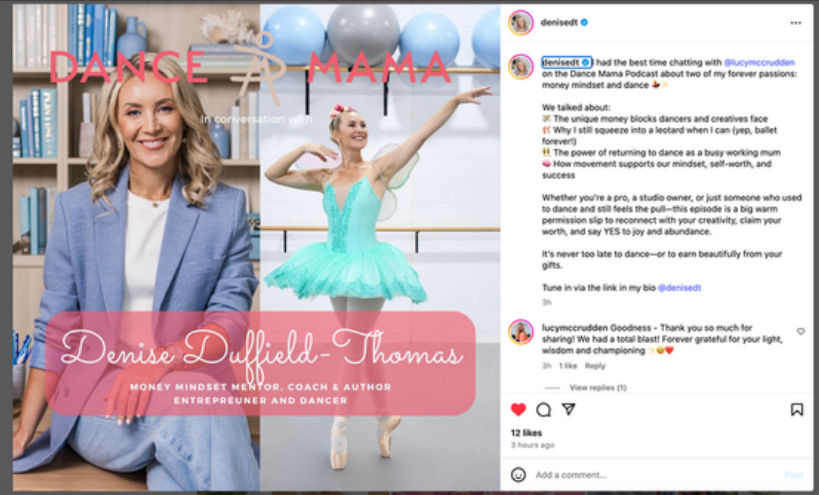
Gold membership offers a blue-print for bespoke work with organisations that can be adapted to suit their commissioning need. Rhiannon Faith Dance Company and Scottish Dance Theatre bought memberships for their employees.

Benefits across each level are outlined in the table (left), and new for 2026, include Mini Mentor Mama sessions (20 minutes) included in Silver Membership to enable more bespoke support.



DANCE MAMA

SILVER MEMBER



When asked, “How has being a member impacted you personally and/or professionally?”
a Silver Member responded,

“Professionally I’ve been able to think through more critically and practically some of the options available to me. Personally I have used the resources as a checklist when thinking about my physicality and the capabilities of my postpartum body.”



DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**THE DANCE
PSYCHOLOGIST**

WEBINAR - TUE 6 MAY, 1PM LONDON



DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**AWA
DANCE
AVATÂRA
AYUSO**

WEBINAR - FRI 27 JUNE 2025, 1PM



Photo: Daniel Minguez

DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**PIPA
CAMPAIGN**

LAURA HARVEY
ANNA EHNOLD-DANAÏLOV



WEBINAR - THUR 3 JULY, 11.30AM

DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**MAX YOUR
MEMBERSHIP**

WEBINAR - SEPTEMBER



DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**NEXT
GENERATION**

WITH MICHELLE BALLENTYNE

WEBINAR - TUE 21 OCT, 12PM
PART 1



Photo: Daniel Minguez

DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**CREATIVE
CAREER
ELEVATION**

CONTENT DROP - TUE 18 NOV 2025, 12PM



Photo: Daniel Minguez

DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**DEC
CONTENT
DROP**


WELLNESS & WONDER
TUE 9 DECEMBER



DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**JAN
CONTENT
DROP**


ENSEMBLE ASSEMBLY: YOUR 2026 PLAN



DANCE MAMA
SILVER MEMBER

**FEB
CONTENT
DROP**

MANAGING INTERRUPTIONS
LOGISTICS CHORED FOR PRACTICAL SELF CARE



Championing evidence-based information for the dance sector



A huge milestone was reached towards the end of 2024 when Rachael Kuik released her clinical guidance for perinatal professional dancers, '**Dancing Beyond**', peer-reviewed by fellow eminent pelvic-health physio, Bill Taylor. Both authors work closely with parents in English National Ballet and Scottish Ballet companies respectively, as well as seeing freelance, independent patients.

“...these guidelines have come about to create a baseline of care as standard that we can deviate from that’s been led by clinical guidelines, by research and by evidence...”

Rachael Kuik, Pelvic Health Physio, Author and Dance Mama Research Advisory Group Member.

HAPPY HEALTHY BLADDER
WEBINAR FOR ALL DANCE PROFESSIONALS
WITH AWARD-WINNING PELVIC HEALTH PHYSIO,
RACHAEL KUIK
THU 26 MARCH 7.30 - 9PM GMT

Rachael and Bill both serve as Research Advisory Group members for Dance Mama, and are working closely with us to help disseminate this information as far and wide as we can. A link to the free 'Dancing Beyond' resources reside in our research page, and as view-on-demand webinars for our Silver Members focussing on 'pregnant' and 'return to dance' phases recorded in March 2025.

Rachael won the 'Advancing Dancer Healthcare' One Dance UK Award 2025 for this work at the celebration evening in Bradford, UK, February 2026.

Continuing this work, Rachael delivered another webinar, 'Happy Healthy Bladder', in March 2026 to continue our mission in educating the professional and recreational dance sector on the importance of pelvic health.



Continuing to raise awareness of applied science research



Active Pregnancy Foundation Awards 2025, at RCOG, London. Left to right, Dr Kelly Massey OLY, Lucy McCrudden, Sally Kettle, Dr Marlize De Vivo and Dr Hayley Mills



Founder/CEO, Lucy McCrudden has been a member of Active Pregnancy Foundation (APF)'s Scientific Advisory Board since its creation in 2021. Inspired by trail-blazing founders Sally Kettle and Dr Marlize De Vivo, she continues her PhD tracking postnatal professional dancers at Canterbury Christ Church University under the supervision of Professor Angela Pickard and Dr Hayley Mills. Dr Kelly Massey OLY sits on both Dance Mama's Research Advisory Group and the APF's Scientific Advisory Board.

McCrudden was nominated a second time at the 2025 APF Awards as This Mum Moves Ambassador of the Year, as she delivers awareness-raising sessions (created by APF and the Institute of Health Visiting) for Dance Mama participants and as standard for Dance Mama staff.

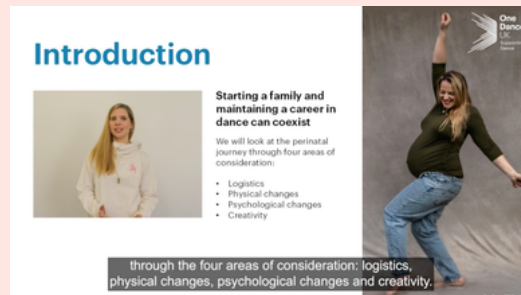
A key collaboration over this period was the creation of the One Dance UK CPD Snippet 'Supporting pre and postnatal dance professionals' available to One Dance UK Members.

Erin Sanchez, Manager of Health, Wellbeing and Performance and Amy Roberts, Dance in Education Manager of One Dance UK are on our Research Advisory Group.

Lucy also delivered a presentation at the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science on her PhD research, held at Wolverhampton University in May 2025.



Erin Sanchez, Manager of Health, Wellbeing and Performance, One Dance UK





“Many of the women we provide care for have benefitted from the classes.”

– Local Midwife



Dance Mama Moves Surrey



Building on the success of our commissioned classes in 2024-25 with Surrey Sports Park, University of Surrey's Perinatal Activity Programme, 'Dance Mama Moves Surrey' became a Sport England-funded project from September 2025 running to July 2026.

The development of this programme has enabled us to deliver classes to women with babies 6 weeks to 14 months across 2 levels, creating a vital progression route for Mums to stay active, inclusive of their caring responsibilities. **76** women and their babies in the local Guildford area have taken part at this mid-point through the project (time of going press). The programme includes our specialist dance classes, Strengthen and Stretch classes led by Lisa Upton (Atma Alchemy) and swim passes for pregnant participants given in kind by Surrey Sports Park. By delivering our sessions free-to-access, it has made it possible for those from lower-income households to take part in specialist, high-quality activity.



The content of the dance sessions are derived from research and development with Lead Dance Artist, Laura Harvey and Lucy McCrudden over 2023, supported by Arts Partnership Surrey, G Live and Surrey Dance Network, which continues to be developed by applying new evidence-based research from members of our own Research Advisory Group, Lucy's PhD research and Active Pregnancy Foundation's work. Lucy delivered a poster presentation on how the team use music at Music and Parental Wellbeing Network, The Royal College of Music in July 2026 (bottom picture). The pedagogy of sessions will feature in the Critical Dance Pedagogy Network's forthcoming book, edited by Professor Angela Pickard. A new team member this year is Volunteer, Chloe Power, a Sports Science student at Surrey.



Carly Pearson, Surrey Sports Park's Active Wellbeing Manager, continues to be excellent to work with, and we have also had the opportunity to work with her intern undergraduate student, Phoebe Brinan. Previous intern Demi Burchett has joined Dance Mama's Research Advisory Group having been inspired by the project to focus her dissertation on perinatal activity researching our participants. Participants also got the opportunity to meet local midwives including a pelvic physio specialist midwife via our great connection with Surrey Maternal and Neonatal Voices Partnership.

We aim to continue this great partnership in to the next year by apply for further funds to continue our classes and develop the programme to sustain the programme and continue to embed it into the local community.



Commission



Dance Mama returned to Royal Opera House in January and February 2026 for two special workshops 'With Love' on Family Days, co-delivered with Royal Ballet Former-Soloist, Laura McCulloch, and First Artist, Sabina Cox, and pianist Frances Yonge.

Networks: International Parenting and Dance (IPADN) & Critical Dance Pedagogy



Professor Aoife McGrath (QUB), Professor Ali Duffy (TTU), Professor Angela Pickard (CCCU), Lucy McCrudden (Dance Mama), Susie Burpee (Balancing Act Canada) and Madeline Jazz Harvey (Colorado State University)

'Versatility of insightful presentations was very interesting. The environment felt welcoming and supportive at all times. Everyone was open and there was a sense of solidarity and community.'
- Participant, IPADN



Developed from a group created in the pandemic in 2021, IPADN became funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in April 2022, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) thanks to Professor Aoife McGrath. This international network establishes new scholarly discourse across existing disciplinary boundaries on the topic of parenting and dance, connecting researchers working through different disciplinary lenses and methodologies (e.g. performance-based, sociological and physiological/psychological). The network also connects researchers with leading dance industry organisations at the forefront of sectoral and policy research related to parenthood in dance, forging links with a wide range of public stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The network's connection of academia and industry creates pathways for the communication of research findings with artists and for policy co-development. The network is led by PI Dr Aoife McGrath ([Queen's University Belfast](#)) and Co-I Dr. [Ali Duffy](#) (Texas Tech University) in collaboration with dance industry research partners, Dance Mama (UK), [Balancing Act](#) (Canada) and [PIPA](#) (UK), and academic partners Professor Angela Pickard ([Canterbury Christ Church University](#)), and Professor Madeline Harvey ([Colorado State University](#)).

Attracting global researchers and networks (including Tanz Und Elternschaft, Germany) two of the three global seminars, took place at Queen's University Belfast in September 2023 and Canterbury Christ Church University in 2024. The third and final seminar took place in September 2024 at Texas Tech University, USA (Lucy pictured delivering her presentation, bottom left). The IPADN report and book are forthcoming in late 2026 - early 2027.

Dance Mama is also on the steering group for the Critical Dance Pedagogy Network led by Professor Angela Pickard (AHRC funded) and will be contributing to its forthcoming book about Dance Mama's pedagogy, adaptations and considerations for the perinatal dancer.



‘As a member of Dance Mama’s Board, I’m very proud and impressed by how much our organisation is doing to champion our sector and ensure all opportunities to continue to develop talent and careers remains high on the national agenda. My hat goes to our CEO, Lucy, for spearheading so many important initiatives that are providing much needed resources for dancers.’

**– Fern Potter, First Director,
Dance Mama**



Organisational Development

Dance Mama received very little public funding support from July 2023 until July 2025 when Sport England funding was awarded to support Dance Mama Moves Surrey. Over this period the organisation had to be opportunistic and agile to continue its mission in a difficult climate. Financial support for professional perinatal dancers mainly came through membership fees and academic funding. The Dance Mama Board of Directors was sustained, and continued to meet online at its usual quarterly cadence. Directors Kim Hayes and Balbir Singh MBE completed their 3-year cycle in February 2026. Sara Macqueen, Alexandra Desvignes and Solomon Karmegam will join the Board in Spring 2026.

The Research Advisory Group continued with quarterly meetings. This group is made up of renowned specialists in the fields of medicine, midwifery, dance science, sports science (including a Former-Olympian Dr Kelly Massey). We continued to capitalise on our links with the leading organisations including Active Pregnancy Foundation and Maternal Mental Health Alliance, and Strategic Partnership agreement with PiPA Campaign. Lucy McCrudden was nominated for the second awards in a row for This Mum Moves Ambassador of the Year, Active Pregnancy Foundation Awards, taking place on 6th June 2025.

Dance Mama continues to operate with a boutique team, with core members including Katie Mason as freelance Projects Officer, Laura Harvey as Lead Dance Artist and Chloe Power as Volunteer - Dance Mama Moves Surrey, working closely with Lucy McCrudden, Founder/CEO. From Autumn 2026 a sports science placement student from the University of Surrey will join the team. Additional freelance staff are employed when required.

Our position as a driving force for Surrey Dance Network with GLive and Made By Katie Green has increased in number on the Strategic Advisory Group with the additions of Karen Robinson (Royal Ballet & Opera) and Kerry Biggin (New Adventures). This has enhanced our communication across the county for dance professionals in a time where infrastructure has been vastly under-funded. These local connections have created artistic opportunities, and have afforded us the opportunity to share our research and development work on the general public strand, as well as our work with professionals, to our local colleagues including Surrey Cultural Partnership (who also work nationally and internationally) with limited support from the Co-op.





**‘This is amazing! I wish I had
this sort of organisation when I
was a young Mum.’**

– Etta Murfitt, Associate Director, Matthew Bourne's New Adventures



2026 +

Over April 2025 - April 2026 Dance Mama has continued to persevere with its mission in a highly challenging climate. We were thrilled to be supported by Sport England this year.

Leading with purpose, passion and dedication has enabled us to continue our work in service of parents who dance. It has rendered us many great opportunities which we have created as well as those we have welcomed. With a variety of contributions to academic outputs coming up, we are proud of the part we play in creating an evidence base for perinatal dance.

In 2026 and beyond, Dance Mama will continue to work on its funding and organisational plans, whilst further developing its high quality content, connection and support for parents who dance professionally, as a recreational pursuit and as a dance and health programme.

The continuing advancement of its advocacy, learning programmes, research and story capture aim to serve more parents who dance near and far, and to increase and normalise the presence of parents who dance and their needs.

We help parents who dance move their worlds

Lucy McCrudden , Founder/CEO (Dance Mama) with Carly Pearson, Community Wellbeing Manager, Surrey Sport Park, University of Surrey at Royal Surrey County Hospital Antenatal Department.



"A vital and unique resource for
the 40,000+ strong workforce in
dance"

Andrew Hurst MBE,
Chief Executive , One Dance UK



lucy@dancemama.org

dancemama.org

 [@dancemamaofficial](https://www.instagram.com/dancemamaofficial)