

## New NHS Dance Injury Clinic Announced in Birmingham by National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science

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On Friday 29 November 2013 the partners of the ground-breaking National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science (NIDMS) are announcing an agreement to establish the second ever NHS specialist dance injury clinic in Birmingham following the success of the London clinic at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital. The new clinic is being made possible by an additional generous donation of £10,000 by the world's leading dance floor manufacturer, Harlequin Floors. This dance industry led initiative is important because research has shown 80% of professional dancers suffer an injury that stops them working each year, so fast, affordable, specialist healthcare is critical to keeping dancers in employment.

Birmingham is one of the biggest hubs of dancers in England with a concentration of Dance Science expertise including three of the founding NIDMS partners: Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB); University of Wolverhampton's Dance Science Department; and University of Birmingham's dance psychology research group in the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences and School of Psychology.

Presenting the Harlequin cheque for £10,000 to Helen Laws, the NIDMS Manager based at Dance UK, Group Marketing Manager Mark Rasmussen said: *"We all appreciate the level of skill and athleticism required to dance at the top level, and we recognise how injuries can potentially ruin a career. That is why Harlequin Floors provided financial support for the creation of the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science some three years ago. We are delighted that the funds we injected acted as a catalyst to begin turning the dream into reality and that the first centre at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital has proved such a success. So much so that NIDMS is now planning the opening of a second centre in Birmingham."*

The new clinic will be based at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and work in partnership with Birmingham Royal Ballet's state-of-the-art Jerwood Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of Dance Injuries. The first NHS dance injury clinic opened in London at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital (RNOH) in May 2012. It has treated over 200 dancers in its first year and been widely acclaimed by dancers and dance companies.

The Birmingham announcement marks a significant milestone in fulfilling the goal announced at the London NIDMS launch last year to raise further funds to create similar services where there are concentrations of dancers across the UK by 2017.

Nick Allen, Clinical Director at BRB's Jerwood Centre said: *'The Jerwood Centre at Birmingham Royal Ballet has long been recognised as having both state of the art facilities and expertise when it comes to dancers' health and well-being. Similarly the new state of the art Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and its sports medicine and rehabilitation facility has been demonstrating the value of specialist care in the region and therefore is a perfect fit for the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science (NIDMS) and local dancers in providing the support needed for this unique group of athletes.'*

Dr Leon Creaney, Consultant in Sport & Exercise Medicine at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham said: *'We look forward to providing a world-class NHS specialist dance injury clinic at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and forging a successful partnership with the Jerwood Centre. This model of care has worked extremely well in London and we plan to replicate this in Birmingham so the region's dancers can receive a bespoke service. The clinic offers a multi-disciplinary approach utilising a Sports Physician and Sports Physiotherapist to offer experienced care for dancers.'*

The University of Birmingham's long-standing research in the area of dance psychology centres on understanding the impact of the psychological environments created by dance instructors and other key figures within the world of vocational and professional dance, on dancers motivation, sustained engagement, and well-being.

The University's dance psychologists also work with dancers to facilitate their abilities to self-regulate their thoughts and feelings before, during and following a performance. The aim is to help dancers, starting when they are young and training in vocational school to be more mentally resilient, in possession of better coping skills, and have more control over their own dancing rather than being controlled by their engagement in dance and the surrounding dance environment.

**Professor Joan Duda** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise/staff/profile.aspx?Referencelid=9233&Name=professor-joan-duda>), from the University of Birmingham's School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, said: *'We are very happy that we now will have a NIDMS-affiliated injury clinic here in Birmingham. For UoB researchers who are interested in dance, this will provide a convenient and conducive opportunity to conduct inter-disciplinary studies with our dance medicine and health care colleagues, looking at the physical as well as psychological factors that lead to and can prevent injury occurrence. It also now will be possible to combine forces across our areas of expertise to improve the rehabilitation process and facilitate dancers recovery from injury and other setbacks.'*

**Dr Eleanor Quested** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise/staff/profile.aspx?Referencelid=11687&Name=dr-eleanor-quested>), from the University of Birmingham's School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, said: *'From our work, we now have a better understanding on what are the determinants of unhealthy engagement in dance but also what contributes to dancers not merely surviving but thriving. Via our Empowering Dance workshop programme, we are working with teachers, choreographers and other key personnel to create more empowering and health-conducive motivational climates in dance schools and companies from across the sector.'*

The first London clinic was seed-funded by money raised by the NIDMS partners, including major donations from Harlequin Floors (£30,000) and Jerwood Charitable Foundation (£80,000), as well as hundreds of individual donations from students, dancers and dance enthusiasts. Harlequin's decision to make a second donation recognises their commitment to long-term improvements in dancers' healthcare.

The National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science (NIDMS) is a partnership project brought together by Dance UK working with Birmingham Royal Ballet, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, University of Wolverhampton, University of Birmingham, the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital and now including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham.

NIDMS aims through shared expertise and a network of multidisciplinary hub-sites and partners, to provide all dancers access to high quality, evidence-based, dance specific healthcare and dance science services. It has three strands: clinical services; education for dancers and medical specialists; and research.

Harlequin's support as a major donor to NIDMS has been vital to its creation and development. Widely recognised as leaders in dance floor technology and closely aligned to the specific interests of the dance community, with the dance floor so critical to both the safety and longer-term health of dancers, Harlequin was already supporting research in the field and using this knowledge to inform the design of dancer friendly sprung floors and dance surfaces.

Mark Rasmussen says: *'For 35 years Harlequin Floors has worked with leading dancers all over the world, to develop floors which enable them to express their art whilst doing much to protect them against spinal, ankle or leg injuries associated with dancing on solid unyielding surfaces. Whilst the installation of a proper dance floor is now increasingly recognised as a prerequisite by the dance community, this alone cannot of course guarantee the elimination of dance injuries and that's where the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science has come in. We remain supportive of their vision for 'all top level dancers to have access to high quality, comprehensive, dance specific healthcare and dance science support services on a par with those enjoyed by athletes and the dancers in the very largest ballet companies.' We hope that our further donation will once again provide the impetus to take the whole initiative forward.'*

Dance UK and Harlequin are calling for individual donations towards the work of The National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science as part of The Big Give Christmas Challenge this December. Donate via the **Big Give website** (<http://new.thebiggive.org.uk/project/8874>) from 10:00 on Thursday 5, Friday 6 and Saturday 7 December.

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

For further press information or to arrange interviews contact [Helen Laws \(mailto:helen@danceuk.org\)](mailto:helen@danceuk.org), NIDMS Manager at Dance UK on +44 (0)20 7713 0730.

## National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science Press Contacts

### Birmingham Royal Ballet's Jerwood Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of Dance Injuries

Press contact: [Simon Harper \(mailto:simonharper@brb.org.uk\)](mailto:simonharper@brb.org.uk), Media and PR Manager, Birmingham Royal Ballet  
Tel: +44 (0)121 245 3562 or +44 (0)7971 782674

### Dance UK

Press contact: [Helen Laws \(mailto:helen@danceuk.org\)](mailto:helen@danceuk.org), NIDMS Manager  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7713 0730

### Harlequin Floors

Press contact: [David Brooks \(mailto:dbrooks@technicalmarketingltd.com\)](mailto:dbrooks@technicalmarketingltd.com), Technical Marketing Ltd  
Tel: +44 (0)1525 854672

### Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham

Press contact: [Carmel Dorricott \(mailto:carmel.dorricott@uhb.nhs.uk\)](mailto:carmel.dorricott@uhb.nhs.uk), Communications Specialist  
Tel: +44 (0)121 627 2969

### Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital

Press contact: [Tony Higgins \(mailto:tony.higgins@rnoh.nhs.uk\)](mailto:tony.higgins@rnoh.nhs.uk), Communications Manager  
Tel: +44 (0)20 8909 5349

### Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

Press contact: [Piers Frazier \(mailto:p.frazier@trinitylaban.ac.uk\)](mailto:p.frazier@trinitylaban.ac.uk), Head of Marketing & Communications  
Tel: +44 (0)20 8469 9521

### University of Birmingham

Press contact: [Kate Chapple \(mailto:k.h.chapple@bham.ac.uk\)](mailto:k.h.chapple@bham.ac.uk), Press Officer External Relations  
Tel +44 (0)121 414 2772 or +44 (0)7789 921164

### University of Wolverhampton

Press contact: [Chris Jones \(mailto:chris.jones@wlv.ac.uk\)](mailto:chris.jones@wlv.ac.uk), Media and Communications Manager  
Tel: +44 (0)1902 322736

### Note to editors

**Harlequin Floors (<http://www.harlequinfloors.com>)** is the world leader in advanced technology flooring for dance, the performing arts, entertainment and display. Firmly established worldwide, the Harlequin Group has locations in the UK, Europe, USA, Asia, and Australia. Established in England in 1979, Harlequin's experience and reputation are founded on the manufacture and supply of floors which are preferred by dancers and performers at the world's leading venue. With a comprehensive range of long-lasting, durable and multi-purpose portable and permanent sprung and vinyl floors, trust and innovation are key and the company continues to reinforce its slogan, "The world dances on Harlequin floors." Issued on behalf of British Harlequin plc.

For sales, contracts and product information, contact [Rebecca Conway \(mailto:rebecca.conway@harlequinfloors.com\)](mailto:rebecca.conway@harlequinfloors.com).  
British Harlequin plc, Festival House, Chapman Way, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3EF. Tel: +44 (0)1892 514888 Fax: +44 (0)1892 514 222

For further information contact [David Brooks \(mailto:dbrooks@technicalmarketingltd.com\)](mailto:dbrooks@technicalmarketingltd.com), Technical Marketing Ltd., 235A Heath Road, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 3AG, Tel: +44 (0)1525 854672.

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