

Disabled Artists Programme

Information Pack 2025/26

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For an audio version of this document,
please click **here**.

Welcome

Sadler's Wells is a world-leading dance house, with a spirit of creative innovation and artistic collaboration at its heart. A key mission is to fuel the evolution of dance by providing artists with opportunities to experiment, explore, and develop their practice. In 2023, we launched our Artist Development Programme, consisting of six offerings, all open or recruited by open call, designed to support the artistic community through non-outcome driven initiatives. Following its first two years, we are re-opening applications for two of our programmes and changing one to be rolling basis registration. We have also developed new programmes that support developing choreographers to present work with us. You can read about the full programme online at:

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/>

We acknowledge that artists who identify as disabled are underserved in our industry. With the support of that community, we have designed a development programme to specifically support disabled, d/Deaf, and neurodiverse choreographers and dance makers. Through participating in a broad range of choreographic experiences we hope that artists can try different approaches, deepen their practice, and build confidence working professionally.

We hope that with this programme we are creating a dedicated space for this community placing them directly in a relationship with Sadler's Wells. We hope that by holding space for a community of disabled artists, we will cultivate deeper relationships and further support the development of disabled

dance makers. This initiative will be a consistent offer through years to come to make a lasting impact on the sector.

This programme welcomes artists working in dance in all its forms, regardless of pathway, training, or background. If you identify as disabled and are interested in developing your choreographic practice, this is a space for you to experiment and grow.

The Offer

What is it?

By registering your interest in this programme, you will get access to:

- **A free practice-based session every two months facilitated by a choreographer or artist within the Sadler's Wells network.**
- **A free Artist-Led Support Session every two months with someone from the Sadler's Wells Artist Development team to discuss your practice.**
- **Support during the practical session from an Artist Support Practitioner.**
- **Peer-to-peer support and exchange through a network of disabled artists.**

In addition, to make the session a success for those with supplementary needs, we can offer a bespoke package of access support to suit your requirements.

The aim is to provide a broad range of choreographic experiences specifically for this community. You will book to attend for free on a session-by-session basis so there's no need to commit to a full block; join us as and when you like.

The programme is supported by an Artist Support Practitioner who will provide consistent support to the artists attending each session as well as supporting the invited facilitators.

Who is it for?

We would like to support choreographers and dance makers that:

- **Identify as disabled including physical, d/Deaf, neurodiversity and other invisible health conditions.**
- **Have some professional experience of choreography having already created no more than three works that have been performed in a public setting.**
- **Are over the age of 18 and not in formal education or training.**
- **Are residents of the United Kingdom and Crown Dependencies (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and Channel Islands).**

For us, the term choreographers and dance makers early in their choreographic journey means that you might have presented no more than three of your own choreographic works publicly in professional settings and you are committed to a professional pathway as a choreographer. We are inclusive of anyone who identifies as disabled, whatever that might mean for you.

We also acknowledge there are many different pathways in dance and that you might have a wealth of experience performing in other people's work. We ask that your current interest is in developing your own unique choreographic language or style. We mean this in the broadest sense meaning you could be interested in creating work for several settings including theatre, outdoor, community, and visual arts contexts.

Unfortunately, we won't be able to support:

- **Individuals who are currently in formal education or training.**
- **Those who reside outside of the United Kingdom and Crown Dependencies (such as Republic of Ireland or other EU countries).**

This is a space for the artistic community and is not a place to propose projects to Sadler's Wells for commissioning or programming.

If you are unsure if this programme is for you and would like to talk to someone, please contact our team. You'll find contact details at the end of this pack.

When is it?

The practice-based session will run every two months on a Monday evening in the Lilian Baylis Studio at Sadler's Wells.

18:30 – Arrive and Self-Directed Warm-Up

19:00 – Session Begins

21:30 – Session Ends

22:00 – Close and Self-Directed Cool-Down

Each session will include a break.

The 2025-2026 practice-based sessions are included below:

Monday 8 September 2025 – Cathy Waller

Monday 3 November 2025 – Jade Hackett

Monday 12 January 2026 – Raquel Meseguer

Monday 9 March 2026 – Jo Fong

The programme and booking details for these sessions and all following ones will be listed on our Open Sessions webpage:
<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/open-sessions/>

The Artist-Led Support Sessions will be offered every two months, alternating with the practice-based sessions. These will be in-person or online, led by our Artist Development team.

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The 2025-26 support sessions are included below:

Monday 13 October 2025

Monday 8 December 2025

Monday 9 February 2026

Monday 13 April 2026

You will be able to book them via our Open Sessions webpage:

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/open-sessions/>

Register Your Interest

If you would like to be part of this programme, please register your interest through the **Expression of Interest Form** on our website:

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/disabled-artists-programme-form/>

In this form, we ask for some basic information about you and your creative practice.

You can submit your response to the question in either of the following formats:

- **Written statement with a word count of up to 250 words**
- **Audio or video recording with a duration of 2-3 minutes**

It's best that you prepare your response before you click through to complete the form. Once you have prepared your response, the form should take no more than 10-minutes to complete.

We are mindful of the unpaid labour undertaken for open calls and as such invite you to keep your response to the approximate length requested.

Registration for this programme is rolling; you can sign up anytime. Once you have completed the Registration Form, please let us know about your Health & Access Requirements via this form:

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/artist-development-access-requirements-form/>

You will receive an automatic response when your registration has been received, if you don't receive an e-mail within 24 hours, please contact us via the details at the end of this pack.

Once you have registered, you can head to our Open Sessions webpage:

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/open-sessions/>

and sign up to individual sessions.

Access Requirements

We are committed to being open and inclusive and hope the process is accessible to all but realise that some may still encounter barriers in accessing this offer.

If this resonates with you, please get in touch by phone, text, or e-mail to let us know what additional support you require to make your expression of interest possible.

You can listen to an audio version of this pack:

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/disabled-artists-programme/audio/>

There is a read aloud function available in the PDF, which is available to download at:

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/disabled-artists-programme/>

Contact:

**Valentina Vela, Senior Producer,
Artist Development & Programming
E-Mail: Valentina.Vela@sadlerswells.com
Phone or Text: +44 (0) 7872 506 803**

Valentina is available from Monday to Friday between 10:00-17:00. Please allow two working days for a response.

We can offer additional access support to help with overcoming

barriers that would usually make your participation in this kind of initiative prohibitive or challenging.

Once you have completed the Registration Form, we will ask you to complete an online form to tell us what support you need from us to make your participation a success. The form will ask a series of questions for us to get the practical information we need. It will also detail your Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan and there will be a chance for you to upload your Access Rider, if you have one you'd like to share with us.

We will only ask you to complete this form once per year to try and reduce unnecessary labour and invite you to stay in a regular dialogue with us about your ongoing needs. As an alternative to submitting this form, we are also happy to receive this information directly from you either in person or over the phone. Please let us know what is most helpful for you using the contact details at the end of this pack.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to pay to attend one of these sessions?

No, these sessions are offered to artists to attend for free. Unfortunately, we cannot pay your travel expenses so you will need to be able to get yourself to and from Sadler's Wells.

What access support is available?

We have a budget to support your needs once you are with us in the building and we will work with you to create a package of support that's bespoke to your needs.

How many people will be at each of these sessions?

The capacity of each session will vary month-to-month depending on the facilitator and session content. We aim to keep the capacity of these sessions on the more intimate scale in order for there to be plenty of space and contact time for everyone in the room. This means initially there might be between 10-16 people each month. This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and if we are able to open up to more people (and the demand is there) we will.

Can my friend come along who is visiting?

These sessions are for any artists that identify as disabled who are registered for this programme.

How does Sadler's Wells define disability in relation to this programme?

Sadler's Wells identifies a disabled person as someone with long term and/or invisible health conditions, d/Deaf, is neurodivergent,

experiences mental health issues, is chronically ill, has physical impairments and/or has experienced access barriers. We recognise that someone who experiences any of the above may not typically identify with the term 'disabled' and we welcome the use of terminology that you are most comfortable with, for example 'crip'.

I don't identify as disabled, but I am interested in working in integrated practice, can I attend these sessions?

At present, these sessions are designed exclusively for dance artists who identify as disabled. There might be opportunities to participate in some integrated sessions in future, so please check our website for more information.

I'm not sure how to get to Sadler's Wells, what support is available if I need help to plan my journey?

We are happy to help you plan your journey but won't be able to make travel arrangements on your behalf. Please use the contact details at the end of this pack to let us know what you need support with.

What are the facilities like at Sadler's Wells?

These sessions will be held in the Lilian Baylis Studio. This space is a studio theatre and the seats will be retracted to give a large rehearsal space of over 12m x 12m. There is a black marley floor and no windows, so rehearsals will take place under regular working strip lights.

The Lilian Baylis Studio is accessed directly from the Fox Garden Court Café through the Stage Door and Lilian Baylis Studio entrance from Rosebery Avenue. There are 17 steps down into the space and there is lift access from Stage Door at ground level to the Lilian Baylis Studio. There is an accessible toilet next to the dressing rooms, which for these sessions will be used as quiet spaces.

A Sadler's Wells Care Guide with full details about the building and what to expect will be sent to you as part of your booking confirmation. This will also be downloadable from our website.

Can I apply if I am already working with Sadler's Wells?

If you are already part of a Sadler's Wells programme like Young Associates, or if you are being commissioned or programmed by us you can't apply.

Is there access to help me apply?

Yes, the materials are available in large-print plain text and audio. If you need further assistance with access, including our support with the understanding of terms used in this document, we can help. Please use the contact details at the end of this pack.

Are there age restrictions for this programme?

You must be aged 18 or over to apply. We acknowledge that everyone's journey is different, therefore there are no specific age specifications.

Can I apply if I live outside of the United Kingdom?

No, this offer is only available to artists with permanent residence in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

I am having trouble with the form; please can you help?

If you experience any IT issues in completing or submitting the expression of interest form, please contact us using the details at the end of this pack.

Contact

If there is other information that you need or questions you would like to ask, please get in touch with **Valentina Vela, Senior Producer** by e-mail at **Valentina.Vela@sadlerswells.com**. You can also call or text Valentina on **07872 506 803** from Monday to Friday between 10:00-17:00. Please allow two working days for a response.

Read more about the **Artist Development Programme** online at: **<https://www.sadlerswells.com/for-artists/artist-development/>**

With thanks to Artistic Advisor Kimberley Harvey and all those who attended our focus group meetings to help shape this programme.