Candoco Dance Company
Systems Leadership: Training and Research Project

In 2025, Candoco is inviting organisations to join us in our training and research project, 'Systems Leadership.'

Our goal is to create a peer-support network to help us set up new, inclusive ways of working.

What is 'systems leadership'?
Clore Leadership define this as:
"A way of working together, good communication, and sharing decisions. It is different to traditional leadership where a leader makes all the decisions."

We want to find out if adopting these ways of working can support us to be a positive example for systemic change and forward-thinking access.

What does the project involve?

Step 1: Participation in an online course

Participants will join an online training course starting in April 2025. The course, offered by Evolving Organisation, focuses on creating resilient teams by using new techniques and tools. Optional live coaching sessions will also be offered.

Step 2: Reflection and Conversation

Participants will be invited to join an online discussion to share their observations, thoughts and learning experiences from their time on the course.

Step 3: Implementation

At this point Candoco will start to investigate more deeply how we can adopt the learning. There is no expectation on participants to do the same - they can use the knowledge and tools gained in whatever way works for them.

Step 4: Sharing Learning

Candoco will create a podcast series and commission case studies from participants who are willing to share their experiences of using the tools.

Step 5: Evaluation

Candoco will conduct a survey and write a short report which aims to answer some of the research questions below.

1) Can systems leadership help clarify roles and responsibilities in co-leadership models with multiple leaders?
2) How can it create space for prioritising access within the organisation?
3) How can these tools support disabled leaders?
4) Has the implementation led to more empowerment and clarity, by:

   Easing the pressure on leaders and sharing responsibilities fairly?
   Ensuring clear roles and decision-making for everyone?

Why are we starting this project and how does it link to access?
We believe that using systems leadership and focusing on equity will lead to greater access and inclusion, adapting policies to real needs. By moving away from outdated structures, we hope to create an organisation that is flexible and responsive to today's cultural needs.

A note about the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding round:
We know this project overlaps with upcoming NPO funding applications, but it's designed to help us build tools to strengthen our applications and showcase Arts Council England's Investment Principles.

The online training course is available for a year, but participants must complete at least one module by June to join the research section of the project.

The Project in detail

Candoco's Head of Access and Equity will lead and manage this project.
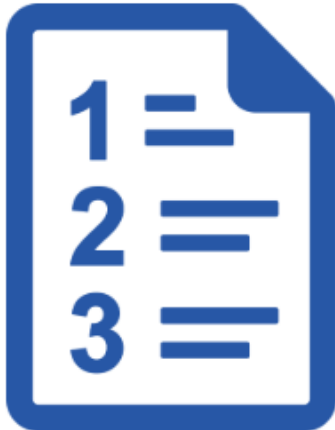
When will it happen?
Spring/ Summer 2025 (with access to the training content for 12 months)

How will it work?

Candoco will enrol and pay for all partners to take part in the online course.
The course can be done at the participant's own pace.

Three live, group coaching sessions will be booked by Candoco and available for all participants to join.

There are 3 training modules:

Module 1: Creating Clear Expectations
Module 2: Take Ownership and Initiative
Module 3: Use Clarity and Initiative to Speed up Your Decisions

How much time will it take?

The course will take around 1 hour per week, for 14 weeks. This will include watching videos and doing activities to apply new learning.

Facilitated debrief

In June 2025, Candoco will host an online peer debrief session, to reflect on the learning and discuss implementation. We don't expect everyone to have fully completed the course by that time!

Ongoing Implementation

Led by our Head of Access and Equity, Candoco will adopt the most useful principles and learnings. We hope that having attended the training, other partners will be open to forming a support network that can come together in future if needed.

Sharing of knowledge and learning: September to December

Candoco will produce a podcast series and three commissioned case studies to share insights from ourselves and other participants.

Participants will be invited to write short essays, documenting a diverse range of experiences from the project.

The Head of Access and Equity will create and share a reflective survey in Autumn. The results from this survey will be published as a report, with the aim to show improvements in the following areas: role clarity, team empowerment, and working conditions for disabled leadership.

JUNE   **2025**

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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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29	30					

What we're asking from you:

We ask all participants to commit to:

- Being listed as a partner in a press release about the project.
- Complete at least one training module by the end of June 2025.
- Attend a reflection session in June to evaluate the learning and its use.
- Participate in an evaluation survey in Autumn 2025.

If invited to join podcasts or write thought pieces, partners will be paid.

Financial offers we are making:

- Free Training (valued at £100 per user).
- Payment for attending reflection session (max 2.5 hours): £150 per participant (if freelance).
- Payment for podcast planning and recording: £200 per participant (up to 8 participants).
- Payment for thought pieces: £400 each (3 participants).

Sustainability and Sector Impact:

After the project, Candoco will look at how to make these principles standard and long-lasting in the ways we work.

With new ideas from the project, participants are encouraged to share learnings with their clients, members, or partners.
All participants are invited to share their learning through their own channels (newsletters, blogs, webinars, etc.) and should credit 'Evolving Organisation' in any published materials.