

Agenda – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2, Senedd

Meeting date: 16 November 2023

Meeting time: 09.30 – 12.40

For further information contact:

Lleu Williams, Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCulture@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting registration

(09.15 – 09.30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.30)

2 Public service broadcasting in Wales: evidence session with BBC

(09.30 – 11.00)

(Pages 1 – 17)

- Tim Davie, Director-General, BBC
- Dame Elan Closs Stephens, Acting Chair, BBC
- Rhuanedd Richards, Director, BBC Cymru Wales

Attached Documents:

- Research Brief: Public service broadcasting in Wales

Break

(11.00 – 11.10)

3 Public service broadcasting in Wales: evidence session with ITV

(11.10 – 12.10)

(Pages 18 – 31)

- Phil Henfrey, Head of News & Programmes, ITV Cymru Wales
- Magnus Brooke, Group Director of Strategy, Policy and Regulation, ITV



Attached Documents:

- Research Brief: Public service broadcasting in Wales

4 Papers to note

(12.10)

4.1 HSBC UK Welsh Service Line

(Pages 32 – 33)

Attached Documents:

- Letter from HSBC: HSBC UK Welsh Service Line – 8 November 2023

4.2 Arts Council of Wales: Investment Review

(Pages 34 – 35)

Attached Documents:

- Response from the Arts Council of Wales: Investment Review – 18 October 2023

4.3 Creu Cymru: Hynt Impact Report

(Pages 36 – 56)

Attached Documents:

- Letter from Creu Cymru: Hynt Impact Report – 6 November 2023
Creu Cymru: Hynt Impact Report: Executive Summary

4.4 Cultural Strategy for Wales

(Pages 57 – 59)

Attached Documents:

- Letter from the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism: Cultural Strategy for Wales – 24 October 2023

- Response to the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism: Cultural Strategy for Wales – 24 October 2023

4.5 Books Council of Wales magazine funding model

(Pages 60 – 62)

Attached Documents:

- Letter from the Wales Arts Review: Books Council of Wales magazine funding model – 8 November 2023

4.6 Welsh Government international relations

(Page 63)

Attached Documents:

- Welsh Government international visits – October 2023

4.7 Future support for Duolingo

(Pages 64 – 65)

Attached Documents:

- Letter to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language: Future support for Duolingo – 25 October 2023

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting

(12.10)

6 Public service broadcasting in Wales: consideration of evidence

(12.10 – 12.30)

7 Consideration of the forward work programme for spring 2024

(12.30 – 12.40)

(Pages 66 – 70)

Attached Documents:

- Forward work programme: Spring and Summer 2024

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted



Delyth Jewell MS
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

8 November 2023

Dear Delyth,

I am writing to let you know that HSBC UK is today announcing we will no longer be offering a Welsh speaking customer service phone line, as of 15 January 2024.

I would like to assure you that this decision has not been taken lightly. We strive to tailor our services to meet our customers' needs, and after an in-depth review of our Welsh speaking customer service phone line, we have found this line is no longer being fully utilised. We have seen a steady decline in usage – we receive 22 calls into the line each day, compared to 18,000 into our English-speaking lines, and 73% of service users only call once or twice a year.

After 15 January, if customers need to call us, they will still receive the service they are used to, but in English. Our English-speaking agents will be able to assist with any customer banking needs.

We recognise that for some customers, banking in Welsh is still their preference, so we can arrange a call-back in Welsh, within 3 working days, to help with any questions they may have. Whilst we understand it is not their first choice, we have confirmed that all customers are able to bank in English.

We appreciate change can be difficult, and therefore we have created an outreach programme to support specific customers who hold vulnerabilities or call frequently. This will involve a personalised call to advise them of this change, how they can continue to contact us, including alternative ways to bank with us, and addressing any specific concerns they may have. We would like to reassure you that all the other Welsh services we offer will remain in place, including Welsh speaking colleagues in half of our Welsh branches, responding to Welsh customer correspondence in Welsh, and some of our branches in Wales offering a full translation service.

I am sorry to be writing with what I know will be disappointing news and want to reassure you that we remain fully committed to serving our customers in all parts of the UK. We are continuing to invest in our UK business and in 2024, our primary focus is to improve the experience and outcomes for our customers. This includes enhancing our digital self-service capabilities, increasing the availability and responsiveness of our telephony teams, and supporting our customers through the cost-of-living crisis. This will be a pivotal year as we transform our business to benefit our customers, now and in the future.

HSBC UK Bank plc

1 Centenary Square, Birmingham, B1 1HQ

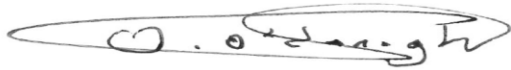
Registered in England number 9928412. Registered Office: 1 Centenary Square, Birmingham, B1 1HQ

Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority

If you would like to discuss any of the points raised above, please contact political.engagement@hsbc.com.

Yours sincerely,

Oliemata O'Donoghue

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a hand-drawn oval. The signature appears to read "O. O'Donoghue".

Managing Director, Wealth and Personal Banking, HSBC UK

18 October 2023

Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,
Sport, and International Relations Committee
Via Email

Dear Delyth Jewell MS

Re: Arts Council of Wales briefing on the Investment Review 2023

Thank you for your letter of the 3rd October regarding the above and for the opportunity to update the Committee on our Investment Review work.

The additional information you have requested is provided below.

A copy of the conditional offers made to the organisations who were successful in their applications is now published on our website [Investment Review 2023 Report and Decisions](#). This report also provides information on the rationale for the funding decisions made and the subsequent phases of the Investment Review work. A summary of the conditional offers may be found on page 43 of the Report. These offers are conditional whilst we await the outcomes of any appeals that may be submitted to our Appeals Process and confirmation of our funding for 2024/25 from Welsh Government.

Below is a list of funding that has been awarded to Blaenau Gwent from April 2022 to date. This list includes funding across all of our current programmes, including Capital funding, Arts and Health, Creative Learning and our general open Lottery programmes.

Lottery and Grant in Aid (incl Arts and Health)	£134,657
Capital	£84,906
Creative Learning	£24,200
Night Out	£6,350
Total	£250,113

Plas Bute, Caerdydd CF10 5AL
Ffôn: 0845 8734 900
Ffacs: 029 2044 1400
Minicom: 029 2045 1023
Ebo: gwybodaeth@celfcymru.org.uk
Gwefan: www.cyngorcelfyddydau.cymru.org.uk

Bute Place, Cardiff CF10 5AL
Tel: 0845 8734 900
Fax: 029 2044 1400
Minicom: 029 2045 1023
Email: info@artswales.org.uk
Website: www.artscouncilofwales.org.uk



Swyddfeydd Lleol/Local Offices:

Caerdydd/Cardiff, Bae Colwyn/Colwyn Bay, Caerfyrddin/Carmarthen
Rhif Elusen Gofrestredig/Registered Charity Number: 1034245

In some instances, our grant awards support activity that takes place in more than 1 area. Therefore, we have included these awards where the project activity in Blaenau Gwent is stated as being 10% or higher and calculated the amount for these based on the percentage quoted in the application of the award directly benefiting the Blaenau Gwent area.

Included in the above table also is a total of £20,000 Creative Learning investment in the area, sourced from 2 Lead Creative School grants awarded prior to April 2022 and for which activity is still ongoing alongside £4,200 for 5 schools through our Go and See opportunity.

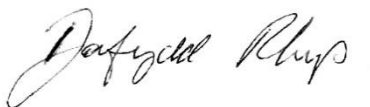
The Night Out Scheme which works in partnership with the local authorities to help groups of volunteers across Wales bring the arts to the heart of their communities, staging performances in community and village halls and other non-traditional arts venues has seen 7 separate events supported at £6,350.

Details of the Lancet article regarding the role of the arts in promoting good health in Wales may be found [here](#).

As you will be aware, through the 6 principles and 5 balancing factors of the Investment Review that will underpin our work going forward our aim is for our funding to benefit all of Wales's communities. We recognise that there are areas of deprivation which too often lack arts opportunities. We want to see sustainable infrastructure and activity embedded across both rural and urban settings, making sure that there will be opportunities in the arts for young, old and future generations wherever they may live. Where this was not universally achieved through the Investment Review proposals, in our published [Report](#) we have committed to making additional strategic interventions through targeted programmes of work. Initial work on these will progress over the coming months and new financial year.

Meanwhile I trust this provides you with the additional information you are seeking, and please do let me know if you require anything further at this stage.

Yours sincerely



**Chief Executive
Arts Council of Wales**





6th November 2023

Re: Hynt Impact Report

Creu Cymru are delighted to be able to share our brand-new Impact Report for Hynt, the national access scheme that works with theatres and arts centres in Wales to make sure there is a consistent offer available for visitors with access requirements, and their essential companions.

The Impact Report is the first time that we have evaluated the scheme in this way. We've seen the power that access to theatre and the arts can transform, and this was a chance to reinforce our story, share the stories of our users, venues and stakeholders. To share the successes and demonstrate what is brilliant, unique, and bold about the hynt scheme.

Hynt is an Arts Council of Wales initiative, managed by Creu Cymru in partnership with Diverse Cymru. In March 2014 Arts Council of Wales (ACW) appointed Creu Cymru to work in partnership with Diverse Cymru to deliver a single national access scheme for customers with disabilities and their essential companions. Hynt was developed with and by disabled people, the third sector, theatres and arts centres.

Hynt is also a resource for anyone interested in information or news about accessibility of the arts. The site features listings of all accessible performances, as well as providing up-to-date venue access information to help plan a visit. Through regular e-updates, the Hynt website and social media platforms, Hynt provides relevant and up-to-date arts and theatre access information. Hynt is a peer-led initiative rooted in the social model of disability. It works alongside disabled people, carers and the third sector to improve the quality of experiences at theatres and arts centres for anyone with access requirements.

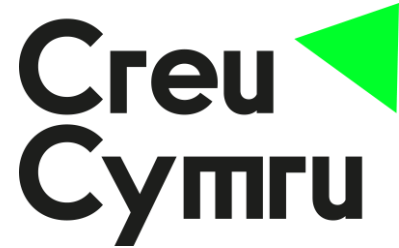
As of October 2023, Hynt has issued 29,866 cards to members to be able to use their Hynt cards in over 41 theatres and arts centres and associate venues across Wales.

Creu Cymru champions the performing arts in Wales. It is constituted as a membership body. Creu Cymru members represent virtually all of the nation's professionally-run theatres and arts centres, and producing companies, at a diverse range of scales. Our mission is to be a vibrant and leading network of performing arts professionals from across Wales.

We are grateful to Arts Council England for funding this report and to Abigail Tweed – Milestone Tweed & Mark Richardson – Social Impact Consulting for carrying out such a comprehensive report.

Some of the amazing highlights from the report include:

- 76% of cardholders said being part of Hynt improved their access to culture.
- 89% would go to the theatre less without their Hynt card and 14% would not go at all.



*Yn Gosod y Llwyfan I'r Celfyddydau Perfformio yng Nghymru
Setting the Stage for the Performing Arts in Wales*

- 82% say Hynt makes going to the theatre more affordable.
- 68% report that Hynt improves their physical access to venues.
- 52% say they are better able to access content.
- 81% of cardholder report Hynt increases the amount of social interaction in their lives.

As a result of being part of the Hynt scheme, cardholders visited theatre 75% more. This resulted in **144,000** more theatre visits across Wales, half of which were full price tickets. 58% of cardholders said they visited a new venue as a result of Hynt.

For every complimentary ticket venues gave to Hynt cardholders, they made an average of **£23.53** in additional revenue.

In addition, local economies surrounding Hynt venues benefit to the tune of £3,261,200 a year.

For every £1 spent on Hynt, £6.05 of social value is created.

Hynt venues generate £42.33 in additional value for every complimentary ticket they give away.

We have attached the executive summary of the report. The full report can be found here:

<https://arts.wales/>

We would be very happy to discuss the report further or answer any questions you might have about the scheme.

Best wishes,

Louise Miles-Payne, Director, Creu Cymru

HYNT IMPACT REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Hynt is an Arts Council of Wales Initiative, managed by Creu Cymru in partnership with Diverse Cymru. Hynt is a national access scheme that works with theatres and arts centres in Wales to make sure there is a consistent offer available for visitors with an impairment or specific access requirement. Hynt cardholders are entitled to a ticket, free-of-charge, for a personal assistant or carer at all the theatres and arts centres participating in the scheme. Hynt creates impact, not just for cardholders and their essential companions, but also for venues and the local economy.

Creu Cymru is the lead partner for the Hynt scheme and employs a member of staff who manages the scheme day to day. Creu Cymru champions the performing arts in Wales. It is constituted as a membership body. Creu Cymru members represent virtually all of the nation's professionally-run theatres and arts centres, and producing companies, at a diverse range of scales. Their mission is to be a vibrant and leading network of performing arts professionals from across Wales.

This report documents the research undertaken from May 2022 until April 2023 examining the impact of the Hynt scheme in Wales.

The research aimed to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme through conversations with stakeholders, and quantitative analysis of available data to undertake a study examining the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the Hynt scheme.

Hynt scheme cardholders, essential companions of Hynt cardholders, non Hynt members with access requirements, Hynt venues and Hynt partners were all asked for their reflections on the impact, content, style, and whole experience of this scheme. Individual interviews and focus groups took place to enable these conversations and these reflections have been used to inform the report.

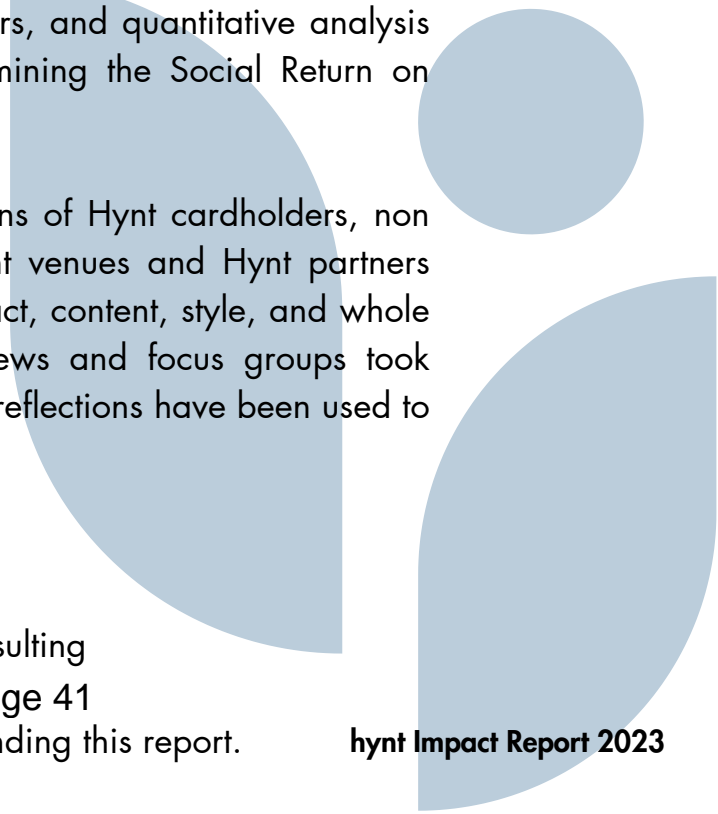
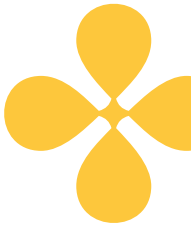
Abigail Tweed - Director, Milestone Tweed

Mark Richardson - Director, Social Impact Consulting

Pack Page 41

We are grateful to Arts Council England for funding this report.

hynt Impact Report 2023



ANDREW MILLER

UK ARTS ACCESS CHAMPION

“

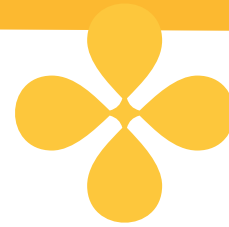
Hynt was a groundbreaking initiative by The Arts Council of Wales in 2014 and as a member of the Council that approved it, I feel great pride in all the achievements listed in this report. I was moved by Peter's testimony about how membership of Hynt has restored his independence and sense of dignity. I was equally delighted to see how Hynt has boosted business at Theatr Clwyd and other venues.

This evaluation also provides critical data which will shape the UK version of Hynt that I champion, with important learnings on every page such as how every free companion ticket issued generates significant secondary income for venues.

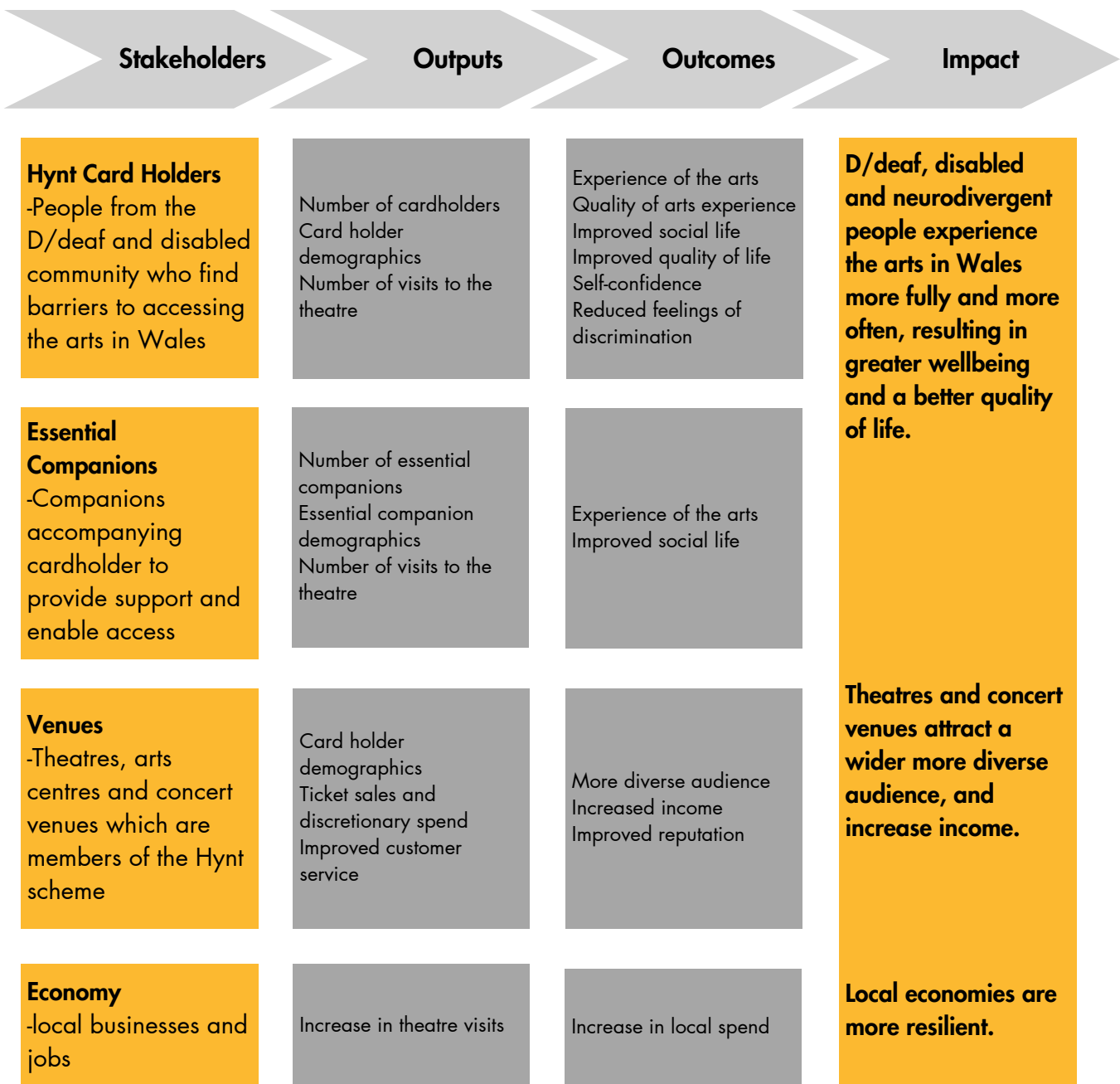
Hynt has created real economic and social value, it has encouraged Welsh venues to improve their access, but best of all, it has provided over 26,000 disabled people with better access to culture. Hynt is a fantastic success story for Wales.



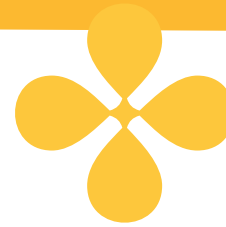
THEORY OF CHANGE



Hynt exists to make the arts in Wales more accessible to D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people.



INCREASED INCLUSIVITY



Hynt Cardholders all face additional barriers to accessing theatre, and the arts more broadly. At the time of the report there were 23,536 Hynt card holders. Of these...

Wheelchair users	6,761	29%
D/deaf / Hearing impairment	2,566	11%
BSL	393	2%
Require closed captioned performance	693	3%
Require audio description	1,060	5%
Require relaxed performance	4,150	18%
TOTAL NUMBER OF CARDHOLDERS	23,536	100%

Welsh Government's population survey lists 422,300 people aged 16-54 in Wales as having a disability, of whom 120,900 are classed as having a physical disability[i]. Not all of these people will need Hynt to access the theatre, and there are others who are not included in this data, but who would benefit from Hynt. Using this figure as a benchmark, just under 6% of those who would benefit from Hynt are currently using the scheme.

Hynt Reach

Specific disability statistics are difficult to interpret, however, using the best available data:

Disability / Need	Cardholders	Wales	% of population reached by hynt
Disability	22,124	422,300	5.2%
D/deaf / Hearing impairment	2,566	575,000	0.4%
BSL user	363	4,000	9.8%
Wheelchair user	6,761	59,584	11.3%
Visual impairment	1,060	106,000	1.0%

[i]

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Disability/disabilitystatus-by-region>

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Hynt membership is reflective of the population distribution across Wales.



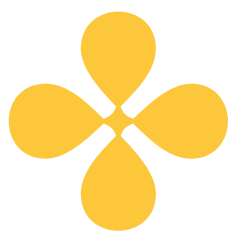
Area	Region	Hynt Cardholders	% Hynt Cardholders	Population	% Population
CH	North	1,320	6%	130,388	4%
LL	North	3,155	15%	537,467	18%
LD	Mid	158	1%	49,792	2%
SY	Mid	590	3%	120,905	4%
CF	South East	7,801	36%	1,005,334	33%
NP	South East	2,501	12%	488,368	16%
SA	South West	6,121	28%	730,232	24%
TOTAL		21,646		3,062,486	

DISTRIBUTION OF HYNT VENUES

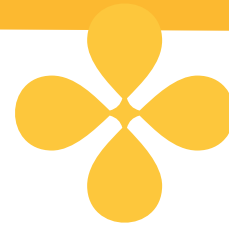
Hynt Venues are evenly distributed across the four regions of Wales in comparison with population.

On average about 0.8% of tickets at a participating venue are given to Hynt cardholders.

Area	Number of Venues	% Venues	% Hynt Cardholders	% Wales Population
North Wales	7	17%	21%	22%
Mid Wales	5	12%	3%	6%
South East Wales	19	46%	48%	49%
South West Wales	10	24%	28%	24%
TOTAL	41	100%	100%	100%



ACCESS TO THE ARTS



- **76%** of cardholders said being part of Hynt improved their access to culture.
- **89%** would go to the theatre less without their Hynt card and 14% would not go at all.
- **82%** say Hynt makes going to the theatre more affordable.
- **68%** report that Hynt improves their physical access to venues.
- **52%** say they are better able to access content

Without a Hynt card I wouldn't be able to come as often due to the finance support.

I'm able to attend more events with a carer as one ticket is free.

I am physically disabled, I need support with me at all times. If I didn't have the Hynt card, then I wouldn't be able to afford to go.

It's been life changing for me to try different things. I appreciate the diversity.



IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE



- **73%** of cardholders report that Hynt has improved their quality of life
- **59%** of cardholders report that the experience of having a Hynt card has improved their self-confidence
- **81%** of cardholders report Hynt increases the amount of social interaction in their lives
- **74%** say Hynt improves the quality of their relationships
- **85%** of cardholders say Hynt makes it easier to ask a friend to accompany them to the theatre.

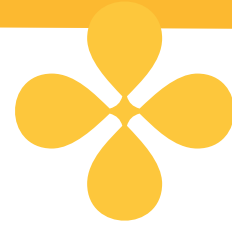
I am no longer anxious and nervous going to venues which I was before.

I can't go to events without someone to drive and accompany me, so the companion ticket allows me to maintain relationships with more friends and carers.



Mental health was a big thing for me and there's nothing better than a live show. It is something to look forward to.

ESSENTIAL COMPANIONS



- Many of the Hynt cardholder's essential companions are unpaid carers.
- **81%** of carers have felt lonely or isolated as a result of looking after a loved one.
- More than a million unpaid carers in the UK live below the poverty line.
- **77%** of cardholders reported that Hynt made going to the theatre more affordable for their friends and carers.

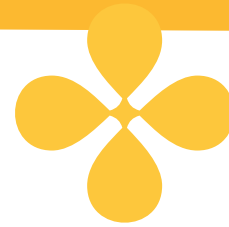
It has made it more affordable to go with a carer.

I don't qualify for carers allowance it has to come out of my pension. I can stretch to one ticket for me, or one for my son, but not for both of us.

Before Hynt, I would have to pay for myself and a carer and it got too expensive.



VENUES



- As a result of being part of the Hynt scheme, cardholders visited the theatre **75% more**.
- This resulted in **144,000** more theatre visits across Wales, half of which were full price tickets.
- **58%** of cardholders said they had visited a new venue as a result of Hynt.
- **56%** of cardholders report a better welcome at venues as a result of Hynt
- For every complimentary ticket venues gave to Hynt cardholders, they made an average of **£23.53** in additional revenue.
- In addition, local economies surrounding Hynt venues benefit to the tune of **£3,261,200** a year.

Hynt helps us get to know our customers and their needs. (Venue)

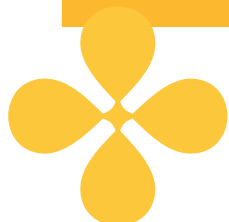
I have more confidence in venues who operate Hynt. They appreciate difficulties of mobility and treat you with dignity and respect.

We are now welcoming people who wouldn't normally have come. We now have a larger amount of disabled people coming. (Venue)

I'm willing to buy the coke the ice cream as we wouldn't be going without the free ticket. We go for lunch as well on a trip out.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

For every £1 spent on Hynt, £6.05 of social value is created



The scheme generates £24,018,708 of social value every year, including:

£494 of value for each cardholder
£129 for each Essential Companion



Hynt venues generate £42.33 in additional value for every complimentary ticket they give away



This includes £23.53 of additional revenue for each complimentary ticket



£3,261,200 of additional revenue is brought into local economies each year as a result of Hynt

WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T

What works

Cardholders & Essential Companions

- Hynt reaches people throughout Wales and across deprivation levels
- Complimentary ticket makes theatre affordable
- Hynt cardholders have better physical access to venues and better access to content
- Scheme reduces isolation and improves wellbeing amongst cardholders and essential companions

What can be improved

Cardholders & Essential Companions

- Booking system
- Website Marketing to increase reach
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Additional capacity needed in Hynt Team
- Funding should be longer-term and increased



WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T

What works

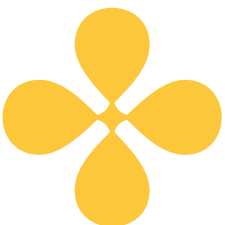
Venues

- Venues attract new, diverse audience
- Venues know exactly what each Hynt cardholder needs
- Venues make an additional £23.53 in revenue for every complimentary ticket they give

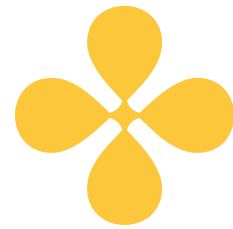
What can be improved

Venues

- Communication and engagement with venues from Hynt
- Training and support for venues to improve inclusive practices



RECOMMENDATIONS



Review of Hynt Operations and Governance

- Consider appointing a development committee/group to work through the recommendations of the report, to discuss with ACW the funding implications of the report and consider some easy to implement decisions to improve the scheme in the short term.
- Convene meetings with partners to understand the needs of all the partners in the scheme and review the partnership agreements.
- Explore and implement appropriate, robust governance structures and procedures.
- Expand the existing Hynt Team to add capacity.
- Consider re-launching the scheme, with improvements, further developments and appropriate resourcing in place.

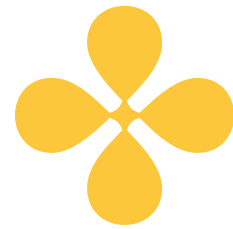
Review of Hynt Application Process

- Review and update the eligibility criteria.
- Work with cardholders to review the application process from start to finish, both online and with a hard copy.
- Update and extend the information given about the eligibility criteria and the application process, and make the language more inclusive and accessible.
- Include a review date for Hynt members to update details and needs, and to reduce concerns about fraud.

Marketing and Promotion

- Develop and implement a marketing strategy for both cardholders and venues.
- Utilise networks and partner organisations to raise awareness of Hynt amongst d/Deaf/ hearing impairment, disabled, and neurodivergent people
- Upgrade the website to make it fit for purpose for cardholders and venues.
- Consider commissioning further work to understand partnership or commercial opportunities for the scheme.





Monitoring and Evaluation

- Collect demographic and baseline data for all cardholders during the application process.
- Develop and implement impact measurement tools to allow live reporting against key impact measures:
 - o D/deaf /hearing impaired, disabled and neurodivergent people experience the arts in Wales more fully and more often.
 - o Theatres and concert venues attract a wider, more diverse audience, and increase income.
- Implement regular, possibly annualised surveys for Hynt cardholders and Hynt venues to improve insight and understanding.

Venues

- Increase dialogue and engagement with venues and share learning from this report.
- Consider supporting venues to think about the whole customer experience from the perspective of the Hynt cardholder and inclusive practices through the whole organisation and their systems and processes. This could include: staffing, training, governance, procurement, creative engagement, outreach and education, transport and programming.
- Work with ticketing system providers, ticket agencies, ticket promoters and STAR (Secure Tickets from Authorised Retailers) to enable all customers to book online, ensuring full accessibility in booking for all Hynt venues.

Recommendations for Arts Council of Wales (ACW)

- ACW to reconsider the funding strategy in terms of length and amount of funding to ensure a sustainable, effective, efficient, integrated and widespread scheme. Funding terms should be 3-5 years.
- ACW and funders to consider what else they can do to support the Hynt scheme, particularly through their data collection and monitoring, application processes and support for EDI training.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hynt is an Arts Council of Wales initiative managed by Creu Cymru in partnership with Diverse Cymru. Thank you to Arts Council England for funding this report. With thanks to everyone who contributed to this report: the Hynt cardholders, their families and friends, the venues' staff, the organisations and people who facilitated focus groups on our behalf, the Hynt scheme partner organisations and collaborators, Megan Merrett and Louise Miles-Payne at Creu Cymru. Many thanks to Tim Wheeler and Phil Lofthouse at Arts Council England, and Diane Hebb and Amanda Loosemore at ACW for their support with this report. Thanks also to Kat Watkins and Rhian Davies at Disability Wales, Richard Hoare, Richie Turner and Andrew Miller MBE, UK Arts Access Champion.



**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Creu
Cymru**



**Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales**



Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by
Welsh Government

Contact

Creu Cymru
PO Box 242
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 9AX
www.hynt.co.uk
info@hynt.co.uk
[@we_are_hynt](https://twitter.com/we_are_hynt)





Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: DB-PO-0363-23

Delyth Jewell MS
Chair – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations
Committee
SeneddCulture@senedd.wales

24 October 2023

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your support last night in ensuring the situation around the accidental publication of the Culture Strategy Interim Report was quickly resolved.

I am of course concerned that this error happened. It is unfortunate that an internal working document which had not been shared further than our Steering Group has now been in the public domain. This could lead to difficult conversations with trusted partners who have not yet had an opportunity to comment on the content of the strategy.

Moving forward, I believe it best that we adopt a protocol of only sharing published documents with the Committee. I remain eager to ensure we maintain a constructive and positive relationship with the Committee and hope that our regular meetings will provide the appropriate mechanism for discussing issues which are not yet in the public domain.

Yours sincerely,

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Dawn Bowden MS
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism
Welsh Government

24 October 2023

Re: publication of cultural strategy interim report 24 October 2023

Dear Dawn

Thank you for bringing the publication of the above document to my attention yesterday evening, and for your letter today.

I would like to apologise once again for this error. The document was restricted as soon as the error was brought to my attention. I acknowledge fully, however, that in this case the care with which we dealt with the draft document fell below the high standards that officials and the Committee set themselves and I would like to assure you that this will not happen again.

I am grateful to you, as ever, for sharing this information with the Committee, as it helps with our broader understanding of your department's work. I note that you have proposed that only published material will be shared with the Committee in the future. I hope that we will be able to work towards rebuilding your trust and confidence.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do contact me directly or through official channels.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.





8th November 2023

FAO: Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Dear Delyth Jewell,

I am writing in light of the recent decision by *Wales Arts Review*, our country's leading cultural journal, to disengage with the Books Council of Wales and its English language magazine funding facility that has provided *Wales Arts Review* with core funding since 2014. The effect of this action puts the future of the organisation in jeopardy, but we felt we had no alternative. The decision was a point of principle, but, first and foremost, it was a clarion call for the magazine and wider English language publishing sector in Wales which finds itself in increasingly dire financial health, one that we have become sure is unsustainable.

I am writing to the committee in order to help shine a light on a sector that has been dramatically let down by the body that should be working to sustain it, and which has also been crucially underfunded by Welsh Government. **I am writing in the hope that the Committee may pick up some of the questions that *Wales Arts Review* has been forced to ask of the Books Council of Wales.**

Background

Founded in 2012, *Wales Arts Review* has been in receipt of funding from the English language magazine fund administered by the Books Council of Wales since 2014. As a spotlight on the arts and culture of Wales for a global readership we are now being read by 300,000 people in 200 countries. *Wales Arts Review* has published over 5,000 reviews, essays and interviews by over 500 Welsh and Wales-based writers. The success of *Wales Arts Review* is a remarkable story of dedication, resilience, and passion for the arts and culture of Wales, created and published by a team who work far beyond the resources available to us. We have operated during this time, partially, on BCW grants of between £20,000 and £27,500pa.

Within this, we have given opportunities to many individuals (over forty at the last count) in the publishing industry, through internships, paid positions and structured work experience programs. Our BCW grant has been an investment, not just in the core team at *Wales Arts Review*, but in the wider creative sector in Wales, that has returned much more in terms of social and cultural capital. Furthermore, we have also provided guidance and an artistic

space to aspiring authors, artists, producers, and writers to showcase their talents on a global platform.

Concerns

We have become increasingly dismayed at messages coming out of BCW in the last few years signalling that there would be no increase in money available, given the **24% decrease in real terms value of the grant money in the 5 years since the last allocation**. BCW has also made it very clear that the coming years will be harder, with an increased squeeze on resources and funding. *Wales Arts Review* came to the enormously difficult decision that we would be better off closing down than trying to sustain a publication in such circumstances, and thus damaging the legacy of the work we have produced in the last decade.

Our main concerns over the systems of funding established by BCW can be broken down to these:

- The cap on what a publication can apply for in the 2023 round of funding means that *Wales Arts Review* could have only applied for less than we needed to operate on a budget commensurate with real terms increases in budgetary demands since the last round of funding was allocated. It means that applicants are not even being permitted to make our strongest case.
- The culture of conservatism at the BCW means that they are unable to make the tough decisions. Instead they keep their existing portfolio on life-support. The evidence is clear in that two of their biggest recipients of funding had to hold existential fundraisers in the last cycle.
- We believe the model for funding is a clear sign that BCW is failing in its duty to encourage and nurture innovation and creativity.
- It became clear during our initial preparations for the application that BCW has not revised, renewed, or reconsidered the remit for the application to the English language magazines fund in the past 5 years that has seen epochal cultural, political, and economic shifts in the United Kingdom and beyond. BCW has issued a near-identical set of documents pertaining to the funding as it did in 2018. We believe this is evidence of a dereliction of duty by BCW.
- *Wales Arts Review* has proven over and over that it operates a vital cultural public service and that it should be correctly funded as such. What BCW was offering instead was a system that would neither support growth nor properly fund a public service business model. I ask if that is a responsible position to take for an organisation charged with the support of the sector.
- BCW has dismissed the concerns of *Wales Arts Review* in these matters, concerns that are widespread across the sector, as evidence by Emily Trahair's editorial for Planet Magazine in 2023 in which she detailed the stresses of operating under BCW budgets, including effects on work ethics and wellbeing, contradicting Welsh Government's own Healthy Working Wales pledges.

Questions

I would like to encourage the Committee to consider the following questions in relation to the Books Council of Wales' funding of English language magazines.

1. Is it morally defensible that In 2022 Welsh language magazines benefitted from a pot of £385,000, whereas in 2023 English language magazines have their corresponding fund amounting to just £180,000?
2. Why has there not been an opportunity for a sector-wide debate on the need (or not) for radical restructuring as proposed in my article of Sept 23, "[A New Future is Needed for Magazines in Wales](#)"? I believe a creative and radical overhaul of the magazine sector in Wales could use the limited resources in innovative ways and produce a vibrant and robust magazine sector. BCW has shown no willingness to engage in discussions about doing things differently.
3. Given that there has been no review of the funding model, guidelines, or application remit in five years, is BCW guilty of negligence toward the English language magazine sector in Wales?

Reflections

We believe it is a reasonable evaluation that BCW's model for funding is a clear sign that BCW is failing in its duty to encourage and nurture innovation and creativity, and that this funding approach will only manage the decline of the English language magazines in Wales.

I would be happy to make myself available for further and deeper discussion on these points, in particular the potentialities and possibilities of reshaping the English language magazine sector.

Your sincerely,



Gary Raymond
co-founder and executive editor of *Wales Arts Review*
gary@walesartsreview.org
07794578176

Agenda Item 4.6

MINISTERIAL INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

OCTOBER 2023

INWARD VISITS

- 16 Oct** **Visit to Wales by Australian High Commissioner**
The Minister for Economy met with the High Commissioner during his visit to Wales for Wales Tech Week. Their meeting discussed opportunities for greater trade, collaboration and investment in tech & cyber.
- 20 Oct** **Visit by Irish Ministers to Wales (Wales Ireland Ministerial Forum)**
The First Minister and other Cabinet members met with the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, and Irish Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science as part of the Wales/Ireland Ministerial Forum in North Wales. Details of the two-day programme has been published in a written statement.
[Written Statement: Ireland-Wales Ministerial Forum](#)
- 26 Oct** **Visit to Wales by New Zealand High Commissioner**
The First Minister met with the High Commissioner to share learning on Universal Basic Income, the Well-being Alliance and the young vote. The High Commissioner also met with the Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd and attended Blas Cymru/ Taste of Wales event.

OUTWARD VISITS

- 05 Oct** **First Minister Visit France for Wales in France year and RWC**
The First Minister visited France to take part in a programme of events celebrating the Wales in France year and to support promotional activity surrounding the group stages of the Rugby World Cup. Details of the visit, including the visits by the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport & Tourism and Minister for Finance & Local Government has been published in a written statement.
[Written Statement: Raising the profile of Wales at the Rugby World Cup](#)

Jeremy Miles MS
Minister for Education and Welsh Language
Welsh Government

25 October 2023

Future support for Duolingo

Dear Jeremy

I am writing to you following recent reports that Duolingo will no longer be updating or editing the Welsh language course on its app from the end of October 2023. As I am sure you will agree, this news is very concerning given the number of learners who use Duolingo, either solely or alongside formal provision, to learn Welsh.

I would be grateful if you could outline:

- When you were first made aware of Duolingo's plans;
- What discussions have been undertaken by either you or your officials with Duolingo about this issue, either before or since this announcement;
- What discussions you have had with the National Centre for Learning Welsh relating to its role in continuing to create content for Duolingo;
- What potential resource implications exist for the National Centre if its offer to help with the work of developing the Welsh course on Duolingo is accepted.

You have previously stated that the partnership between Duolingo and the National Centre "will create even more opportunities for people to enjoy learning and using the language." This resource is therefore a critical component in working towards the ambition of ensuring 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050, a goal I know that you are committed to achieving.

I look forward to receiving your response in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Delyth Jewell

Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Document is Restricted