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This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care](#)  
[Committee](#) consultation on [mental health inequalities](#)

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**Ymateb gan: | Response from: Cronfa Treftadaeth y Loteri Genedlaethol |**  
**National Lottery Heritage Fund**

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## National Lottery Heritage Fund response to the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry into mental health inequalities

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This consultation response may be made public and is not subject to any restrictions.

### Background

Created in 1994, the National Lottery Heritage Fund ('the Heritage Fund') supports projects involving the national and local heritage of the United Kingdom. We are a UK-wide arm's length public body, we receive policy directions from the UK Government and from the devolved governments<sup>1</sup>. Since our inception, the Heritage Fund has invested over £8billion in grants to more than 45,000 projects across the UK equating to £420million to over 2,700 projects in Wales, making us the biggest single investor in the UK's heritage sector outside of government, a level of investment made possible through people across the UK participating in the National Lottery. We believe in the value of heritage as a contributor to the life of the nation, assets, organisations and experiences that help define our lives, and our shared identities. The Heritage Fund follows a set of priorities<sup>2</sup> which help decide which projects receive National Lottery money. These include to have regard to the interests of Wales as a whole and the interests of different parts of Wales, provide opportunities for people from across Wales of all ages and backgrounds, especially children and young people to have access to, to learn about, to enjoy and thereby promote the diverse heritage of Wales.

The Heritage Fund defines the difference we want to make with our funding through a set of outcomes. In 2021-22, we are prioritising heritage projects that will meet six of our outcomes as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. They are: a wider range of people will be involved in heritage (this is a mandatory outcome); the funded organisation will be more resilient; people will have greater wellbeing; people will have developed skills; the local area will be a better place to live, work or visit; and the local economy will be boosted.

In addition to distributing National Lottery funds, we also distribute funding on behalf of the Welsh Government. Since 2020 all local authorities in Wales have received funding through this mechanism as follows:

Local Authority	Projects	Grant Awarded	Grant per Capita
Blaenau Gwent	2	£20,100	£0
Bridgend	5	£740,100	£5
Caerphilly	2	£58,800	£0
Cardiff	21	£1,498,644	£4
Carmarthenshire	13	£397,790	£2
Ceredigion	6	£599,356	£8
Conwy	2	£19,222	£0
Denbighshire	6	£66,100	£1
Flintshire	7	£554,135	£4

Gwynedd	21	£1,765,645	£14
Isle of Anglesey	5	£61,025	£1
Merthyr Tydfil	2	£60,000	£1
Monmouthshire	8	£870,700	£9
Neath Port Talbot	9	£261,900	£2
Newport	7	£286,200	£2
Pembrokeshire	13	£473,260	£4
Powys	31	£1,177,940	£9
Rhondda Cynon Taf	11	£85,800	£0
Swansea	14	£768,838	£3
Torfaen	4	£65,700	£1
Vale of Glamorgan	5	£264,182	£2
Wrexham	7	£153,849	£1

The Welsh Government funded schemes have thus far included:

- Local Places for Nature<sup>3</sup> capital grant scheme for Wales – Welsh Government funding to enable communities to restore and enhance nature. £10k-£100k grants totalling £2.3million; and Local Places for Nature – Breaking Barriers<sup>4</sup> – revenue only grant scheme to help excluded and disadvantaged communities to connect with nature in Wales;
- Community Woodlands<sup>5</sup> scheme - £2.1million Welsh Government funding to restore, create, connect and manage woodlands in Wales;
- Two rounds of 15 Minute Heritage<sup>6</sup> – a collaboration with Cadw encouraging engagement with heritage within 15 minutes of people’s doorsteps;
- The Green Recovery Capacity Building Scheme – A £1million joint project with the Welsh Government to offer grants between £5,000-£100,000 to pay for business skills training for Welsh environmental non-governmental organisations.

The historic environment has a significant role to play in enabling and supporting people to maintain their health and lead healthy, active lives through range of outdoor activities. It is widely recognised that culture and heritage can support wellbeing, and research by the Historic Environment Forum<sup>7</sup> found that engaging with or living near heritage is associated with higher life satisfaction and quality of life.

**Committee inquiry question: Which groups of people are disproportionately affected by poor mental health in Wales? What factors contribute to worse mental health within these groups?**

The Heritage Fund’s Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024<sup>8</sup> has a mandatory outcome for all projects – ‘involving a wider range of people in heritage’ – which is situated within our policy context which recognises existing, and well researched UK inequalities and takes action to address these inequalities. The Heritage Fund’s inclusion guidance<sup>9</sup> uses ‘Taking Part’ and ‘Monitor of Engagement with the Environment’ (MENE) research evidence and data to demonstrate how people and communities with protected characteristics including disabilities, are under-represented in cultural and heritage activities, and engagement with land and nature.

The Heritage Fund recognises the power of heritage in connecting us with each other in new, often unexpected ways, building connections across communities and across ages, demographics and cultural backgrounds. Loneliness is associated with higher rates of depression, high blood pressure and dementia<sup>10</sup>, and the Heritage Fund is an active member of the DCMS convened Tackling Loneliness cross sector network<sup>11</sup> working alongside charities including Red Cross, Age UK, other Lottery providers including the National Lottery Community Fund and others.

The Heritage Fund has an in-house inclusion policy lead, bringing specific intersectional expertise in building strategic networks with allies including people with lived experience of mental ill health, and mental health focused charities including Mind, Richmond Fellowship, and the Mental Health Foundation. These networks have led to a strong focus on how the Heritage Fund promotes mental health partnerships across all levels of funding, including with social housing and care providers.

**Case study: First Base Day Centre celebrates grant to restore home and help homeless<sup>12</sup>.** The Heritage Fund supported a five year project to provide service users, together with local schools and the wider community, the opportunity to get involved in an education and activity programme to bring to life the history of St Stephen's Hall in Brighton, through historical research and practical conservation workshops. The Hall, dating back to 1766, became the First Base Day Centre for homeless and vulnerable men and women in 1974. The project involved service users in research activities exploring the history of homelessness – the changing profile of a homeless person, workhouses and other 'poor' institutions, laws, diet, disease, and the development of the welfare state. One of the core project partners, The Brighton Housing Trust, enables its service users to live independently through providing services which seek to address the causes and effects of poor mental health, as well as homelessness, vulnerability and poverty. Through the project, service users were able to help deliver education sessions for schools and community groups, including role play, handling artefacts and cookery lessons.

**Case study: Museum of Homelessness gets funding to explore untold stories of homeless and LGBTIQ+ communities through Islington project<sup>13</sup>.** The Heritage Fund provided a £98,000 grant to finance the first time that "outsider heritage" of homelessness and LGBTIQ+ resistance will be explored together in the UK. At the pioneering homeless shelter, social justice activists and artists have been documenting homeless and queer heritage. The new funding will support a weekly direct access drop in service for street homeless people, and service users will be able to access hot food and a shower, and get involved in the creative heritage project. By recording and sharing community stories, we can learn about our heritage and discover what it tells us about our future.

**Committee inquiry question: To what extent does Welsh Government policy recognise and address the mental health needs of these groups? What are the policy gaps?**

It is critical that the Welsh Government recognises the important role that heritage has to play in supporting wellbeing and mental health. The heritage sector can offer significant benefits to the population's wellbeing and mental health, and this should be reflected in mental health policy and practice. Visiting heritage sites can contribute enormously to wellbeing, as can volunteering, and being involved in community projects. As the Heritage Alliance sets out, heritage can provide healing spaces and activities for people living with

particular conditions, such as dementia and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research<sup>14</sup> has demonstrated the benefits of social prescribing schemes in museums, outcomes of which included improved mental wellbeing and reductions in depression.

Nature is our oldest form of heritage, and access to woodlands is very important for individuals to support their mental health and wellbeing. Forest Research<sup>15</sup> attempts to estimate the capital value of mental health benefits provided by UK woodlands. It is based upon an association between regular visits to natural environments and a reduced prevalence of common mental illnesses, combined with societal costs of depression and anxiety, including lost working days and NHS costs. The Welsh Government should recognise the value of land and nature, and wider heritage, in mental health and wellbeing, and learn from wide ranging evidence which links heritage with mental health support. Indeed, Richard Layard (LSE) argues that wherever there is a fixed budget constraint, money should be allocated to policies which give the greatest increase in wellbeing per pound of expenditure<sup>16</sup>.

**Committee inquiry question: What further action is needed, by whom / where, to improve mental health and outcomes for the groups of people identified and reduce mental health inequalities in Wales?**

The heritage sector's positive contribution to wellbeing should be recognised, by not only Welsh Government, but the health and care sector. Mental health cannot be looked at in isolation, and the value of different sectors should be recognised.

**Case study: Green Valley Conservation and Heritage project<sup>17</sup>.** The project, led by Green Valley Wellbeing Group, provides outdoor activities and accredited training programmes for young people, many of whom are excluded from the mainstream. The organisation works with people from all ages experiencing mental health issues. The project has forged links with community groups, autistic support networks, job centres and schools, and accepts social prescription referrals from GP surgeries. The emphasis is on connecting with nature and harnessing the benefits of nature to improve wellbeing as well as employability.

Heritage can support mental health, and the Heritage Fund is proud to work with the Baring Foundation, and mental health and heritage organisation The Restoration Trust. The 'Creatively Minded'<sup>18</sup> report sets out 18 case studies, the majority supported by the Heritage Fund, showcasing excellent practice across multiple art forms, heritage assets, inclusive, people-centred approaches, organisational structures and health settings, to demonstrate how heritage can be used creatively to improve people's mental health and community connections.

**Case study: Brecon Cathedral – 1,000 years of calm<sup>19</sup>.** Brecon Cathedral ran a four month project, working with the local Mind branch, researchers at the University of the West of England, and their own outreach programme. The project was designed to develop the heritage and wellbeing offer at the Cathedral by creating new heritage landscape trails, and delivering gardening and learning workshops. The workshops were provided for a local school from a deprived ward, and for local adults with depleted mental health, through a partnership with Mind.

The Heritage Fund would like to point to the Restoration Trust as a UK leader of exemplary heritage and mental health partnership working. The Restoration Trust recognises the chasm between what people with serious mental health challenges need, and what is on offer – they work in partnership with heritage / arts and health / social care bodies to provide 'culture therapy' for people with mental health problems. The organisation uses heritage and

creativity to improve people's mental health without relying on services.

"Refocusing early intervention and prevention away from institutions and into communities overcomes systematic exclusion from amazing cultural assets that belong to us all. Weaving partnerships and groups into new communities has long term impacts on people and places. Participants are equal partners, so we highlight their interest and skills through meaningful involvement<sup>20</sup>".

**Case study: Dr Hills' Casebook: The Anthology<sup>21</sup>.** The Dr Hills' Casebook: The Anthology is a collection of patient case studies, stories and creative responses by members of the Change Minds: Dr Hills' Casebook community. The Casebook was a heritage and creativity project that ran from 2019-2021, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation. It was intended to support the wellbeing of people living with mental health challenges, and to stimulate public conversation by comparing past and present treatments. Members of the Change Minds projects worked with historical records, in particular the patient casebooks from the Norfolk County Asylum held at the Norfolk Record Office. Ultimately what was produced was an innovative, moving and important piece of theatre.

**Case study: Burgh Castle Almanac<sup>22</sup>.** This archaeology, creativity and wellbeing programme based at Burgh Castle Fort and Time and Tide Museum. Evaluation of the work showed that history and landscape were key themes, with participants talking about the therapeutic impact of being in nature, being outdoors, walking, and witnessing the changing seasons. Walking in nature seemed to provide both sanctuary and a safe place to talk and connect with others. Key themes that arose from the evaluation narrative were: trying new things; learning; history; landscapes; sanctuary; looking / taking notice; perspective; friendship; safety; and expression and sharing.

Although these are examples from outside of Wales, the person centred and lived experience focus, outcomes, resources and evaluation methods are all transferable.

In conclusion, heritage is inextricably linked to mental health and wellbeing, often generating positive emotions and sense of connection. Heritage contributes to individuals' and communities collective memory, sense of belonging, cultural identity, and social cohesion – all elements strongly connected with mental health and wellbeing. The Welsh Government should recognise the valuable role heritage has to play in our mental health, and consider the role it can play in our collective wellbeing.

- <sup>1</sup> Welsh Government, National Policy Directions in Relation to Wales for the National Lottery Heritage Fund (2019), available at [national-lottery-heritage-fund-spending-priorities-for-national-lottery-funding.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)
- <sup>2</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024, available at [Strategic Funding Framework 2019–2024 | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>3</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, Local Places for Nature, available at [Local Places for Nature | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>4</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, Local Places for Nature – Breaking Barriers, available at [Local Places for Nature – Breaking Barriers | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>5</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, Community Woodlands, available at [Community Woodlands | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>6</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, 15-Minute Heritage Fund, available at [15-Minute Heritage Grants \(Round 2\) | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>7</sup> Heritage Alliance, Heritage, Health and Wellbeing (2020), available at [untitled \(theheritagealliance.org.uk\)](#)
- <sup>8</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024, available at [Strategic Funding Framework 2019–2024 | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>9</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, Inclusion Guidance, available at [Guidance for Inclusion | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>10</sup> Local Government Association, Must Know: Loneliness – Is your council actively tackling loneliness, available at [Must Know: Loneliness - Is your council actively tackling loneliness? | Local Government Association](#)
- <sup>11</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Policy Paper – Emerging Together: the Tackling Loneliness Network Action Plan, available at [Emerging Together: the Tackling Loneliness Network Action Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- <sup>12</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, First Base Day Centre celebrates grant to restore home and help homeless (2010), available at [First Base Day Centre celebrates grant to restore home and help homeless | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>13</sup> West London Mission (WLM), Museum of Homelessness gets funding to explore untold stories of homeless and LGBTIQ+ communities through Islington project (2020), available at [Museum of Homelessness gets funding to explore untold stories of homeless and LGBTIQ+ communities through Islington project | West London Mission \(WLM\)](#)
- <sup>14</sup> Heritage Alliance, Heritage, Health and Wellbeing (2020), available at [untitled \(theheritagealliance.org.uk\)](#)
- <sup>15</sup> Saraev V., O'Brien L, Valatin G., and Bursnell M., (2021), Valuing the mental health benefits of woodlands, Forest Research. Available at [Valuing the mental health benefits of woodlands - Forest Research](#)
- <sup>16</sup> Layard R., (2022), Why wellbeing should be the goal of policy, LSE blogs. Available at [Why wellbeing should be the goal of policy | LSE COVID-19](#)
- <sup>17</sup> National Lottery Heritage Fund, South Wales wellbeing garden wins National Lottery Award (2021), available at [South Wales wellbeing garden wins National Lottery award | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- <sup>18</sup> The Baring Foundation, Creatively Minded and Heritage, available at [Creatively Minded and Heritage - The Baring Foundation](#)
- <sup>19</sup> Diocese of Swansea and Brecon, Grant backing for heritage landscape trail (2020), available at [Grant backing for heritage landscape trail - Swansea & Brecon Diocese \(churchinwales.org.uk\)](#)
- <sup>20</sup> Restoration Trust, What We Do, available at [What we do – Restoration Trust](#)
- <sup>21</sup> Restoration Trust, Dr Hills' Casebook: The Anthology – Restoration Trust (2021), available at [Dr Hills' Casebook: The Anthology – Restoration Trust](#)
- <sup>22</sup> Burgh Castle Almanac, About, available at [About – Burgh Castle Almanac](#)