

National Assembly for Wales
Communities, Equality and
Local Government Committee

**Report by the Task and Finish Group
on Participation in the Arts**

January 2013



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

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The Committee was established on 22 June 2011 with a remit to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters encompassing: Wales's culture; languages; communities and heritage, including sport and the arts; local government in Wales, including all housing matters; and equality of opportunity for all.

Task and Finish Group

The Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee established a task and finish group of three Members to consider and report on Participation in the Arts. The group members were Ann Jones (Chair), Rhodri Glyn Thomas and Joyce Watson.

Current Committee membership



Ann Jones (Chair)

Welsh Labour
Vale of Clwyd



Joyce Watson

Welsh Labour
Mid and West Wales



Rhodri Glyn Thomas

Plaid Cymru
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

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Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The Welsh Government should put in place a participation action plan, to sit alongside its accessibility action plan, with the purpose of increasing participation levels across Wales. (Page 25)

Recommendation 2. The action plan should include measures to monitor participation levels across the arts, and actions to identify inequality of provision (e.g. due to geographic, economic or social reasons). (Page 25)

Recommendation 3. In addition to accessibility and equality, the Welsh Government's annual remit letter should include an emphasis on increasing participation levels. (Page 25)

Recommendation 4. The action plan should include measures to ensure co-ordination across government departments and joint working by partners, including local government and the voluntary sector. (Page 26)

Recommendation 5. The Arts Council of Wales should keep under review its funding policies, to ensure that they are delivering excellence, while increasing participation levels. (Page 34)

Recommendation 6. The Arts Council of Wales should ensure that organisations are able to access information on alternative sources of funding. This should be in the form of training, if necessary. (Page 34)

Recommendation 7. The Arts Council of Wales should ensure that it uses its relationships with networks to ensure that information reaches relevant organisations. (Page 35)

Recommendation 8. The Arts Council of Wales should put in place a strategy to increase levels of funding from business. (Page 35)

1. Introduction

1. The arts sector in Wales is wide and varied. Some arts activities are provided by large, professional networks and others are run by volunteers. Funding sources include the Arts Council of Wales (who also distribute Lottery funding), local authorities and other sources such as charitable trusts and private businesses.

2. The equality of opportunity to participate in arts activities is highlighted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) article 27(1), which states that:

“Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, [and] to enjoy the arts [..]”

3. The UN Convention on the Rights on People with Disabilities, article 30 also states:

“States Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society.”

4. In Wales, these values are underpinned by strategies such as the Arts Council of Wales’s [Participation Strategy \(2009-13\)](#), the Welsh Government’s *Programme for Government* and public authorities’ strategic equality plans.

Accessibility inquiry

5. In the third Assembly, the former Communities and Culture Committee undertook a lengthy inquiry into the accessibility of arts and cultural activities in Wales, which reported in February 2011.¹

6. In January 2012, the Minister provided an update on the progress of the report’s recommendations to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee.²

¹ National Assembly for Wales Communities and Culture Committee-[The accessibility of arts and cultural activities in Wales](#), February 2011

² [Update from the Welsh Government on the Communities and Culture Committee Report into the Accessibility of Arts and Cultural Activities in Wales](#), 18 January 2012

Petitions

7. A number of petitions were received by the Assembly's Petitions Committee following the Arts Council of Wales's Investment Review expressing concern at the impact of decisions that had been taken following that review.³

Terms of reference

8. The Committee agreed to the following terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group:

The Committee will:

- assess the impact of budget cuts on participation in the arts in Wales, specifically whether certain groups of people have been affected more than others;
- identify gaps in provision for participation in the arts, both demographically and geographically;
- explore the role of the voluntary arts sector in arts participation and scope alternative funding sources;
- evaluate the policy framework between the Welsh Government and the bodies that distribute arts funding; and
- look at whether arts organisations in Wales are equipped to deliver the equality objectives of their funders.

Method

9. As the focus of this inquiry is on participation in the arts, the Committee thought it was important to gather the views of individuals as well as organisations. The call for evidence reflected this, and consultation questions were made available in various formats.

10. The Assembly's Outreach Team organised a number of workshops across Wales that were hosted by local arts organisations. These were used to gather the views of individuals that might not have otherwise responded to the inquiry. A report on these evidence gathering activities is available on the Committee's website.⁴

³ P-04-0317 - Hijinx funding for the arts; [P-03-308 - Save Gwent Theatre](#); [P-03-311 Spectacle Theatre](#); [P-03-314 - Save Theatr Powys and Mid Powys Youth Theatre](#)

⁴ [Focus Group Report](#)

11. Two oral evidence sessions were held on 15 and 29 March, where representatives from various organisations including the Arts Council of Wales, Hijinx Theatre, Disability Arts Cymru and Voluntary Arts Wales, among others, gave evidence.

2. Barriers to participation

Introduction

12. This chapter sets out the feedback we received from witnesses about what they perceive to be barriers to participation. In Chapters 3 and 4 we will set out some of the ways that we believe these concerns could be addressed.

Transport and rural areas

13. Over thirty respondents highlighted transport and rurality as major barriers to participation in the arts. People noted that the rising cost of fuel, reductions in local transport services and the closures of local arts organisations were all factors in their decision whether or not to take part in activities. A number of respondents⁵ noted the particular lack of public transport in rural areas and in the evening.

14. An individual respondent highlighted a particular case of where transport is a barrier to participation in north Wales:

“[...] without Theatr Harlech people in Ardudwy have to drive for over an hour each way to attend similar/ larger scale arts events on the North Wales coast in Caernarfon, Bangor and Llandudno.

“There is no public transport available for such journeys in the evenings. Such distances, especially in the winter months, severely restrict the opportunities and increase the cost of participating in live arts for local people.”

15. Hijinx noted particular issues around transport for people with a learning disability:

“Adults with learning disabilities who live in supported housing and are not able to travel by bus are unable to access either performances or participatory activities. Performances in mainstream venues are often too expensive for them. Vulnerable adults and older people are often anxious about travelling after dark.”⁶

16. Swansea Metropolitan University and Caerphilly County Borough Council also highlighted the issue of the cost of transport. In a focus group session, the Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales (BVSNW) stated that they get

⁵ Voluntary Arts Wales - Arts 10

⁶ Hijinx Theatre - Arts 04

requests from schools in north Wales to perform for them, but they are not always able to do so because of the extra costs for travel, which means that they do not perform there as much as they do in the south. This was echoed by the Wrexham Youth Justice Service, which commented on the issue of encouraging art professionals to travel to North Wales.

Gaps in provision

17. A number of gaps in provision were identified. These included gaps for:

- disabled people (highlighted by Disability Arts Cymru, Touch Trust and Prometheus);
- older people (highlighted by Age Cymru, Harlech and Ardudwy Music Society and Tonic);
- young people (highlighted by Oriel Myrddin Gallery and Cwmni'r Frân Wen); and
- people living in mid and west Wales (highlighted by ArtWorks Cymru, Mid Wales Opera and Power of the Flame).

18. Three respondents stated that there were gaps in the provision of traditional art forms.⁷

19. Disability Arts Cymru expressed concern about the indirect ways that disabled people may be affected by budget reductions:

“[...] when money is tight, or perceived to be tight, arts organisations and events organisers will make cuts to accessibility. Perhaps they will go for a cheaper venue where the access is not so good for disabled people, or worry less about whether there is enough parking, or access to the stage, or whether they can get sign language interpreters, or whatever the access issue is.”⁸

20. BVSNW represents artists from BME backgrounds, and they remarked that their artists have to work for a low rate in order to perform:

“[organisations] have an issue where they say they are expected to perform for minimal sums when comparing to other groups from more mainstream ethnic backgrounds.

⁷ BVSNW focus group

⁸ Oral Evidence, 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

“A difficult decision has to be made on a regular basis: do they perform at cheaper rates/free to increase exposure and awareness or do they refuse to perform under the standard rate. Equity has suggested that they should refuse to perform under the set rate.”⁹

21. However, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) noted that BME groups and Welsh speakers often engage more in the arts, proportionately.¹⁰

22. The ACW highlighted the work that they have been undertaking, and plan to undertake, in order to target arts provision at specific groups of people and address gaps in provision. They stated that:

“[...] our targeted development programmes are usually targeted at areas, groups, communities, or communities of artists that cannot access the more general funding, such as schemes funding, or are not part of our revenue portfolio. [...]

“Creative Steps looks to target artists who might, for example, come under the protected characteristics in the new Equality Act 2010.

“It is a very different way of working. It is about identifying those people, inviting them to come and have conversations with us, and then looking at the work that they have been doing, what their development needs might be, what kind of projects they might wish to develop, and working much more closely with them to look at what kind of funding might be appropriate.”¹¹

Deprived communities and the cost of participation

23. Eight individuals that responded to the consultation highlighted the cost of activities as another major barrier to participation. It was suggested by some respondents that people living in deprived communities were more likely to be affected by budget reductions as they are more likely to depend on subsidised provision.

24. Four organisations, including Cyster, noted that the changes to Communities First areas would also affect participation among people in deprived communities.

⁹ BVSNW Focus Group

¹⁰ Oral Evidence, 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid

25. Dawns I Bawb stated that:

“There is less funding available within Communities First so groups/ organisations which used to buy our services cannot do so any longer. As a consequence, it has become more difficult to reach people in these areas.”¹²

26. Harlech and Ardudwy Music Society noted that they have had to increase the fees for their courses because of reductions in funding, and Small World Theatre had noticed a marked decrease in attendees from deprived communities.

27. Several individuals noted that concessionary prices would encourage them to participate more. One individual stated that:

“[...] most arts activities are run by private companies, who are able to charge what they like, which obviously limits the attendance to people who are able to afford it, rather than be subsidised which would make them accessible to all.”

28. Another individual said that:

“Although I am a Senior Citizen, I pay full fees for this course [...]It’s quite a struggle to find the full fees.”

29. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council noted that more people are seeking financial assistance to attend arts activities:

“While we have not seen a significant decrease in numbers of participants, we are experiencing people needing to seek financial assistance to attend. We have considered offering our programmes for free however we feel that this devalues a service that is already being subsidised from the core budget and that people still need to pay to appreciate the high quality of service on offer.”

Education

30. The cuts to the Arts Council’s Theatre in Education (TIE) scheme were noted by Gwent Theatre and Spectacle Theatre. Gwent Theatre stated that:

“The cut in funding for Theatre in Education has been catastrophic. In the region of 20,000 young people have been denied access to TIE

¹² Community Dance for Conwy, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn - Arts 28

services in The Greater Gwent area alone. Similarly there is now no provision for TIE in either Rhondda Cynon Taf or Powys.”

31. On this issue, Spectacle Theatre remarked that:

“A generation of young people will be disenfranchised from their entitlement to access the arts in their community.”

32. Cyster noted that reductions in school budgets had also affected arts participation in an indirect way:

“Cuts to schools budgets have also had a massive effect already in terms of work in education. The cost of transport means we have run all our workshops within schools so that children do not need to pay to travel to rehearsals.”

33. Arts 4 Wellbeing¹³ thought that schools should offer more opportunities for participation, and Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts commented that they thought “education system does not value the arts enough.”

Facilities and venues

34. The issue of cuts to capital funding was highlighted as an important issue by organisations. Ty Cerdd Music Centre commented that new instruments are expensive, and buildings used for rehearsals are no longer fit for purpose. Some local authorities had recognised these issues, for example Carmarthenshire County Borough Council noted that venue sustainability is their priority, but this is having an effect on the groups of people that participate:

“While we are now having to prioritise venue sustainability as being the most effective way of providing access to the arts for most, this is beginning to affect the scope of being able to provide certain targeted interventions.”¹⁴

35. In a focus group session, Arts Alive remarked that schools and colleges should make their buildings and facilities (such as dark rooms and pottery studios) more available to arts groups.

36. Head for Arts also commented on the importance of schools as venues, saying that the lack of a school in north Torfaen makes finding a venue very

¹³ Arts 4 Wellbeing focus group

¹⁴ Carmarthenshire County Council - Arts 02

difficult. The WLGA noted that local authorities could support arts organisations by making venues available and suspending business rates.¹⁵

Quality and professionalism

37. The Arts Council's priority of 'excellence' in the arts led respondents to discuss issues around professionalism and quality.

38. Caerphilly County Borough Council stated that they have seen a rise in the number of professional artists seeking support, and an individual respondent said that there were less commissions for independent artists. Harlech and Arduwy Music Society noted that after losing ACW funding they have had to employ cheaper and fewer professional musicians to compensate.

39. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council stated that they have found it increasingly difficult to fund professional arts practitioners who will travel to the Valleys area, which has led to a gap in the provision of quality, affordable arts activities in this area. They also stated that:

“Other issues relating to quality are those around local groups and organisations not valuing the professional arts practice of community arts practitioners and opting instead to 'train' people in a weekend to be a dance practitioner or using someone who can play the guitar to teach a group to do so - these devalue the work being done by professionals and make it increasingly difficult to make the case for the proper payment of artists in communities as well as potentially jeopardising people's experience of the arts.”

Conclusions

40. The Committee recognises that the arts sector has been subject to significant pressures arising from the wider economic situation. We also recognise that the Arts Council of Wales has had to make some very difficult decisions relating to funding. In some cases, this has meant that organisations have had funding removed and it is difficult to see how they might carry on.

41. It is clear from the evidence that the arts sector is resilient, creative and responsive to change. However, the full impact of the public funding crisis

¹⁵ Oral Evidence, 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

has not been seen as yet, and this is something that needs to be kept under review.

42. In Chapters 3 and 4, we will set out the ways we feel that these issues can be addressed

3. Strategic Direction

43. In this chapter, we address the strategic issues that can address the issues outlined in the previous chapter.

44. The Welsh Government's *Programme for Government* includes a number of actions to improve accessibility and increase levels of participation in the arts. These actions have an overall aim to widen access to culture, heritage and sport, and encouraging greater participation, particularly by targeting low income families and children to access services. The individual actions are to:

- require the Arts Council Wales to continue improving access and reducing the barriers to participation and appreciation of the arts;
- require the Arts Council Wales to make arts for young people a central plank of its future action plan in an agreed Compact with the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills;
- require the Arts Council Wales to undertake a strategic developmental and support role for arts organisations in Wales.

45. The ACW has developed a [*Participation Strategy \(2009-13\)*](#), which focuses on three priorities:

- increasing opportunities for people to actively participate in the arts;
- raising the quality of Participatory Arts practice;
- helping the Participatory Arts in Wales to become more durable and sustainable.

46. The strategy states:

“In March 2008 we published Arts and Public Engagement a report on the results of research into the barriers that prevent people from taking part in the arts. The main reasons centred around lack of public transport, community safety, cost and lack of interest.

“We now need to find ways of addressing these, working through the organisations we fund and in partnership with other key agencies, such as Local Authorities and Communities First.”

Annual remit letter and accountability

47. Both organisations and individuals seemed to have a general lack of awareness about the relationship between the Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales, even if their organisation was funded by the ACW.

48. Harlech and Ardudwy Music Society remarked on the accountability of the Minister for Heritage, noting that individual funding decisions by ACW are not the responsibility of the Welsh Government, which they thought was “disgraceful”.

49. However, Mid Wales Opera supported the Minister’s decision to not comment on individual cases:

“We believe that ACW is doing an excellent job and that the way in which the Welsh Government consistently refused during the Funding Review to get drawn into individual cases was appropriate.”

50. Hijinx Theatre stated in their written and oral evidence that the Assembly should have a greater input into the Minister’s annual remit letter to ACW, through an annual arts debate. BVSNW thought that an Assembly Committee should have the opportunity to scrutinise ACW’s decisions and progress.

51. The Wales Association for the Performing Arts (WAPA) suggested that the remit of the Arts Strategy Board should be widened.¹⁶ In their oral evidence ACW agreed with this principle, and suggested that officials from other governmental departments should be included in the membership in order to encourage cross-departmental working.

52. In their oral evidence, ACW re-stated that they would welcome the broadening of the Arts Strategy Board’s membership,¹⁷ and the WLGA noted that the Board had been recently considering widening its membership. They also commented that a balance must be struck between being fully representative and being cumbersome.

53. The ACW said that they would welcome a more ‘joined-up’ approach from the Welsh Government, which recognises:

“[...] the work that the arts can contribute to a whole host of other areas, from education, to health, to economic development. The arts

¹⁶ Wales Association for the Performing Arts - Arts 24

¹⁷ Oral Evidence, 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

strategy board is intended to provide a vehicle for the arts council to liaise with Government as a whole, but, if you are asking me for my honest opinion on how effective that is, I would say that it is mixed and that we do not have quite as regular a relationship with other departments as we do with heritage.”¹⁸

54. A number of other respondents noted the importance of improving cross-departmental working, specifically between local government, health, education and the arts. The Theatres Trust summarised this sentiment:

“The Theatres Trust would like to see more collaboration between government departments which recognise the value of the arts across many other areas of policy – in education, tourism and inward investment and culture.”

55. The WLGA commented on where responsibility lies for consulting arts organisations during formulation of ACW’s remit letter:

“Consulting with those groups is very much the role of the arts council and local authorities. I suppose that the dilemma with consulting all arts groups is that you may get skewed away from real strategic planning.”¹⁹

The Role of the Arts Council of Wales

56. The majority of respondents were happy with the arms-length principle between the ACW and the Welsh Government. Voluntary Arts Wales stated that:

“We believe strongly in the arm’s-length principle. We think that it is important and right that the arts council is given the freedom to make the decisions, particularly the artistic decisions, about what is funded and what is not. [...]

“I do not think that there is a huge amount wrong with that relationship at the moment. There is a danger of it becoming a red herring if what we are talking about is arts participation, because the majority of arts participation is not funded by the arts council.”²⁰

¹⁸ Oral Evidence, 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Oral Evidence, 15 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s6979/15%20March%202012.pdf>

57. Most organisations found ACW’s investment review process clear and fair, and many organisations praised ACW for their advice and transparency. The Welsh National Opera commented that:

“[...] the Arts Council of Wales provides clear advice and guidance and an open process for accessing project funding.”²¹

58. However, there was some criticism of ACW regarding its decision making and scrutiny. South Wales Intercultural Community Arts (SWICA) stated that:

“[ACW’s] artform-based approach is archaic and not prone to developing participation in particular.”²²

59. Spectacle Theatre highlighted issues around ACW’s funding assessments:

“We strongly believe the current mechanism employed by the Arts Council to assess artistic quality is not transparent and disenfranchised valleys communities.”

60. Gwynedd County Council noted concerns around regional gaps:

“Following the latest changes to the Arts Council structure, concerns have been expressed that there is no regional overview that could identify gaps or opportunities to increase participation. There is a danger that a gap could develop here that could affect participation.”²³

Voluntary sector

61. The importance of the voluntary sector was highlighted in the Communities and Culture Committee report into accessibility of the arts. As budget reductions in some organisations has led to volunteers being utilised more, the current Committee thought it was appropriate to examine the role of this sector and how its work can be supported. An anonymous respondent to the consultation noted that:

“I would say that the voluntary arts sector provides the majority of participatory opportunities, especially to people in areas of economic and social deprivation. Not only do they give access but they provide

²¹ Welsh National Opera - Arts 08

²² South Wales Intercultural Community Arts - Arts 21

²³ Gwynedd County Council - Arts 29

many social benefits - social networks, health issues (especially community dance) informal education, integration, therapy and social change.”

62. Disability Arts Cymru also noted the effective network that the voluntary arts sector provides:

“The voluntary arts sector is vital in maintaining links and networks in the arts, working closely with artists / participants who may be outside of the kind of artists funded by ACW.”

63. Torch Theatre commented that the voluntary arts sector needs to be “re-vitalised”, and thought that local authorities should take a lead on this.

Networks

64. The importance of networks in connecting voluntary arts organisations was highlighted by six organisations. Voluntary Arts Wales, the main umbrella body for voluntary arts organisations in Wales, made some key recommendations for developing the sector, which included improving links between organisations. These recommendations were:

- some mapping or audit of existing arts participation;
- greater links between the amateur arts, professional community arts and professional arts organisations;
- increased support for Voluntary Arts Wales and the national voluntary arts umbrella bodies in order to improve inclusivity and diversity within local amateur arts groups;
- more holistic collaboration between amateur and professional arts, local authorities and the wider voluntary and community sector.²⁴

65. Cyster suggested that advice services, affordable venues and a “sense of a wider movement” would improve participation through the voluntary arts sector.

66. Blaenau Gwent and Powys Councils acknowledged local authorities’ role in providing advice, specifically around the practical issues of running a group, like child protection, marketing and licensing. Caerphilly Council also highlighted the importance of voluntary network associations such as the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO).

²⁴ Voluntary Arts Wales - Arts 10

67. The Youth Inclusion Programme at Conwy & Denbighshire Youth Justice Service stated that more opportunities to share good practice would be welcomed, and used an example of the conference arranged by ACW in 2011.

Quality and professionalism

68. Cwmni'r Frân Wen and Gwent Theatre indicated that more collaboration between the voluntary arts sector and the professional arts sector would be beneficial to the voluntary arts. ArtWorks Valleys Kids noted that they need:

“[...] high quality professional workers with the skills to deliver community and youth arts at a high level - this is highly skilled work if done properly it can have a huge impact on intervening successfully in supporting young people and members of the community.”

69. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council stated that the capacity of voluntary arts organisations is limited because of the lack of professionalism:

“In general there are a lot of participatory opportunities promoted through the voluntary arts sector however these are not always based on strong foundations e.g. professional practitioners, sound business awareness etc. which makes their capacity limited.”

70. Head for Arts highlighted the importance of investing in individuals, and encouraging quality and professionalism, even in voluntary arts:

“The voluntary arts sector is particularly active in areas of multiple deprivation like Merthyr Tydfil but though laudable, the quality of work is often poor. It's difficult to persuade someone to pay a professional practitioner when there's a willing volunteer who "knows a bit".

“We only employ highly experienced community arts practitioners, often finding ways of getting them to work alongside volunteer tutors to help raise the quality - and demonstrate the difference that it can make having someone who really knows what they are doing. The availability of revenue funding as well as capital from HOV would help this enormously.”

Equality duties

71. Public authorities are subject to the Welsh specific equality duties, but the majority of arts organisations are not. However, if they are funded by a local authority, or the Arts Council of Wales, arts organisations may feel the effects of the duties indirectly.

72. In their written evidence, the ACW outlined the objectives that they will be working towards in their Strategic Equality Plan. The ACW emphasised that, although some of their Revenue Funded Organisations (RFOs) may not currently be equipped to deliver ACW's overall equality objectives, they are working to improve this:

“We have a development programme with our portfolio of revenue organisations, and part of that looks at how they will help us to address child poverty and the equalities agenda. We will be implementing that over the next 12 months. For many of those organisations, it is about understanding better what they are already delivering.”²⁵

73. Most respondents were not fully aware of the full extent equality duties, but many seemed positive that the duties would help ensure that arts provision would be available to everyone, regardless of their gender, age, disability, sexuality, religion, or ethnicity. Disability Arts Cymru thought that they would “undoubtedly” increase participation and the National Museum of Wales stated that the duties are:

“[...] an extremely positive step for public bodies to be aligned and developing joint approaches to increase participation.”²⁶

74. Live Music Now Cymru noted that they found it “good to be part of the discussion on [the equality duties] earlier this year”. Newport Museum commented that the equality duties will reinforce long established and pre-existing policies for many local authorities. Gwynedd County Council stated that:

“It became clear from [the consultation process] that ethnic minority groups are particularly eager to know more and to participate more with the arts on a local level. We believe that there is strong potential

²⁵ Oral Evidence, 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

²⁶ National Museum of Wales – Arts 13

to build on this: by informing groups about events and also supporting them to engage with the arts."²⁷

75. Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre thought that such measures did not affect changes in the delivery of activities, but just increased bureaucracy and reporting. Small World Theatre thought that the process of defining and targeting 'under-represented groups' creates a division in itself.²⁸

76. Some organisations felt that the public sector equality duties would have little impact on participation in the arts because it is a long way from strategy to grass roots level. Voluntary Arts Wales advocated using the duties as part of a more holistic approach to increasing participation in the arts. A number of respondents, including Swansea Metropolitan University and Bagad Pibau Morgannwg, thought that the equality duties would be ineffective unless funding was increased for organisations working with under-represented groups of people. This contrasts with the views discussed early regarding the restrictions placed upon projects when funding is targeted at a specific group of people.

Our View

77. For the purposes of this inquiry, the committee drew a distinction between accessibility and participation. These are clearly linked, as accessibility to the arts is clearly linked to participation levels. It is the experience of the arts which can, in many cases, inspire individuals to get involved and have a go themselves. However, we concentrated on participation, as a number of issues relating to accessibility had been addressed in the previous Assembly's Communities and Culture Committee Report on the Accessibility of Arts and Culture.²⁹

78. In November 2012, the Committee received an update on the Welsh Government's action plan on the recommendations of that report.³⁰ We welcome the progress outlined in the update.

A participation action plan

79. It is clear that the Welsh Government is putting in place measures to address equality and accessibility issues. From the update provided to the

²⁷ Gwynedd County Council – Arts 29

²⁸ Small World Theatre - Arts 25

²⁹ National Assembly for Wales Communities and Culture Committee, [The accessibility of arts and cultural activities in Wales](#)

³⁰ [Update from the Welsh Government on the Communities and Culture Committee Report into the Accessibility of Arts and Cultural Activities in Wales](#), (November 2012)

Committee, it is clear that progress has been made in a number of key areas. We feel that this progress can be built on, to ensure that individuals who experience the arts and who are inspired to want to take part have access to opportunities. A participation action plan, sitting alongside the Welsh Government's action plan on accessibility and equality, would be useful in setting a strategic direction and could deliver increases in participation levels.

Monitoring participation levels

80. We recognise that addressing barriers to participation is not easy. The action plan should include measures to monitor participation levels across the arts, to get a full picture of the impact of funding cuts on participation. The action plan should also include measures to identify and address inequality of provision across Wales (e.g. due to geographic, economic or social reasons).

Annual Remit Letter

81. We note that the Government has delivered on its commitment to emphasise the importance of equality and accessibility issues in its remit letters for 2012/13. We feel that these letters should also put an emphasis on increasing participation levels.

Partnership Working

82. If participation levels are to be increased, there needs to be joint-working at a strategic level. We note that the Welsh Government is including partnership working as a specific requirement in the annual remit letter and, of course, welcome this.

83. There needs to be effective joint working between the Arts Council of Wales, Local Authorities and voluntary sector networks. There are examples of good practice on this issue e.g. 'Arts Connect' and work around the Simpson Compact. This needs to be built on and developed. The action plan therefore needs to involve partners and include a clear emphasis on partnership working.

84. We welcome the way that ACW's strategy includes support for network organisations such as Disability Arts Cymru, the Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales and Voluntary Arts Wales. We feel that, in terms of increasing levels of participation, these networks can play a central role. Therefore,

these networks should be consulted in the drawing up of the participation action plan and should play a role in ensuring that it is implemented.

Opportunities for organisations to feed in to arts strategy

85. A number of witnesses suggested that organisations should have more opportunities to feed into arts strategy. Indeed, it was also suggested that organisations should have the opportunity to feed into the Minister's annual remit letter. We do not believe that this is appropriate, but recognise that the views of organisations need to feed into the development of policy, particularly in matters such as participation in the arts, where experience 'on the ground' would prove useful.

Co-ordination between Welsh Government Departments

86. Welsh Government departments are already working together on a number of issues relating to the arts, e.g. health and education. This needs to continue so that scarce resources can be utilised for maximum impact. The participation action plan should include actions for multiple government departments, thereby ensuring effective collaboration.

The roles of the Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales

87. We were surprised that a number of organisations, some of which had received ACW support, did not understand how the Welsh Government and Arts Council worked together. We feel that some work could be undertaken to inform arts organisations in Wales about how the 'system' works so that they can appreciate more fully the different strands of work that are being undertaken.

The Welsh Government should put in place a participation action plan, to alongside its accessibility action plan, with the purpose of increasing participation levels across Wales.

The action plan should include measures to monitor participation levels across the arts, and actions to identify inequality of provision (e.g. due to geographic, economic or social reasons).

In addition to accessibility and equality, the Welsh Government's annual remit letter should include an emphasis on increasing participation levels.

The action plan should include measures to ensure co-ordination across government departments and joint working by partners, including local government and the voluntary sector.

4. Funding

88. In this chapter, we will look at the key concern raised by witnesses, funding. In written and oral evidence, a number of issues were raised, particularly around the following:

- approaches to funding, including targeting and short and long-term funding;
- difficulties around accessing funding, including advice and guidance; and
- access to other sources of funding, including private investment.

89. The Arts Council of Wales (ACW),³¹ Voluntary Arts Wales,³² and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)³³ emphasised that the arts sector in Wales is resilient, creative and responsive to change. They noted that art will continue to be created with or without public subsidy, but reductions in funding will inevitably have an effect on the amount of opportunities that people have to participate, particularly for specific groups of people.

90. Consultees highlighted that budget reductions have not just come from the Arts Council of Wales, but also local authorities, the private sector, charitable trusts and foundations and other governmental departments like education and health. Some felt that budget reductions had forced some organisations to work more efficiently and creatively, which could improve their work in the long term.

91. Organisations commented that there is a continuing increase in demand for the arts, which is not being met by the supply. The ACW and WLGA stressed that although participation levels have not fallen significantly in recent years, there is the potential that budget reductions would affect levels in the long term, especially among specific groups of people.

92. The overall view from respondents was that there are not enough alternative sources of funding for organisations that were not funded by the Arts Council of Wales, and organisations needed help and advice to identify, apply for and manage funding.

³¹ Oral Evidence 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

³² Oral Evidence 15 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s6979/15%20March%202012.pdf>

³³ Oral Evidence 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

93. Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre summarised the funding situation for arts organisations:

“The funding map has changed. The way the Arts Council of Wales delivers its funds has changed, the number of organisations receiving revenue funding has decreased. Local authority funding levels are static, this position is in reality an inflationary cut in resources. Charitable trusts and foundations are receiving significantly higher numbers of applications. Capital schemes are on hold until after the 2012 Olympics.”

Targeting

94. The move towards outcome-focused funding that targets specific groups of people received both positive and negative responses. This issue was raised by fourteen respondents.

95. Head for Arts felt that organisations had to turn away individuals who didn't 'fit' into a targeted group, which had led to decreased participation levels overall. The Josef Herman Foundation stated that:

“There are also many examples of arts being funded just because they are focussed on minority communities, rather than being quality activities. Funders should of course support under-represented groups, but not just because they are under-represented.”

96. Arts 4 Wellbeing and Engage Cymru noted the concentration of funding on NEET groups, and commented that this had meant that there was less funding available for other groups of people.

97. Arts Active also pointed out that targeted funding to address geographic or demographic gaps could potentially lead to the dilution of provision:

“[...] That is not to say that inspiring and fantastic work is not happening in all sorts of places it is just a worry that work can be diluted and the experiences become standardised and deliverable rather than transformational and inspirational.”

98. However, some organisations thought that targeted funding helped to mitigate the disproportionate impact of overall budget reductions, for example, for people living in disadvantaged communities. Bagad Pibau Morgannwg noted the positive impact of the increase in funding for deprived areas of Merthyr Tydfil:

“There has been an increase in the amount of money available for arts activities in our area, Merthyr Tydfil, which is a very positive development [...] People in deprived areas will benefit more from an increase in arts funding. In Merthyr Tydfil there are new opportunities for young people to make drama, dance, music, visual art etc.”

99. Disability Arts Cymru also noted that they had received more funding to work with disabled artists across the whole of Wales:

“Our organisation Disability Arts Cymru has received enhanced funding from ACW, which enables us to provide a better, more effective service with a more equal spread across Wales.”

Short and long term funding

100. Five respondents said that small revenue grants were more useful than long term core funding, but seven respondents said that stability in funding was the key to long term sustainability.

101. Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre thought that long term sustainability and core funding were the most pressing issues for arts organisations. The Centre emphasised that stability is the key to strategic development and Re-Live echoed this sentiment. The need for stability was also raised by Cyster, Theatr Fforwm Cymru and Hijinx.

102. ArtWorks Cymru stated that:

“Our research has told us that one of the things artists feel is key to good quality participatory arts is time around planning and delivery, and with reduced funding this is one of the things that may be affected.

“The current funding situation means that artists are not able to create long term, or multi art form projects and shorter term projects are expected to deliver longer term outcomes.”³⁴

103. Many organisations commented on the lack of awareness about smaller funding pots, such as Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, who also suggested some good practice:

³⁴ ArtWork Cymru - Arts 12

“Little is known about other possible sources of funding for the arts, particularly not for smaller pockets of funding and money to pay artists (often seen as a revenue rather than a project cost). [...]

“Sports Wales's model of Community Chest seems a really positive one and it may be worth considering looking at the viability of a similar model suited to community arts to assist with these issues among local groups, organisations and societies.”

104. Cardiff Community Housing Association highlighted the importance of speed and flexibility in funding for the voluntary arts sector:

“[The voluntary arts sector] has the power to adapt very quickly to community need and changing issues. It needs access to fast and flexible funds, it doesn't have to be huge amounts of moneys. They just need to be able to spend it on what ever makes the project work.”

105. Arts Active noted the value of ‘legacy’ events that kick start arts activity in an area, and Head for Arts suggested that capital funding was not being utilised effectively.

Competition

106. Eight organisations noted that competition for arts funding had increased in recent years. Arts Active remarked that:

“There are many trusts and foundations but it is a very competitive landscape and hard to get long term sustainable funding.”

107. WAPA suggested some reasons for the increasing competition and barriers that organisations find when applying for funds:

“There are more and more charitable organisations chasing fewer and fewer pots of money, and the amount available from some UK based foundations is not that large in any case. The reserves and investments of all such Trusts have of course taken a hit over the last three years and with interest rates flat-lined, will remain in that state for the foreseeable future.

“For small organisations the time and expense in making applications to a variety of trusts is disproportionate to the amount that might be given out. It is also virtually impossible to find corporate sponsorship in the present financial climate.”

108. Disability Arts Cymru and the Josef Herman Foundation both stated that charitable trusts are particularly difficult to access for independent artists.

Advice and guidance

109. In their oral evidence, Hijinx highlighted the lack of capacity and knowledge within small arts organisations to identify and apply for alternative sources of funding. Many other organisations, such as Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts and Ty Cerdd emphasised the need for more guidance and training for small arts organisations to identify and apply for funding.

110. Pontardawe Arts Centre stated that there is a lack of confidence in community groups to access funds for themselves, and said that they are seeking to address this. Powys County Council echoed this, commenting that the small scale and fragility of groups meant that their capacity to access funding is limited, therefore threatening their sustainability.

111. BVSNW, TAN Dance and Theatr Felinfach noted the importance of the ACW and umbrella organisations in providing funding advice. BVSNW said:

“There is a lack of guidance available for individuals and group for alternative funding sources if they are turned away from the Arts Council.

“BVNW has a role to play in assisting these groups with funding allocation.”³⁵

112. Theatr Felinfach stated that VAW and the WCVA also play important roles:

“The VAW has a valuable role in acting as a "signpost" for organizations wishing to develop an idea. The WCVA plays an important role in terms of the voluntary sector as well and holds networking and information sharing events which are useful to the participatory arts sector.”³⁶

113. TAN Dance highlighted some good practice from England:

“We note that Arts and Heritage in England have set up a Catalyst Arts and Catalyst Heritage fundraising capacity building grants programme and wonder if it would be possible to set up a similar

³⁵ BVSNW Focus group

³⁶ Small World Theatre - Arts 23

programme in Wales? A grant from such a programme would solve our problem of insufficient capacity to pursue new funding avenues.”³⁷

114. ACW highlighted that they are planning to create a new information service:

“We are going to invest more time and energy in producing better information.

“We are going to start running information and advisory surgeries across Wales. We will try to ensure that we are providing more advisory and information services at a local level, for people who perhaps cannot travel to our regional offices across Wales.”³⁸

Private investment

115. Eight respondents discussed private investment and corporate sponsorship. Arts and Business Cymru highlighted their existing work, and their response to the economic downturn:

“Arts & Business UK’s annual Private Investment in Culture Survey showed that the private sector in Wales invested over £18 million in the arts in 2010/11. Unlike other parts of the UK, business in Wales has, for many years, cited engagement with local communities as the primary reason for supporting the arts.

“Inevitably though, as budgets reduced, demand for such projects decreased during the recession. A&B Cymru addressed this and through advocacy, brokerage, and its programmes, enabled a renewed enthusiasm for community projects.”³⁹

116. Oriol Myrddin, Hijinx, Literature Wales, SWICA, Cardiff Community Housing Association, and Jazz Heritage Wales all noted the increasing difficulty in obtaining private investment. Mid Wales Opera stated:

“We would appreciate greater support from the Welsh Government, ACW and Arts and Business in trying to persuade businesses (particularly those with a national reach across Wales) to invest in arts provision beyond the national companies and to work strategically

³⁷ TAN Dance - Arts 05

³⁸ Oral Evidence, 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

³⁹ Arts and Business Cymru - Arts 14

with Trusts and Foundations to see how they can support touring arts provision.”

117. ACW noted that excellence is a key driver in encouraging private investment. They also commented that businesses are reluctant to connect to arts organisations through intermediaries, emphasising the importance of equipping organisations to attract sponsorship themselves.⁴⁰

118. ACW stated in their written evidence that they:

“[...] are working in partnership with Arts and Business Cymru to provide practical assistance to revenue funded organisations to help them generate additional earned income.”⁴¹

Our View

Targeted Funding

119. In terms of targeted funding, we feel that there is clear merit to this approach, particularly in terms of participation, but every effort should be made to ensure that the quality of the experience is not compromised.

120. There was a clear difference of opinion on the issue of short and long-term funding, with respondents outlining the strategic benefits arising from the security of long-term funding and others emphasising the importance of flexibility in accessing small pots of money, perhaps for a specific project. On balance, it is clear that a mix of funding opportunities is necessary, and the ACW approach seems to be appropriate.

Access to alternative sources of funding

121. We note respondents’ comments that alternative sources of funding are increasingly difficult to access and feel that more needs to be done to ensure that organisations have the ability to access alternative sources of funding.

122. However, the majority of organisations do not have the capacity or resources to continually chase funding. This is particularly a problem for the smallest of organisations, which may be run by volunteers, and who may not be aware of the different types of support available.

⁴⁰ Oral Evidence 29 March 2012

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s7173/29%20March%202012.pdf>

⁴¹ Arts Council of Wales - Arts 33

123. For this reason, we agree that umbrella organisations such as BVSNW and VAW can play an invaluable role in assisting organisations to access funding. This is why, as we outlined in the previous chapter, it is so important that such umbrella organisations are involved in strategic planning for the arts.

124. We also note that the ACW has introduced a ‘Creative Steps’ fund, for individuals or organisations who have not accessed ACW funding in the past. We welcome ACW’s commitment to provide more information on accessing resources, and request that ACW reports back to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee on progress of both initiatives at an appropriate time.

Private investment

125. Making the most of private investment is vitally important at times where access to public money is difficult. There needs to be more advice in place to access these alternative sources of funding. There also needs to be strategies in place to ensure that the sector and private investors can work together.

126. We note the issues raised by witnesses in relation to private investment, particularly the comment from Arts and Business Cymru that business in Wales “cited engagement with local communities as the primary reason for supporting the arts”.

127. We feel, therefore, that as much as possible should be done to encourage such investment, not only at a national level, but for smaller, local organisations and projects.

128. Finally, we note the evidence from ACW, emphasising the importance of equipping organisations to attract sponsorship themselves. We endorse this approach and encourage the ACW to ensure that individuals and organisations have the opportunities to develop these skills, including through training and development.

The Arts Council of Wales should keep under review its funding policies, to ensure that they are delivering excellence, while increasing participation levels.

The Arts Council of Wales should ensure that organisations are able to access information on alternative sources of funding. This should be in the form of training, if necessary.

The Arts Council of Wales should ensure that it uses its relationships with networks to ensure that information reaches relevant organisations.

The Arts Council of Wales should put in place a strategy to increase levels of funding from business.

Witnesses

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed in full at

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=3377>

15 March 2012

Val Hill, Administrative Director	Hijinx Theatre
Mike Clark, Chair of Trustees	Hijinx Theatre
Chris Ryde, Chair	Wales Association for the Performing Arts
Stephen Stockton	Wales Association for the Performing Arts
Robin Simpson, Chief Executive	Voluntary Arts Wales
Maggie Hampton, Chief Executive	Disability Arts Cymru
Leanne Rahman, Senior Arts Development Office	Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales

29 March 2012

Chris Llewellyn, Director of Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information	Welsh Local Government Association
Peter Gomer, Interim Policy Officer for Leisure, Culture and Heritage	Welsh Local Government Association
Nick Capaldi, Chief Executive	Arts Council of Wales
Diane Hebb, Director of Engagement and Participation	Arts Council of Wales

List of written evidence

The following people and organisations provided written evidence to the Committee. All written evidence can be viewed in full at <http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=3128>

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Oystermouth Art Society	Arts 01
Carmarthenshire County Council	Arts 02
Oriel	Arts 03
Hijinx Theatre	Arts 04
TAN Dance	Arts 05
engage Cymru	Arts 06
Mid Wales Entertainment Circuit and Cyster	Arts 07
Welsh National Opera	Arts 08
National Dance Company Wales	Arts 09
Voluntary Arts Wales	Arts 10
Wales Millennium Centre	Arts 11
ArtWork Cymru	Arts 12
Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum of Wales	Arts 13
Arts & Business Cymru	Arts 14
Federation of Museums & Art Galleries in Wales	Arts 15
Adamsdown Arts Association	Arts 16
Llenyddiaeth Cymru Literature Wales	Arts 17
ArtsConnect	Arts 18
Aberystwyth Arts Centre	Arts 19
Age Cymru	Arts 20
South Wales Intercultural Community Arts	Arts 21
Performing Arts Aberystwyth Arts Centre	Arts 22
Theatr Felinfach	Arts 23
Wales Association for the Performing Arts	Arts 24
Small World Theatre	Arts 25

Theatre Gwent	Arts 26
Theatr Torch	Arts 27
Community Dance for Conwy, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn	Arts 28
Gwynedd County Council	Arts 29
National Theatre Wales	Arts 30
Cwm Taf Local Health Board	Arts 31
Welsh Local Government Association	Arts 32
Arts Council of Wales	Arts 33

<i>Organisation (SurveyMonkey)</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Powys County Council	Arts SM01
Newport Museum and Art Gallery (Newport City Council)	Arts SM02
Theatres Trust	Arts SM03
Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales	Arts SM04
Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff	Arts SM05
Youth Inclusion Programme (Conwy & Denbighshire Youth Justice Service)	Arts SM06
Theatre Fforwm Cymru	Arts SM07
Cwmni'r Frân Wen	Arts SM08
Ballet Cymru	Arts SM09
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Arts SM10
Cerddoriaeth Fyw Rwan Cymru	Arts SM11
Spectacle Theatre Ltd.	Arts SM12
Touch Trust	Arts SM13
Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts	Arts SM14
Pontardawe Arts Centre, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	Arts SM15
Ty Cerdd – Music Centre Wales	Arts SM16
Cyster – The Constellation Project	Arts SM17
Re-Live	Arts SM18
Nofit State Circus	Arts SM19

The Gwent Theatre Company	Arts SM20
ArtWorks Valleys Kids	Arts SM21
Mid Wales Opera	Arts SM22
Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch	Arts SM23
Harlech and Ardudwy Music Society	Arts SM24
Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre	Arts SM25
Cadw/ACW Cultural Olympiad Project – Power of the Flame	Arts SM26
Josef Herman Foundation	Arts SM27
Swansea Metropolitan University	Arts SM28
Breaking Barriers Community Arts	Arts SM29
Jazz Heritage Wales, Swansea	Arts SM30
Wrexham Youth Justice Service	Arts SM31
Cardiff Community Housing Association	Arts SM32
Pembrokeshire Youth Offending Team	Arts SM33
Torfaen County Borough Council – Arts Service	Arts SM34
Bagad Pibau Morgannwg	Arts SM35
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	Arts SM36
Head for Arts	Arts SM37
Arts Active – St David’s Hall	Arts SM38
Flintshire County Council	Arts SM39
Anonymous	Arts SM40
Anonymous	Arts SM40
Anonymous	Arts SM41

20 SurveyMonkey questionnaire responses were also received from individuals.

Focus Groups

- Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Arts – Cofio
- Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Arts – Reach the Heights
- Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Arts – Flippers
- Ruthin Craft Centre – Threads in Time

- Galeri - Promometheus
- Galeri - Tonic
- Celf o Gwmpas
- Arts Alive
- Arts 4 Wellbeing

Other Submissions

- Gwent Theatre Video
- Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Arts - Journeys and Discoveries DVD
- India Dance Wales