

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee's entitled 'Behind the scenes: The creative industries workforce'.

The Welsh Government welcomes the findings of the report and offers the following response to the 13 recommendations contained within.

Recommendation 1

The Welsh Government should ensure that the forthcoming Culture Strategy sets out support for developing and sustaining the workforce in the arts and music sectors.

Response: Reject

The scope of the draft Culture Strategy includes the arts, heritage, museums, archives and library sectors. The draft strategy narrative is high level and will not include specific ambitions for developing and sustaining the arts and music sector workforce. However, the draft strategy does currently include ambitions around ensuring that our sectors are great places to work and volunteer. The strategy remains in draft and will require further consideration in light of the publication of the draft budget and the potential impacts on the cultural, heritage and creative sectors.

Skills development is a priority in the Arts Council of Wales' (ACW) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Creative Wales, and discussions regarding freelancers are already underway. ACW's open Lottery funds (Create) are open to training and skills development applications and are often used for this purpose. ACW also supports key programmes and projects directly such as Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries, and also have expectations of the organisations it funds. Nurturing Talent is a principle that guided ACW's decisions on what organisations were offered multi-year funding as part of its Investment Review.

Financial implications: No financial implications

Recommendation 2

The Welsh Government should outline how it is coordinating initiatives to ensure there are sufficient Welsh language skills available in the creative industries. If no specific plans are currently in place, the Welsh Government should work with partners who require Welsh language skills to develop and implement a scheme to increase the Welsh language workforce in the creative industries.

Response: Accept

Developing Welsh Language across the Creative Sector is a key priority for Creative Wales. Our three-year Creative Skills Action Plan outlines our objective to find, support and nurture Welsh creative talent with a specific action to support Welsh language talent and those from diverse backgrounds to enter the industry and progress within the creative sector. Furthermore, the Action Plan commits to

ensuring training provision is promoted and delivered through the Welsh language where possible and those interested in learning or improving their Welsh language skills have the opportunity to do so. Creative Wales is currently working with S4C and Ffilm Cymru on the Sinema scheme, to develop Welsh language film. As part of this scheme, we have recently funded the Welsh language script writing course O'r Sgript i'r Sinema delivered in conjunction with NFTS Cymru Wales and S4C.

The draft culture strategy also highlights the issue of Welsh language skills across the sectors in scope.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh's *Cymraeg Gwaith* programme provides Learn Welsh courses ranging from online self-study taster courses to intensive learning courses. As well as increasing the number of Welsh speakers and Welsh language use in workplaces, *Cymraeg Gwaith* also allows organisations to provide better Welsh language services to their users. The Coleg Cymraeg also encourages more young people to study courses through the medium of Welsh when undertaking post-16 education and works to increase the capacity of Welsh-medium courses in key sectors.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications

Recommendation 3

The Welsh Government, in partnership with trade unions and production companies, should identify best practice to ensure that workers can work in an environment free of discrimination, bullying and prejudice. The Welsh Government should report back to the Committee within six months on its progress with this recommendation.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales is taking forward a range of actions to help address discrimination, bullying and prejudice in the screen sector, working with trade unions and industry. This includes the development of actions in response to recommendation set out in the creative industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) *Good Work* report, building on the success of the Well-being Facilitators project and the role of economic contracts in production funding, and engaging with the UK wide Creative Industries Independent Standards Agency.

Financial implications: No financial implications. Any new initiatives developed to support this activity in 2024/25 will be subject to ministerial and budget agreement processes.

Recommendation 4

The Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales should review what additional resource is required by the arts, culture and music sectors to achieve equitable pay settlements and outline what additional support they can provide. This work should be completed in time for the next financial year.

Response: Reject

The Welsh Government is using the policy levers and influence it has to promote and encourage fair work. This includes working in social partnership with cultural arms-length bodies and trade unions, who represent workers in the cultural and creative sectors.

We and our partners are aware of the issues we collectively face in seeking to improve pay, terms and conditions and the specific challenges in respect of freelancers. We do not believe that an additional review would add value or improve our understanding of the issues, barriers and opportunities.

We recognise employment law and industrial relations is not devolved and the UK Government has important reserved powers to improve workers rights', raise legally enforceable standards, and strengthen the rights of freelancers. The Employment Bill the UK Government promised in 2019 has failed to materialise.

Welsh Government are also aware that there are other factors influencing pay, including scope and budget in the commercial marketplace, which are to be expected.

Financial implications: No financial implications.

Recommendation 5

The Welsh Government should include provisions on fair pay and working conditions and the use of well-being facilitators in the forthcoming Culture Strategy.

Response: Reject

The draft Culture Strategy covers the arts, heritage, libraries, museums and archives sectors.

The use of well-being facilitators is taking place in the creative industries sector which is outside of scope for the culture strategy.

Fair pay, at least in line with union levels where relevant, is a requirement of all ACW's funding opportunities.

Financial implications: No financial implications.

Recommendation 6

The Welsh Government should mainstream contractual clauses on equality, diversity and inclusion within production funding agreements to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. The use of these should also be stipulated within the forthcoming Culture Strategy, and used wherever possible.

Response: Accept in part

Creative Wales is committed to using production funding to support improvements in key areas including skills, diversity and inclusion, sustainability and fair work. These work in tandem with the pledges within the economic contract, which all companies in receipt of production funding support must sign up to on a rolling basis.

We already require applicants for funding to demonstrate that they have a commitment to diversity, inclusivity and sustainability. Plans are in place to further develop funding criteria related to these issues, using specialist guidance as a base, such as the BFI diversity and inclusion standards and the mental health toolkit issued by the Film & TV Charity.

All recipients of Creative Wales Production Funding are contractually committed to provide paid trainee placements, both at entry level and upskilling levels. Production companies are obliged to ensure all placements are recruited on a fair and transparent basis to support the development of an equal, diverse and inclusive workforce within the screen sector in Wales.

The draft Culture Strategy includes a clear ambition around ensuring that culture is inclusive, accessible and diverse. Supported by the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan commitments for culture, this ambition will remain an area of focus for all sectors. Within the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, we have committed to working with our sponsored bodies to ensure they use their spending powers to embed anti-racist practices, facilitate equality of access and outcomes and maximise participation for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic People. The Plan also includes a specific goal and a set of actions which holds accountable funded organisations to deliver on anti-racist measures.

The draft Culture Strategy cannot include actions around the use of specific contractual clauses because of the wide range of contractual contexts which exist across the sectors.

Widening Engagement is one of ACW's six principles which guides its work and investment in the arts. This is routinely assessed as part of any funding opportunity - including at the recent Investment Review - in terms of who makes work, who the work is for and the governance and staffing of organisations and projects.

Financial implications: No financial implications

Recommendation 7

The Welsh Government should work with the Arts Council of Wales and the academic partners to outline how it can improve data collection on equality, diversity and inclusion. The Welsh Government should report back to the Committee within three months on how it intends to achieve this.

Response: Accept in principle

The recently launched Memorandum of Understanding between Creative Wales and the Arts Council of Wales includes commitments to work together to share data and

gather research and evidence related to equality, diversity and inclusion in sectors within their remit.

In addition, the draft Culture Strategy has identified the need for a strategic and collaborative approach in relation to research and data collection across the whole of our cultural sector and this is captured as an ambition statement in the draft strategy. The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan also sets out the need for publicly funded organisations to capture ethnic diversity data and implement steps to increase ethnic diversity at all levels of the organisation.

We will provide an update on progress within three months.

Financial implications: No financial implications

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the Welsh Government increases the funding available through the Creative Skills Fund and works with industry to identify future skills gaps.

Response: Accept in principle

The three-year Creative Skills Action Plan already commits to a circa £1M annual Creative Skills Fund, which will seek to support projects that deliver against the 10 identified priority areas. In the context of the finite budget available to Creative Wales to support activity across our priority sub-sectors and areas of focus, this represents a significant proportion of the revenue budget on an annual basis. However, we take every opportunity to maximise the support that's made available to skills and talent development in the sector, exploring all options to lever additional investment, including through partnership projects with match funding to ensure maximum value for money.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications. Any new funding to deliver related activity in 2024/25 will be subject to ministerial and budget agreement processes.

Recommendation 9

The Welsh Government should provide longer term (beyond 2024) funded support for skills development in the creative industries.

Response: Accept

We are already providing support beyond 2024 as outlined in the Creative Skills Action Plan, which runs until September 2025 and commits to a circa £1M annual Creative Skills Fund, which will seek to support projects that deliver against the 10 identified priority areas.

In the recently published MOU between ACW and Creative Wales, skills has been identified as an area of shared priority, with a commitment to collaborate further.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications. Any new funding to deliver related activity in 2024/25 will be subject to ministerial and budget agreement processes.

Recommendation 10

The Welsh Government should undertake joint working with schools, education providers and the creative industries to ensure that young people are aware of the range of career opportunities, and have the required skills, to work in the creative industries. The Welsh Government should report back to the Committee by the end of March 2024 with an outline of how it will do this.

Response: Accept

A key priority of the three-year Creative Skills Action Plan is to demystify careers within the music, digital media and screen sectors with a focus to support initiatives which make career pathways clearer, roles more visible across all priority sectors and demonstrate how to access the industry easily. Initiatives which raise career aspirations for young people from underrepresented groups are of particular interest.

A number of current projects supported via the Creative Skills Fund already address this area; a new Screen Academies network which places classrooms within four working film studios across Wales. Screen Alliance Wales, who deliver the Screen Academies, work with Careers Wales and every Local Authority in Wales and have recorded over 400 school visits to-date; Beacons Cymru a music initiative delivering strands such as SUMMIT 2024 an innovative music industry conference, designed and delivered by young people for young people in Wales and Bŵts, a new bilingual series of career awareness videos illuminating important routes into the music industry workforce and Gêm, a new games hub run by Media Academy Cymru with BTEC levels 1 -3 in games design which aims to develop a creative workforce which reflects all communities.

Careers Wales currently works with all secondary schools, special schools, Pupil Referral Units and colleges, supporting young people to become more effective at planning and managing their careers.. In addition, the [digital tools](#) produced by Careers Wales help learners explore potential career pathways, including pathways relating to creative industries and details relating to creative industries further and higher education courses.

Other related activities organised by Careers Wales include:

- two virtual “Careers Discovery Weeks” a year – one for primary schools and one for secondary schools, including a series of employer-led challenges, with accompanying teacher resources, linked to each of the six Areas of Learning and Experience in the Curriculum for Wales; these both include creative industry content.
- a large-scale creative industries event in conjunction with various key stakeholders from the sector; as well as a series of regional careers fairs, branded as “Choose Your Future”, with many creative sector employers represented.

In the area of music, the National Plan for Music Education sets out a work strand, “Making music with others – performing and creative industries”, through which the National Music Service is working with key partners including local authorities, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Creative Wales, the Arts Council of Wales and the wider creative sector, to help signpost young people in accessing career pathways into the creative industries. This includes providing routes and information on apprenticeships into other music industry careers, to be made available to schools, settings and young people, and supporting development of practitioners’ skills in recording and production and industry knowledge and experience.

The Arts Council of Wales has also been involved in career development initiatives around the Expressive Arts and is engaged in helping to develop the Seren approach to Expressive Arts and will work in partnership with education consortia and partners to further support career pathways.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications. Careers Wales is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government; their work, supporting education with young people, parents, education providers and employers, is funded through their core grant from the Welsh Government, which for 2023-24 amounts to a total of £20m. The National Music Service is currently supported with Welsh Government grant funding of £13.5 million, covering the period 2022-23 to 2024-2025 (equating to £4.5 million per annum).

Recommendation 11

The Welsh Government should urgently undertake an assessment of the financial health of arts venues in Wales in collaboration with the Arts Council of Wales, the Music Venues Trust and other suitable organisations. This assessment should be completed before the next financial year in order to allow for any further support to be provided if required.

Response: Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government. Reviewing the financial health of arts venues in Wales is a matter for the Arts Council of Wales.

ACW already holds data on the financial health of the 67 revenue funded organisations that are part of the current Arts Portfolio Wales, which includes venues.

Additionally, ACW is currently undertaking a review of the capital needs of arts venues across Wales.

Officials liaise with grass roots music venues all over Wales regularly and are aware of any that are facing difficulty. Since its launch in 2020, Creative Wales has invested just under £9m in music venues, recording studios, rehearsal spaces and suppliers. Another round of significant funding for grass roots venues has just been announced.

Financial implications: No financial implications.

Recommendation 12

The Welsh Government should urgently undertake an assessment of the health of the cinema sector in collaboration with Ffilm Cymru. This assessment should be completed before the next financial year in order to allow for any further support to be provided if required.

Response: Accept in principle

Support for cinemas is provided across a number of partners. Creative Wales will engage with the Arts Council of Wales and other partners, as appropriate, to explore this recommendation further.

Financial implications: No financial implications. Any new funding to deliver related activity in 2024/25 will be subject to ministerial and budget agreement processes.

Recommendation 13

The Welsh Government should review the outcomes of the Irish Government's Basic Income for the Arts pilot at the appropriate time.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government has met with the Irish Government to discuss the Basic Income for Arts pilot and the research programme that has been put in place to assess its impact on artists, creative arts workers and the arts sector. This is a long-term, three year programme, and we will continue to engage with officials in Ireland during this process. We are also taking the opportunity to learn from the Welsh Government's own Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot, as appropriate.

Financial implications: No financial implications.

Dawn Bowden MS
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism