

Evidence Session – Charging for Exhibitions

**1. How do you balance the desire to generate income from temporary exhibitions with the desire to increase the diversity of audiences?**

Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales belongs to everyone and so we don't view income generation and engagement of diverse audiences as objectives which we need to balance or levers which counteract each other's effectiveness. We have a very strong, long-standing widening engagement programme and we work with communities to deliver meaningful partnerships. During the process of curating temporary exhibitions, a great deal of consideration is given to how we develop exhibitions in collaboration with diverse communities to engage and reflect diverse audiences while attracting diverse audiences.

Every exhibition at each of Amgueddfa Cymru's seven museums across Wales is different. The content of the exhibition, the collaborators, the local context, and the target audience change with each exhibition. All these factors influence our decision on which, if any, charging model we choose to adopt. We have several exhibition spaces across our museums so we can usually balance our programme with a mix of 'free' and 'paid-for' exhibitions which helps us to re-coup some of our spend and reach diverse audiences. Our current funding means that we can't balance many different offers at once, as we don't have the budget nor the resource to produce several exhibitions at the same time. During 2024, we have been trialing different charging models for exhibitions to inform our future thinking and to see where, if any, we can generate income without compromising access to the collection.

[Reframing Picton](#), [The Valleys](#), [Ours to Tell](#), [Wales is... talking about empire](#) are all current examples of how increasing the diversity of our audience is rooted in our practice when developing exhibitions. The target demographic for these exhibitions includes communities with whom significant elements of the exhibitions were developed. These are typically audiences who have not historically engaged with Amgueddfa Cymru, so accessibility is key. The exhibitions predominantly include items from the national collection, which means production costs are comparatively low. All these factors result in Amgueddfa Cymru being able to display these exhibitions free of charge. While visiting our museums, visitors have the option to donate through our cash and contactless donation boxes and they have the option to spend money at our cafes and gift shops. This way, our museums and exhibitions remain an attractive day out for all are all current examples of how increasing the diversity of our audience is rooted in our practice when developing exhibitions. The target demographic for these exhibitions includes communities with whom significant elements of the exhibitions were developed. These are typically audiences who have not historically engaged with Amgueddfa Cymru, so accessibility is key. The exhibitions predominantly include items from the national collection, which means production costs are comparatively low. All these factors result in Amgueddfa Cymru being able to display these exhibitions free of charge. While visiting our museums, visitors have the option to donate through our cash and

contactless donation boxes and they have the option to spend money at our cafes and gift shops. This way, our museums and exhibitions remain an attractive day out for all.

The [Art of the Selfie](#) exhibition is somewhat unique in that it features a world-renowned masterpiece on loan for a limited time. The international loan has provided us with an opportunity to showcase items from the national collection in a different way. It has also provided us with an opportunity to target new audience demographics who have an interest in art but might not be aware of the national collection or audiences who are looking for that 'Instagram-able' moment. Whilst a ticket charge is levied, it's based on a Pay What You Can model, meaning the visitor decides the price they pay depending on what they can afford. It's a ticket charge with choice. It may appear that Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales needs to balance income generation with audience engagement when adopting this charging model. In fact, the exhibition contains artworks from artists from a broad range of different demographics which are accessible to the public for as little as £1 (recommended £5), which means we can achieve both income generation and audience engagement objectives.

Of course, there are considerations beyond charging (or not) when looking at increasing diversity of audiences. These include transport, access to sites, and general funding.

**2. Is any specific assistance or permission needed from the Welsh Government to help you run temporary exhibitions?**

We don't require any specific permission from the Welsh Government to run temporary exhibitions and appreciate the autonomy to make decisions on charging models ourselves as per our Royal Charter. We are developing close working relationships with, for example, Visit Wales to promote and market our exhibitions nationally and internationally, which will be very valuable for the upcoming international touring exhibition, Gwen John for example. We also have a close working relationship with the Welsh Government International Relations team who regularly bring international stakeholders to our seven museums.

**3. How does the current level of Welsh Government funding impact on your ability to host temporary exhibitions?**

The exhibition programme is fully funded from Welsh Government Grant-in-Aid (GIA) funding. Amgueddfa Cymru does receive some fundraised support towards some exhibitions but not to a high value. Temporary exhibitions are expensive to host, which restricts what we can produce. It is something of an anomaly that Amgueddfa Cymru will produce three major exhibitions this year (Art of the Selfie; The Valleys; [Streic! 84-85 Strike!](#)). The recent budget cuts will mean that Amgueddfa Cymru will produce fewer exhibitions in the future to protect their high quality with fewer resources available.

We are grateful to Welsh Government for the funding towards the redevelopment of Amgueddfa Lechi Cymru into a UNESCO World Heritage site interpretation hub, creating spaces to support traditional skills, learning and wellbeing. The redevelopment contains ambitious plans to create conditioned and flexible exhibition environments to be able to rotate our permanent displays as well as host temporary exhibitions. We will be able to show more and a greater variety of items from the national collection as well items on loan from elsewhere. To date, this has not been possible as there are no suitable climate-controlled spaces at the Amgueddfa Lechi Cymru, which has impacted on our ability to show the collection in north Wales. We are also pleased to support loans for temporary exhibitions across Wales through our CELF NCAGW partnership through which we are supporting temporary exhibitions across Wales and access – both digital and in-person – to the national collection.

**4. What, if anything, have you done to explore well connected walking routes from public transport and other visitor attractions to the National Museum Cardiff?**

We have placed advertisements for exhibitions in well-connected walking routes from public transport and in Cardiff City centre in recent years along with promotional material along the streets of Queen Street, St Mary's Street, Park Place and North Road. When Dippy, the Natural History Museum London's famous Diplodocus cast came to Cardiff in 2019, we also hosted events on Queen Street and in St David's. Now that the new Cardiff bus station has reopened it will be considered as an opportunity to market Amgueddfa Cymru to travellers.

Amgueddfa Cymru is committed to sustainability and public transport links and infrastructure are key to enabling visitors to access all our sites. In both Caerleon (Roman Caerleon Partnership Group) and in Llanberis (redevelopment of National Slate Museum), we are working very closely with local authorities, ALBs, funding partner and community partners to holistically enhance visitor experience in both areas. Regarding National Museum Cardiff, we have a good working relationship with the leadership team at Cardiff Council and would always welcome further opportunities to engage in planning and development processes which impact on local transport and local visitor attractions in Cardiff. Likewise, to travel to Sain Ffagan, the other Amgueddfa Cymru site within Cardiff.

**5. How are you using digital media to raise the profile of your exhibitions?**

Website - We promote all our events, exhibitions, and activities via our website, either through each individual Museum's '[What's On](#)' listing or by highlighting priority exhibitions on our [website homepages](#) or [corporate homepage](#). Each individual exhibition has its own [dedicated web page](#) where additional supplementary information is available. Website activity is also promoted through our ticketing portal where we upsell and promote add-ons and extra activities. We use analytics tools to measure website activity for exhibitions, including geographical reach, source, device type, and engagement.

Social media - We also regularly promote our exhibitions via our social media channels, we have a main corporate Amgueddfa Cymru accounts, as well as site specific accounts. We are active on platforms such as [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [YouTube](#) and [X](#). The promotional material we feature through each channel varies depending on each specific exhibition, audience and desired demographic. We use these platforms to share content from influencers, third parties, and user generated content. We supplement this activity through running exhibition paid for advertising campaigns via our Google AdWords, plus we invest in working with advertising agencies to promote our exhibitions through paid advertising on Meta and TikTok.

Digital Signage - In addition to the online promotion of our exhibitions we also run Digital Signage across our sites. The digital signage displays our exhibitions to onsite visitors. For instance, at National Museum Cardiff, we have digital signage screens in our galleries, main atrium, restaurant and also feature exhibition teasers outside on the street.

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