

**Arts and Health Cross Party Group Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025**  
**12:00, hybrid meeting in the Senedd**



**Present**

Heledd Fychan (Chair), Member of the Senedd  
Angela Rogers, WAHWN  
Nesta Lloyd-Jones, Welsh NHS Confederation  
Elinor Lloyd-Davies, Arts Council of Wales  
Rebecca Hardy-Griffith, Arts Council of Wales  
Dan Allen, Arts Council Of Wales  
Brooke Webb, Senedd Staff  
Johan Skre, Swansea Bay UHB  
Kathryn Lambert, Hywel Dda UHB  
Sofia Vougioukalou, Cardiff University  
Teri Howson-Griffiths, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB  
Sally Thelwell, Velindre NHS Trust  
Andrea Davies, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB  
Claire Turner, Aneurin Bevan UHB  
Prue Thimbleby ACW Council member  
Rosie Dow  
Sarah Goodey, Aneurin Bevan UHB  
Sharon Davies, WLGA  
Melanie Wotton, Swansea Bay UHB  
Niamh Salkeld, Senedd  
Eleri Morgan, Senedd  
Menna Williams, Arts Council of Wales (minuting)

**Apologies**

Diane Hebb, Arts Council of Wales  
John Day, Social Care Wales  
Maggie Russell, Chair, Arts Council Wales  
Hannah Moscrop, RD&I Project Manager,  
Velindre Cancer Centre  
Lucy Bevan, Powys Teaching HB  
Kate Newman, Social Care Wales  
Timothy Jenkins, Welsh Government  
Liz Clarke, Arts Council of Wales  
Emily van der Venter, Public Health Wales  
Naomi Alleyne, WLGA  
Sarah McCarty, Social Care Wales  
Joanne Brandon, Cardiff & Vale UHB  
Sue Evans, Social Care Wales  
Iori Haugen, Swansea Bay UHB

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Heledd Fychan MS welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

The minutes from the previous Arts and Health Cross Party Group were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**2. Traction with other Senedd members & other Cross Party Groups**

Nesta explained that since the previous Cross Party Group meeting, Nesta has been in touch with Simon Jones, Head of Policy, Campaigns and Communications at Mind Cymru, and Jo Whitefield, the National Lead for Wales at BEAT Eating Disorders to discuss a joint CPG. Both Simon and Jo support the Cross Party Group for Mental Health and Eating Disorders, chaired by Julie Morgan MS.

In a fortnight, Nesta is meeting with Simon Jones and Jo Whitefield to discuss the possibility of a joint Cross Party Group meeting between Arts and Health, and Mental Health and Eating Disorders. A date in June may be feasible as their Annual General Meeting is due to take place in

October. A likely point of discussion during a joint Cross Party Group is child and adolescent mental health.

**Action Point:** Nesta to update attendees on joint Cross Party Group developments following the meeting with Simon Jones and Jo Whitefield.

Angela raised that examples have been shared with Nesta that demonstrate good practice from the Health Boards in relation to child and adolescent mental health. Angela invited the Arts & Health Coordinators to share any other case studies or resources with Nesta/Angela in advance of the meeting with Simon Jones.

### **3. Budget – reflection on Evidence Session, Priorities and Concerns**

Heledd raised that during the budget scrutiny process, many Senedd members mentioned prevention, including the role of the arts. The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee is flagging the role of the arts in relation to prevention to the Health Committee. The Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership, Jack Sargeant MS, has emphasised the importance of arts and health work.

The draft budget debate later today is a factual debate and will not be a binding vote. The vote takes place next month on 4th March.

Heledd mentioned that one point of clarity at present is the pressures on the cultural sector that works in partnership with the Health Boards.

Angela mentioned that a press release detailing the importance of protecting the arts sector and the prevention agenda was shared with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, Mark Drakeford MS, and will continue to be shared widely.

Kathryn raised that the UK Government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport's paper from the end of 2024 may be helpful in framing the financial impact of the arts.

**Action Point:** Heledd to share the above paper with other Senedd members.

### **4. Creative Health Review for Wales**

Angela introduced Rosie Dow to the meeting. Rosie was previously the Programme Manager for the Health, Arts, Research and People programme in Wales. The programme came with a set of clear recommendations for funders, policymakers, and arts and health networks. Many of the recommendations were adopted, with key legacies including the Arts, Health and Wellbeing Lottery funding at the Arts Council of Wales and WAHWN's learning groups. Rosie now works as a freelancer, utilising her skills and expertise in strategy, policy and funding, and acts as a critical friend to the sector.

Recently, Angela and Rosie have discussed how political traction and policy change can be obtained. The National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH)'s Creative Health Review was considered. It is important to note that Wales would need a review appropriate to the sector in Wales, as the NCCH review is aimed at policymakers in England.

Rosie thanked Angela for the introduction and explained that the overarching mission with undertaking such a Review for Wales is to continue to advocate for sustainable funding for the work being done and that today she was asking the attendees for feedback about the Review approach proposed. Rosie mentioned that Wales has had a strong history over the last decade of investing in the infrastructure around arts and health work (such as the HARP Programme and the Arts and Health Coordinator posts) and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, which has been seen as groundbreaking and crucial across the country and around the world. Such investment in infrastructure is crucial to engaging policymakers and health leaders in this work and it requires there to be people in the roles to complete this sort of work.

However, as there are no longer Coordinators in every Health Board in Wales and the HARP programme is no longer in existence, there are concerns about the potential of the sector stagnating.

Although the NCCH's review addresses the UK broadly, including Wales, when it comes to their recommendations, it focuses on a cross-governmental strategy for Westminster, metropolitan mayors, integrated care systems and resource to Treasury: these are not relevant for our Welsh structures. The review's process however can be utilised to produce a Wales-specific review.

Rosie explained that fifteen commissioners – health leaders, senior academics, notable creatives – were appointed to oversee the original NCCH review, which then consisted of an evidence review, online seminars and collaborations culminating in a final report. Alexandra Coulter, the Director of NCCH, shared that the engagement piece of the process – bringing the commissioners on board – was as important and impactful as the report itself, because the commissioners have gone on to be arts and health champions in their own spheres since they now have a much deeper awareness of the work and its impact.

For Wales, a similar process could include engagement with Public Health Wales, WAHWN, NCCH, Arts Council of Wales, Welsh Confederation, the Senedd, The Wellbeing of Future Generations office, senior health leaders, constituents, NHS Wales, Health Board leaders as well as notable artists, supporters and universities, and this Cross Party Group. Think tanks could also support the development of the work.

Rosie proposed a process that included establishing a small group of Commissioners for Wales, that would review the NCCH recommendations. Additional data and case studies would then be collated for Wales. Following this, open roundtable meetings would be held to co-create the recommendations for Wales, with findings written up and disseminated. The work would culminate in a Manifesto for Wales that could support the Senedd elections in 2026.

Heledd raised that Manifestos have not yet been completed by the parties and should be finalised by Autumn 2025. There is still time to influence ahead of this, which would be significantly more challenging once the policy programme is in place. This Summer is a key time for shaping policy decisions.

Nesta added that Labour is going into consultation in June, and Plaid Cymru usually publish first. The Conservative Party may publish early next year. The Wellbeing of Future Generations office is aiming to publish its report by the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, marking ten years since the Act was passed. There may be some alignment in relation to their work in culture and the prevention agenda.

Angela mentioned that resource is the issue in relation to the policy decision timescale. The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation has a lead-time of six to nine months until grant application decisions are communicated.

Rosie added that the budget for the work would depend on how complex or lengthy the process would be. If a commission is established, with some meetings and a report, the budget may need to be in the region of £10,000-£20,000; most of the budget would be spent on time with partners. The budget-holder for the work could be WAHWN.

**Action Point:** All to consider possible avenues of funding for a review, including end of year budgets.

Kathryn raised that a review is very much needed and asked what the Arts Council of Wales's role would be in the work as it builds on the mapping study previously completed. Rebecca responded that confirmation of next year's budget has not been received, therefore the Council's role in the work is unable to be defined currently. The work is certainly part of future thinking though no commitment can be made at present.

Rosie mentioned that ACW funding has been relied upon a lot for funding previous work and diversified funding streams are needed to make the work more sustainable. NCCH's Creative Health Review process was largely funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, with University College London as grant-holders. UK Research and Innovation funding could also be sought as evidence will be put into practice throughout the review process.

A minimal budget could be obtained to achieve a digital document at an appropriate time considering the election timescale. If a social media call out is done, clear information about the ask, the offer and expectations should be included.

**Action Point:** Rosie to share the proposal brief with attendees.

Johan asked what the biggest impact of the Creative Health Review has been in England, and whether it would be reflected in Welsh outcomes. Rosie responded that the NCCH are now successfully advocating for creative health in health arenas such as integrated care systems, with associates in post in each area of England to convene and influence. There are now several examples where pots of funding have been created for creative health work with a multi-funder approach. Some integrated care bodies also have creative health strategies that draw on the review's recommendations.

Heledd raised that Wales has a different policy context including the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and that a bespoke review is needed instead of only adapting the English recommendations. A more fundamental holistic approach is needed.

Rosie agreed and added that the recommendations need to be specific for policymakers to tangibly use, particularly in relation to addressing health challenges. Angela added that this review would tie in with the joint Cross Party Group meeting proposed with Mental Health and Eating Disorders, in relation to young people's mental health with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Arts and Minds projects.

Heledd raised that funding could also be requested from Welsh Government and the Minister for Culture with the Minister for Health as a joint venture for prevention. A response may not be received in the short term, though Heledd mentioned this could be requested if required.

**Action Point:** Heledd to request funding for Creative Health Review.

## **5. Discussion, questions and actions arising**

Teri raised the closure of Cardiff University's music department and raised concerns about the impact on the sector. Teri questioned whether there was something that could be done collectively, as there are implications on work related to the Arts and Health sector. Bangor University has also undergone cuts to music.

Heledd agreed that this was a pertinent point and that the cuts demonstrate the stress the organisations are under financially.

Heledd mentioned that during the budget scrutiny there was a concern that so many organisations that are doing good work, with collaborations and putting the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act into practice, are the same organisations that will be curtailed.

## **6. Tabled Partner Updates and Any Other Business**

Heledd thanked everyone for the updates shared with the meeting papers.

**Date of next meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025, 12-1PM