

What Next? Our vision for arts and culture in Wales

What Next? is a movement bringing together arts and cultural organisations from across the UK to articulate and strengthen the role of culture in our society.

Arts, culture and the creative industries are a success story both for Wales and the UK. Even during a time of recession, the sector has managed to grow faster than other parts of the economy¹. The arts benefit people throughout Wales, improving health and well-being, building communities, providing jobs and giving value to peoples' lives. Culture helps make Wales a more equal and diverse society as well as projecting our country effectively beyond its borders. The arts are a crucial way in which we articulate our unique identity as a bilingual nation. Therefore, as political parties look to the elections in 2016, we believe they should re-affirm the essential role of arts and culture in Wales. This document outlines our vision for a thriving arts sector, fully contributing to the life of the nation.

Investment

The benefits of arts and culture to Wales do not happen by accident; nor can these successes be sustained if resources are cut. The risk of a cycle of decline is real. Welsh Government should:

- protect and increase core public investment and thereby guarantee competitive quality of, and access to, the arts and culture in Wales, enabling an increased contribution to wider government objectives.
- seek at least an additional 1% in Wales's share of UK lottery funds devoted to the arts to recognise additional needs arising from the high incidence of poverty and social deprivation in Wales.
- develop a philanthropy campaign to increase philanthropic investment outside London and the south east of England, highlighting sectors and geographical areas of need, in partnership with the UK Government, the Arts Council of Wales and the Arts Council England.
- ensure continued free entry to Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum sites for people of all ages.

A joined-up approach to arts and culture across Welsh Government departments

Through the Arts and Creative Learning Plan, we are already seeing the potential in cross-departmental working. This needs to be extended to other departments, so that we can extract cultural value from all fields of government in the most cost-effective way possible. This should apply across education, skills, health, local authorities, the economy and tackling poverty.

- The Culture Minister should be granted full Cabinet status, and be given responsibility for the Government's external relations and international policy.
- The First Minister should require each Cabinet Minister to make a regular statement on cultural objectives and delivery within their field.
- The Welsh Government's International Agenda document should be revised to allow for a fuller role for the arts and culture in delivering the Welsh Government's objectives. It should not be confined to assisting tourism.
- Further to the Andrews Report and evaluation of the Pioneer Area Programme, financial resources should be ring-fenced to enable culture to tackle poverty across Wales.

¹ DCMS (2015) *Creative Industries Economic Estimates, January 2015, Statistical Release*

Local Government

It is clear that local authorities have struggled to maintain their cultural spend in recent years. The average cut to local authorities of 3.5% in 2013/14 resulted in an 11% cut to arts budgets and a loss of £1m². This is leading to very limited access to the arts in many parts of Wales – the exact opposite of the thrust of Welsh Government arts policy over the last decade.

We need to look to a reformed local government system, and to plan our approach to the delivery of arts and culture on the assumption of the existence of fewer and larger local authorities. We must not allow local authorities to become culture blind.

Local authorities should be required:

- to accept responsibility, and a statutory duty, to act as a convener, enabler and access provider of arts and culture within their boundaries. This should sit within the duties placed on Local Government by the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 Act.
- to conduct a regular audit of cultural provision, establish a cultural consortium and agree a local cultural strategy
- to exempt cultural organisations from local authority rates.

Invest in better training and job creation

The average weekly earning for people in the Creative and Cultural Industries in Wales is about 40% above the rest of the economy.³ Almost 60% of jobs are filled by graduates. We must develop a more diverse workforce as well as see more people feel confident in setting up their own business ideas. Welsh Government should:

- strengthen apprenticeship training, and financial assistance through the Young Recruits Programme, or similar, extended to one year.
- establish an investment fund for young cultural entrepreneurs

Arts, culture and young people

The right to culture for every child must be a cornerstone of cultural and educational policy, establishing equal access to a high standard and wide range of cultural learning opportunities, for all children and young people. We must build on the Arts and Creative Learning Plan to ensure that every state school provides the quality and range of cultural opportunities that exists in the best schools, including extra curricular provision.

- Every young person to have the opportunity to see, make and share in arts and culture.
- All students to receive a pledge or cultural passport emphasizing the right to art and culture and enable them to enjoy life-forming and enriching experiences
- preserve the schools' music services across Wales, building on the recommendation of the task and finish group on music services in Wales.
- Every school to be judged by Estyn on the broad range and quality of their cultural learning, including the extra-curricular opportunities, that they offer each and every child
- The numbers of teacher training places in arts subjects must be increased, to reflect the need for high-quality arts teachers, and to reverse the current decline. We welcome the Furlong Report's recommendations but call for improved teacher training and professional development opportunities for all teachers of the arts.

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² WLGA and ACW figures

³ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) ONS in Priority Sector statistics 2015