

VAW welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation about non-public funding of the arts. Please note that this response is based on our recent experience, and does not represent a systematic survey of arts funding of the voluntary sector in Wales.

The majority of participation in the arts and culture happens within local communities. There are around 4,000 amateur arts, crafts and heritage groups across Wales, with an estimated 650,000 people regularly participating in them ([Welsh Government figures](#)). These creative activities, which are essential to the wellbeing and quality of life of individuals and communities, are largely self-sufficient and receive very little direct public funding.

The capacity for significantly extending earned income, investment and – in particular – philanthropy, within a sector which relies on volunteers and limited funds, is therefore comparatively small.

For example, a common model among voluntary performing arts groups which receive no direct public funding, is of subscription fees from members, supplemented by income from fee-paying performances / ticket sales. This pays for venue hire and running costs, and occasional professional artist fees (e.g. group leaders), and sustains many local voluntary arts groups.

Such groups do, however, rely on local venues, facilities, networks and support: an infrastructure that supports local culture. And this is where reductions in public funding are felt.

Arts groups have long been adapting to reduced public funding. The Wales Audit Office report [Local Authority Funding of Third Sector Services](#) (Jan 2017) reveals that 'Culture and Related Services' is the only area of Welsh Local Authority spend to reduce both in real and cash terms between 2001–02 and 2013–14 (p.13): a decrease of 35.3% in real terms.

Voluntary Arts has sought to support the voluntary and amateur sector to increase its diversity of funding sources. We have a range of free information briefings, including 'How to write a successful funding application', 'Applying to trust funds', 'Gift Aid', 'Crowdfunding for voluntary arts and crafts groups', 'Social enterprise',

‘Trustees and fundraising’ and ‘Raising funds locally’. We regularly share information on a variety of funding sources and mechanisms through our social media channels and through our UK-wide newsletter.

VAW overwhelmingly hears of the need for small grants from the groups we work with. These might be from arts-specific or generalist funders; from public sources or charitable trusts and foundations. Awards for All remains an important funder of local cultural activity, as is the Arts Council of Wales’s small grants programme, but there is also a need for very small grants. Voluntary Arts recently ran a project, [\*Open Conversations\*](#), to improve its understanding of creative activities with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) cultures and communities. One of the findings was a demand for ‘micro-grants’ with easier application processes, for example allowing video submissions. This is borne out by VAW’s experience of administering micro-grants (between £100 and £250) to enable participation in Voluntary Arts Week, to pay for the costs of materials, venue hire and promotion. The [\*Gwanwyn\*](#) celebration of creativity in older age offers a similar model. A small amount of increased investment in this area can yield substantial results and introduce large numbers of participants to the benefits of creative cultural activities.

The heritage sector in Wales has benefited from the dedicated [\*Catalyst Cymru\*](#) programme, which provides fundraising skills development for all who work in the heritage sector, and is delivered by WCVA.

Regarding investment, VAW has been exploring the potential for an arts-based manifestation of the Wales Wellbeing Bond, a form of social investment that uses public funds, rather than the private funds used by other Social Impact Bonds. We believe there is considerable potential for arts-based initiatives using repayable finance, particularly in the area of arts and health programmes.

## Volunteering

The additional resource, across all arts, culture and heritage organisations, is of course the vital contribution of volunteering.

VAW has been exploring the role of volunteering in the arts. We are not aware of a statistical overview of arts volunteering in Wales, but the following represents an initial indication of the scale and contribution of volunteers to arts organisations in Wales, which we believe is likely to be considerable:

- The Wales Council of Voluntary Action (WCVA) estimates that there are about 938,000 volunteers in organisations in Wales ([Third Sector Statistical Resource 2016](#)).
- This leads to an estimate that 145 million hours of volunteering is given in Wales in a year, which can be given a monetary value of £1.7 billion: equivalent to 3.1% of Wales' GDP (*ibid*).
- Around 10% of the 33,000 third sector organisations in Wales work in the area of arts, culture and heritage, and 1,915 (22%) of the registered charities in Wales include the charitable purpose of promoting arts, culture, heritage and science (*ibid*).
- In 2015/16, there were 1,353 volunteers within the 67 Arts Portfolio Wales organisations ([Arts Council of Wales](#) figures).
- The number of Arts/Culture and Heritage opportunities advertised on the [Volunteering Wales](#) website between 1 July 2016 and 1 July 2017 was 670.

There are emerging volunteering trends, such as online or micro-volunteering (e.g. archiving heritage collections online), and cultural venues are increasingly part of time-banking schemes (e.g. the [Sherman 5](#) initiative, and [Get the Chance](#), which rewards critical responses to arts and culture with time credits).