

Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts in Wales

Inquiry into Participation in the Arts in Wales

Response from Newport Museum and Art Gallery (Newport City Council)

1. What organisation do you represent?

Newport Museum and Art Gallery (Newport City Council)

2. Which groups of people participate in your organisation's arts activities?

The Museum and Art Gallery is free and open to all. In terms of local participants this includes: formal education sector; family groups; flying start playgroups; youth service; older people; communities first; adults with learning disabilities; specialist groups (e.g. LGBT), etc.....

3. Do you think that budget changes have affected participation in the arts, either positively or negatively?

At the moment no, our overall programmes remain the same. However, in the medium to long term provision (of exhibitions and their associated participation/activity programmes) and output will be reduced and therefore potentially leading to lower levels of participation

4. Do you think that certain groups of people have been affected more than others?

Yes. It will limit cultural participation amongst difficult to reach groups including BME, young people and some socio economic sectors where arts and cultural participation is at a low level because targeting such groups takes time and therefore costs more.

5. Are there gaps in provision for people to participate in arts activities, either demographically or geographically?

Please see answer 4: we have limited resources to undertake outreach work so that the majority of the work we do is focussed on the gallery

6. Are there enough funding sources available other than the Arts Council for Wales? Are alternative funding sources accessible?

Yes. But reductions in staffing means a reduction in our capacity to research and apply and therefore presents a significant challenge. Furthermore it should be noted that not all sources of funding are available to local authorities.

7. What role does the voluntary arts sector play in promoting participation in the arts in Wales and how can this be supported?

Where there is provision it is generally situated in the amateur/community cultural context and plays an important role – less obvious is the role VAS plays in supporting and sustaining the established (and emerging) professional cultural context.

8. Is the strategic relationship between the Welsh Government and the bodies that distribute arts funding effective in increasing participation?

There is a lack of clarity about who sets the arts policy agenda in Wales – is it ACW or the Welsh Government? Delivery mechanisms are open to interpretation by the bodies who distribute funding on behalf of the Welsh Govt.

9. All public bodies in Wales will have published a strategic equality plan by April 2012. Do you think that these new public sector equality duties will help to increase participation in the arts among under-represented groups in Wales?

The changes will reinforce, in many cases, long established and pre-existing policies which are already in place (e.g. in local authorities).