

Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts in Wales

Inquiry into Participation in the Arts in Wales

Response from Josef Herman Foundation

1. What organisation do you represent?

Josef Herman Foundation

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

All ages and backgrounds

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

Reduced budgets to arts services will always affect participation in the arts and there is an increasing need for particularly young people to engage in arts and culture as a way out of disadvantage and isolation.

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

Young people, older people and people on low incomes. Recent statistics in England demonstrate that an increased % of young people have never attended a performance in a theatre.

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

There are many gaps in provision, especially in rural communities and in engaging with young people and the elderly.

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

The continuing battle for independent charitable sector funding for grants is increasingly competitive and there are extremely limited sources of funding available, especially for solo artists. It is also harder to achieve funding for direct arts activities (rather than activities that engage arts to support community development).

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

The voluntary arts sector plays a strong service in support, but this has become increasingly difficult with the loss of ACW funding for VAW.

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

We don't know, as the relationship is not sufficiently transparent to make any informed opinion.

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?

Not unless these specifically include arts and cultural as listed items in the strategy. In many public bodies, the arts make up a very small % of total services, especially in local authorities. There are also very limited pockets of disadvantage in many areas and if grants in future are priorities specifically for these areas it may result in a ghetto culture of funding support. There are also many examples of arts being funded just because they are focussed on minority communities, rather than being quality activities. Funders should of course support under-represented groups, but not just because they are under-represented.