

Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts in Wales

Inquiry into Participation in the Arts in Wales

Response from Swansea Metropolitan University

1. What organisation do you represent?

Swansea Metropolitan University

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

Barnardo's, Phoenix Centre Townhill, YMCA, Tan Dance, Stagecoach, Community Dance Groups, Local Choirs, School Groups in Swansea

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

Negatively – funding for many organisations and groups has shrunk. Our Young Person's group with Barnardo's will close after this year due to cuts to the service

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

Yes – those without access to transport and nearby facilities or organisations – transport and access are the 2 key issues

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

Yes – many people in the deprived communities and CF areas of Wales do not have access to the arts or the means to participate

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

No. More community based resources needed across Wales – there is too much centralisation of funding within Arts organisations – more community and third sector organisations need to be given the money directly – as they have the links with the potential participants and hard to reach groups

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

Voluntary Arts Wales works to develop links and networks but again we should not limit funding to arts organisations – we should work more closely with the third sector and give them more funding support

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

No. There is not enough effective distribution across Wales and it is still the case that most of the funding goes to the usual suspects who perform to the same audiences and work with the same participants – it is very difficult for new opportunities to be created in the current structure – there needs to be more imaginative engagement with those groups who are not within the arts networks

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?

They will help but unless funding is targeted in a more effective way – with the groups who actually work with the under-represented groups (though with proper accountability) you will not produce a significantly greater amount of participation amongst those under-represented groups. They want to participate but it is transport, access and the quality of the engagement with these groups that is usually lacking.