

Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts in Wales

Inquiry into Participation in the Arts in Wales

Response from Participant

1. What kind of arts activities do you currently participate in (for example, drama, music, arts, writing, crafts, filmmaking, dancing)?

Drama, writing and art.

2. Why do you participate in arts activities?

I participate in order to develop my knowledge and skills in these areas.

Interaction with like-minded people is also extremely important to me.

Importantly, all these activities help stimulate mental and physical activity, so crucial for individuals of advancing years.

3. Has arts provision been withdrawn in your area because of budget cuts?

Funding cuts has resulted in the loss of at least one creative writing group that I had been attending for over five years. There seems no immediate prospect of a replacement course.

4. If so, how has this affected you?

The loss of opportunities to continue to be creative, for example, within the context of a writing group, has been difficult to adjust to. Shared literary ideas and experiences have been a bedrock for me, now, alas, this has been removed. Additionally, cost increases are challenging my ability to continue with those activities I currently attend.

5. Do you think that people have enough opportunity to participate in arts activities in your area?

There are opportunities to attend a variety of arts activities. However, costs are increasing and, in some cases, courses and activities have been, and are being, challenged to remain viable. Other issues, for example transport, parking and, in some cases, courses and activities become quickly over-subscribed, dashing the hopes of those who would really like to participate more frequently. I understand that, in some instances, there is a 'waiting list' for some popular activities/courses.

6. Would anything help you to participate more in the arts?

Increased availability of certain courses and activities, or at least, a fairer process to curtail the number of consecutive periods that some participants of the more popular arts courses are allowed to re-join. For example, some

courses have the same nucleus, or same total number of group members, term after term and year after year, hence denying opportunities for others to experience these. More general advertising of arts events and activities may help participation.

7. What might stop you from taking part in arts activities (for example, accessibility)?

Cost remains a major factor, particularly if one participates in a number of activities and courses. For example, one art course costs £110 for a ten-week term, with no facility for an age-related, fee reduction. Transport and parking costs may eventually reduce my ability to participate.