

# Hynt

An Arts Council of Wales initiative managed by Creu Cymru in partnership with Diverse Cymru

## Engagement Feedback Report



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# Introduction

## What is Hynt?

In March 2014 Arts Council Wales appointed Creu Cymru, in partnership with Diverse Cymru to deliver a new access initiative across the theatre and arts centre sector in Wales. After a period of research undertaken in 2013 into the viability of such a project, this initiative is ACW's response to the recommendations that were made.

The scheme has been advertised as a national disabled visitors' card scheme. In fact, it's much broader than that. The aim is for a national, centrally administrated card scheme with a clear arbitration process managed by Diverse Cymru that is complemented by an extensive programme of bespoke training for theatres and arts centres as well as a public-facing information website.

Art and culture exists for everyone. But it's not always that easy. If you have an impairment or disability there can be a number of reasons why getting the most out of an experience at a local arts centre or theatre can be a slightly more complicated affair than simply booking tickets and choosing what to wear.

Hynt is a national scheme with the needs of audiences placed firmly at its heart. By signing up to the scheme, all venues in Wales can come together to create consistency in what they offer their audience members who need support from an assistant or carer in order to make a visit to their venue.

Hynt will provide individuals who need additional support with a card that can be used across all participating venues in Wales. That way, you can be confident about what you are going to get out of your relationship with any venue that carries its stamp.

As well as this, Hynt will provide a range of information to help you make decisions and confidently plan your theatre visit. The Hynt website will act as a home for all access information, providing an up to date and easy to use facility with detailed performance and venue information.

Hynt is a peer led scheme grounded in understanding and knowledge about the needs of audiences with disability or impairment. The scheme is about removing the barriers that hold those audiences back from enjoying everything that arts and culture can offer; opening up cultural spaces to offer people the chance to have meaningful, memorable and inspiring experiences.

## Engagement Sessions

In June 2014 we held 7 engagement events across Wales. The aim of these events was to outline our ideas about how the scheme could work and to discuss the opportunities and challenges of the project. It is important to us that Hynt is a scheme that is peer-led, that responds positively to feedback and that takes on board the views of all our stakeholders. We wanted to speak with as many stakeholders as possible so that we could make sure that this scheme was effective and fulfilled the needs of the audiences, theatres and arts centres. The engagement sessions have provided us with a great deal of information and helped us to understand better the wide range of experiences and challenges that we are working with. We have also benefited from meeting a large number of organisations and individuals who have generously shared their expertise, knowledge and resources with us to help develop and support Hynt. This collaborative and inclusive approach will be key to the future success of the scheme.

We invited a wide range of individuals and organisations to attend and altogether we have spoken with over 80 people from a variety of disabled communities, support organisations, carers, theatres and arts centres. The feedback from all of these events is contained within Appendix 2 of this report. However, this is only the start of an ongoing conversation, we know that we will have to continue to adapt and develop. This report aims to outline the work we have done to date and open up our thinking and provide an opportunity for further consultation.

## The Report

This report collects together the information presented at the engagement sessions, the feedback from participants and the responses and considerations of the project team. It details the growth and change of the scheme from its initial conception in January 2014 through the seven engagement events we held across Wales in June and July. Each chapter of this report addresses a different aspect of the scheme and the report follows the same journey as the presentation that was given at each of the engagement events. The original slides acting as a pre-cursor to each section with the narrative below covering the material we presented and incorporating the feedback and responses from the attendees as well many of the questions and issues raised that we will be continuing to explore as we bring the scheme online.

In order to engage as many of the scheme's potential stakeholders as possible this version of the report will be available online from 9 September 2104 to 8 October 2014 and we are keen to hear from anyone who has input on taking the scheme forward.

For more information or to send feedback to be incorporated into the final version of this report please contact us at any of the email addresses below.

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## Branding

During the engagement events in June we were using the name Entri for this national access scheme. It was a name that we decided on after much thought and research. We wanted a name that did not need to be translated between Welsh and English. A word that could easily be understood in both languages, quickly conjured a positive and welcoming image and represented the values of openness, accessibility and fairness that we want to engender into this scheme.

We felt that Entri served this purpose well, we understood the word to be language neutral, that it is not actually an English or Welsh word rather a linguistic play on the word Entry. However, although the name has been met with positive reactions overall, we have found that in some circumstances it has been recognised as little used Welsh word meaning 'a diary entry' or 'entry via an alleyway or side entrance'.

We have realised that this literal translation of the word Entri could be viewed in a negative light and have connotations for this scheme that are the exact opposite of our intentions. For this reason we have revisited our branding and, continuing to focus on a name that works in both Welsh and English, is easily identifiable and is representative of the scheme's core values of inclusivity, confidence, engagement, transparency and fairness, have settled on the name Hynt.

# The Hynt Scheme

Hynt is a national access scheme for disabled theatre customers made up of three aspects:

- A training and development initiative for theatres and arts centres
- A central website to provide information to customers about performances and venues
- A concessionary card programme

Together these three aspects will make Hynt a facilitator and catalyst for change.

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Hynt is an Arts Council of Wales initiative managed by Creu Cymru in partnership with Diverse Cymru. Founded in the desire to remove barriers to engagement and participation our scheme is based on the social model of disability and strives to address negative attitudes and improve the quality of service and experience that disabled communities receive in our theatres and arts centres.

The Hynt Scheme is a step forward from existing schemes such as the access scheme that Diverse Cymru has been running with the New Theatre and Wales Millennium Centre for the past four years. We have drawn on the best practice, experience and knowledge of the Cardiff scheme and others to create a consistent, fair and peer-led scheme applicable to the whole of Wales. Hynt aims to enable disabled people who currently face a variety of barriers and challenges to enjoy and participate in the arts and responds to a demand and desire across communities in Wales to create a unified approach and quality standard for supporting disabled customers in accessing arts and cultural events.

The project aims to:

- Create a consistent and fair ticketing policy across theatres and arts centres in Wales in relation to carers / Personal Assistants.
- Promote accessibility in all our theatres and arts centres in Wales reducing the barriers to engagement and participation.
- Build links between theatres and arts centres and their local disabled communities.
- Develop skills, expertise and capacity within the arts sector and disabled communities to make the scheme truly collaborative and sustainable.

We want to be honest about what we feel we are able to achieve within the resources we have available. At the same time we recognise there area number of areas where we should be looking to develop the scheme for the future and we will be considering this once the initial scheme is in place.

These include:

- Working with other sectors such as leisure centres, galleries and museums and heritage sites
- Developing the scheme into a wider customer preference scheme that could be of benefit to a broader range of people with impairments

# Training and Development

## A training and development initiative for theatres and arts centres:

- Bespoke training for all participating venues looking at accessibility across the organisation.
  - Working with Diverse Cymru, customers and expert organisations to provide support, skills and expertise in setting criteria for the scheme.
  - Creating opportunities to build relationships with new and existing audiences.
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We are working with a partner organisation called Include Arts to develop our training programme. Throughout the engagement events we have talked about the need for a programme that is bespoke and engages with the specific needs of the participating theatres and arts centres. We wanted to find a partner to work with who had significant experience of working in this area and could bring expertise, knowledge and experience to the project. A number of questions were raised by participants at the events around the following themes; the content of the training, the cascading of training throughout organisations; whether or not our trainer was disabled; whether or not the training was based on the social model.

We recognise that some individuals and organisations will be disappointed that our chosen partner is not a disability led organisation, and that they are not based in Wales however, we believe that Include Arts have the right approach to Inclusive Practice. As an organisation, Include Arts bring experience of working in theatres and venues both in-house and through external consultancy. Include Arts work directly with, and for, disabled people and their families as well as bringing added value in terms of training, for arts venues in particular. One of the issues we identified in the arts sector was finding trainers who had a working knowledge of the industry; a lot of current training is developed and delivered as generic teachings by those who have a good understanding of accessibility and disability equality, but not necessarily with direct examples of how to adapt practice effectively for theatres and arts centres.

All training sessions will be shaped, moulded and have direct input from a range of customers within a pan-impairment spectrum, Include Arts will create and work with an advisory group of disabled people to shape and mould the training. This will allow Include Arts to develop a training programme with a comprehensive breadth of

insight that represents the interests of all those customers the scheme is intended to reach.

We have emphasised the need to design the training fit for purpose and work with all the participating venues to deliver something that works for them. However, the general themes of the training will be identifying key areas of opportunity for embedding an inclusive culture and making changes to improve access and inclusion. Working on ways to improve the customer experience is our primary goal, with a focus on the 'Visitor Journey' for disabled customers. The session aims to identify and work towards removing existing barriers within an organisation to attract a diverse and inclusive audience. Many audience members have a hidden disability, or do not consider themselves disabled (but would still benefit from staff being aware and inclusive) so this session is relevant for all departments within an organisation. Topics will vary for each venue depending on requirements but can expect to include: Basic Disability Equality, Easy Access Tips, Terminology Customer Service, Communication, Marketing (Networks & Accessibility), Assisted Performances, Ticketing and Front of House Policy.

Shared Learning will be very important in ensuring that skills and information can be cascaded through the organisation. Each venue will receive an adaptable training pack which will work both as consolidation learning for those who attended the session but also a stand-alone training document for those unable to attend. Included in this pack are Follow-On Exercises which offer a practical way to share learning with other staff members via a combination of visual, kinaesthetic and auditory exercises and signpost other resources such as the Arts Council of Wales equalities toolkit, which is being developed by Diverse Cymru, and the current series of Access Audits and training being delivered by Centre for Accessible Environments on behalf of the Arts Council of Wales. The training has been structured so that, along with the Training Pack and the Follow-On Exercises, those in attendance will be equipped with the knowledge and tools required to share the findings of the session with other staff members. The materials will allow anyone who has attended the session to cascade the findings effectively and accurately, ensuring best practice shared learning across the organisation.

We want to be able to measure the impact of this training programme and demonstrably improve customer experiences so throughout the project we will establish evaluation methods to assess the impact of areas such as: Impact of Training, Post-Training Internal Influence, Areas of Shared Excellence/Development. This may include methods such as: feedback forms, anecdotal evidence, and evaluation reports. The research for the project will include a survey which will be completed by a representative from each participating venue. The results of this survey will be presented for evaluation purposes in the form of a short report.

The training offered by this programme is only part of a wider need to build expertise and skills in the sector and we acknowledge that there a wide range of organisations

and individuals who are developing projects and designing and delivering training, working across a number of areas. We want to build links to help support this work and where possible we are committed to working together to cross promote maximising the benefits of existing and new provision, there will always be an ongoing need to refresh and revitalise skills and knowledge in this area.

## The Hynt Website

### **A central website to provide information to customers about performances and venues:**

- Central Listings information for all accessible performances happening across Wales.
  - Access guides and information relating to all participating theatres and arts centres.
  - An opportunity to sign up for updates and additional information.
  - Downloadable application forms for customers and venues and full information about the scheme.
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The website will be available to all customers and will be relevant to a wide range of individuals rather than only those who are eligible for the card scheme. We want to create a central hub for information making it easier for customers to find the details that they need.

There will be a full listings section which will provide information on all accessible performances happening at participating theatres and arts centres. There will also be access guides for each venues enabling individuals to plan their visits around the specifics of whichever theatre they are visiting. From listening to people at our engagement events we know that having some detailed information about the layout of our buildings and location of facilities within them can give customers greater confidence in attending. It was clear at the engagement sessions that making this type of information available in one central location and in accessible formats could be a great resource. There was a great deal of positivity about this element of the project.

The lack of consistency in terms of customer experience was also raised on many occasions at the engagement events. We know that there are many challenges for individuals with impairments and although we are clear that Hynt is not able to guarantee the removal of all physical barriers that customers might face we are able to act as a kite mark. By creating these access guides we hope to both inform customers and theatres and arts centres of some of the challenges that may need additional thought, care and attention. Theatres and arts centres who are participating in this scheme are venues that are committed to social and attitudinal changes and where environmental barriers remain the quality of customer service will be designed to make every visit as comfortable as possible.

The design of the website is incredibly important for our customers and is being informed by best practice guidelines from Diverse Cymru and user testing by a number of disability and access organisations. We know we need to ensure that it is easy and intuitive to use and will display coherently and without missing elements for those using tablet devices and smartphones to browse the site (such as those designed in Flash which might not appear on iOS devices).

We also know that we will need to create a site that is always up to date and current for it to be relevant and worthwhile. For that reason where possible we will be using technological solutions to create automatic uploads of information from participating venues via RSS. This way the Hynt website will always have the most up to date information available without putting an additional administrative burden on the participating theatres.

The website will also be the main point of distribution for the application forms for the concessionary card scheme. We will create an application form that can be filled in on screen or printed out and filled out by hand. The form can be returned either by email or in the post with any supporting documents. We will ensure that the form is accessible and can accommodate as wide a variety of screen readers and other accessibility aids as possible. The issue of access to digital technology was raised at a few of the engagement events and we have been clear throughout that there will be other ways to get an application form for the scheme, through your local theatre or by calling the central applications team and having a form posted out to you. We recognise that not everyone has access to a PC and printer but we also know that this is changing with the Digital Inclusion programme and we acknowledge that for many individuals with impairments digital is a more accessible way of receiving information.

The website will also host a Frequently Asked Questions guidance document outlining the application process and to help with completing the application form. We will make sure that this document is updated regularly as questions arise or if further information needs to be made available so that we can continuously improve our service. There will also be a dedicated phone number and minicom with trained staff available and able to answer any questions relating to the application process.

The website will also be a key source of information for theatres and arts centres helping us to identify opportunities for audience development and areas where we can improve our customer services and communications. Participating venues will also have access to detailed website analytics and statistics: In addition to monitoring the number of visitors to their individual venue pages and listings, which can be updated both manually and via dedicated RSS feeds, they will be able see how long users spend browsing the site, which search terms are creating traffic and identify other sites which are linking to a venue's page. All of this information will help us work with the theatres and arts centres to better understand audiences and

continue to develop best practice in communicating with customers. It will also be a valuable resource for targeted audience development work in the future.

## **The Hynt Card**

### **A concessionary card programme:**

- Creu Cymru approached Diverse Cymru about creating a partnership around this aspect of the scheme because we were already running a similar project in Cardiff with the New Theatre and the Wales Millennium Centre.
- Both organisations worked in collaboration to map out how the scheme could best be delivered nationally, and those goals which would be central to the Hynt cards' patron-led ethos.

### **Working for customers and venues:**

- The cards are free to apply for and free to use.
- This scheme is national and venues that have joined will automatically have a card holder's eligibility and preferences registered.
- The scheme would provide consistency and ease of experience for disabled customers and their carers in purchasing tickets and attending performances across Wales.

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We are aware that there are a number of existing access schemes that have been developed by theatres and arts centres and local authorities over the last few years. However, a lack of consistency has been identified as a barrier for customers and this is what our scheme primarily aims to address. As part of the development of this national scheme we drew on existing good practice and benefited from a wealth of experience and expertise. We feel that we have created a scheme that is a step forward for customers with a clear, fair and transparent set of criteria and consistent, empathetic and expert appeals process, alongside the training, support and digital infrastructure that this scheme will create.

As the crux on which the scheme was built, the concessionary card programme is designed to ensure that those who require the support and assistance of a carer or companion are not faced with the financial barrier of buying an additional ticket in order to be able to attend performances. There is already a legal obligation for venues to make Reasonable Adjustments for disabled people to have a carer's concession in place and to apply it across all performances, including across

external hires, and this scheme aims to offer consistency across participating venues.

Some theatres and arts centres already offered a very generous concessionary scheme, but we believe that a more uniform scheme which prioritises those with the highest need will encourage customers with access issues to engage more with artistic and cultural events across Wales. Hynt will remove the uncertainty and complexity that is engendered by a wider variety of smaller, less cohesive schemes by creating a single, simple and central system.

There was much discussion at the engagement events about the possibility of running local schemes alongside the national scheme or about the unique relationships that some theatres and arts centres have with their customers. We think it is important to acknowledge that we will need to work closely with theatres and their customers to make any transition to this new scheme as easy, simple and painless as possible and to communicate clearly the reasons behind the change. Hynt aims to provide clarity rather than impose an autocracy and is addressing and responding to a genuine need. This scheme is about equalising accessibility rather than making it cheaper for a disabled patrons to access the theatre and it is important to note as well that we are focused solely on the concession for carers / Personal Assistants and all other concessions, including any discounts for a disabled customer's ticket, will remain at the venues' discretion.

One of the core aims of the scheme is to create consistency and ease of experience for disabled customers who need additional support to access the theatre. In order to do this the customer's card must be transferable from venue to venue. In order for us to facilitate this the central applications system will create a database of card holders, each identified by the unique reference numbers on their cards. This information will be available for venues to integrate into their local box office systems. We understand that there are a wide range of box office systems across Wales and we will be working closely with venues to undertake some user testing prior to launch to iron out any issues. We will also be providing additional support where we can to simplify any systems.

We also understand that the sharing of data is a sensitive and complex issue. We were very clear at all of our engagement sessions that we take data protection very seriously and we want to make sure that all our systems and processes are transparent and customers understand the way data will be handled. All card holders will need to agree to sharing their contact information across the network in order for the national scheme to function, this will be emphasised clearly at the point of application. Additional customer preference information will only be shared where customers have given permission.

Two main mechanisms for data sharing were considered during the conception of this project; keeping the information in a cloud based portal, or operating an XML

database that is regularly updated and accessible by secure login. It is important that we operate a system that is compatible with the wide range of box office systems and processes being used across the sector. It is also important that we find a system that helps to facilitate the type of audience development work we hope to see as a result of this scheme. With these things in mind we intend to build a unique xml database as this system enables us to clearly control the data that is shared between the network and easily transfer the data to individual box office systems to facilitate better communication with audience members.

Hynt will replace existing local schemes creating a single, consistent national scheme. There are however a few areas where this has caused some problems with issues being raised at the engagement events regarding schemes that would be in direct conflict with Hynt.

For example many of our theatres and arts centres also have cinema facilities and currently accept the CEA card. The CEA card is an opt-in scheme and cinemas are able to remain members of the CEA without also accepting the card. The problem with running the two schemes together in a single venue is that it creates inconsistencies in ticket pricing policy as the CEA card scheme has a different eligibility criteria to the national scheme so running the two schemes together would create the very inconsistency that our scheme is attempting to eliminate.

We envisage that this new national scheme would replace the CEA card in the theatres and arts centres which join. The benefit being that customers do not need to pay to be part of Hynt but do need to pay an annual fee to be part of the CEA scheme. There are also additional benefits to customers and participating venues which include; training, access to resources and a central information website. We feel therefore that we would want to ask venues who opt in to the national scheme to opt out of the CEA card scheme. At the same time we understand that this will be a challenge for some venues where not being part of the CEA scheme may be considered detrimental to the business, for example where dropping the CEA card might prevent them from competing with national cinema chains.

The other area where we have needed to focus our thinking has been around local authority schemes which currently encompass both culture and leisure. Our focus for the national scheme has been on theatres and arts centres however we can see clearly the benefits of widening the scheme to encompass leisure facilities for example the existing PlusOne scheme in Swansea. The challenge for us is that attending a leisure facility is a very different experience to attending a theatre and potentially could require different levels of support making it difficult to define eligibility criteria that is fit for purpose across both the theatres and arts centres sector and the leisure sector. As stated at the start of this document at this moment in time we need to be focused on our brief to work with theatres and arts centres. We acknowledge that this may mean some key cultural venues are not able to join Hynt as they would not want to cease being part of an existing local authority scheme. We

recognise this to be a weakness in our current approach and we hope to be able to work closely with local authorities to find a solution in the future.

The current requirement for theatres and arts centres to be consistent in their approach to making reasonable adjustment has also recently been tested in a high court ruling against the Barbican Theatre in York. Discussions at the engagement events demonstrated how a scheme like this could help theatres and arts centres share information and expertise in this area, for example, keeping up to date with legal changes or rulings like this one. It also provided us with an opportunity to discuss the benefit of working as a collective to negotiate with independent and commercial producers or external hirers. This is an area where theatres and arts centres have the ability to make wider change in the sector by raising the awareness of access issues with the independent and commercial producers. We hope that by coming together under a national scheme that theatres and arts centres will have more central influence and a stronger negotiating position to be able to ensure that these producers also accept the need to make reasonable adjustment and consider this when confirming ticketing policies with the venues.

We recognise that there is a risk for theatres and arts centres, if commercial and independent producers do not agree to offer the concessions demanded by our scheme, participating theatres and arts centres will be left to take the financial hit. This is significant for theatres and arts centres that are facing financial pressures throughout their operations and who are dependent on the income from these types of events. After talking with the venues at a number of events we have suggested that Hynt enter discussions with a number of the main producers currently bringing product into Wales and work towards a collective understanding and support for the scheme to help allay some of the risks for participating theatres and arts centres.

## Eligibility Criteria

Following much discussion on what would be reasonable, fair and workable the DLA High Rate Care Component was identified as the baseline eligibility.

Other disability benefits were then incorporated as criteria.

- Enhanced PIP Daily Living Component
- High Rate Attendance Allowance
- Certificate of Visual Impairment
- War Disablement Pension
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

Those assessed as in need of the Higher Rate Care Component would receive the full discount, with a 30% discount for those in receipt of the middle rate and no discount for those on the lower rate.

Disabled people who do not meet the eligibility criteria can apply to an arbitration process that will look at their individual circumstances.

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The above eligibility criteria, which is based on the model at New Theatres Cardiff and Wales Millennium Centre was discussed at all the engagement events. We want to ensure that the eligibility criteria for our final scheme are as appropriate and fair as possible. As we have stated before this scheme prioritises those individuals who need additional support in order to attend a performance at a theatre or arts centre. We realise that a wholly comprehensive set of criteria is unfeasible and unwieldy, it's a one size fits most rather than all, but it's important that the criteria are objective and reflect the genuine and assessed need of those the scheme is designed to reach.

The scheme is pan-impairment and though the original criteria were designed to be inclusive not exclusive, we realise that they currently leave out some significant groups including: Deaf; deafened and hard of hearing people; those with mental health issues; learning disabilities and age related conditions such as dementia or those with acquired brain injuries. It also did not cover those who would be eligible for DLA/PIP payments but are in receipt of social services support rather than Direct Payments.

Taking all of this into consideration and learning from and listening to the wealth of expertise that was present throughout our engagement events we have redrawn the eligibility criteria as follows:

- Enhanced PIP Daily Living Component
- DLA High Rate Care Component
- High Rate Attendance Allowance
- Certificate of Visual Impairment
- War Disablement Pension
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)
- Direct Payments
- Social Services Care Package
- Dual Sensory Impairments
- Continuing Healthcare Package

Any individual in receipt of these benefits will automatically be eligible for the card scheme. Upon successful application cards will be valid for a period of 3 years before renewal and will be able to hold the particulars of a customer's preferences such as a disabled car parking space, though the cardholder will have the option of restricting any information given besides their name, some address details and their eligibility for a concessionary ticket.

The available concession will be a fully discounted ticket for the card holder's Personal Assistant / or a carer. Previously we had envisaged a two-tiered discount, where individuals receiving higher rate benefits would receive a full discount and those on the middle rate would receive 30%. Although this two level approach acknowledges that some people need more support than others, feedback and discussion at the engagement events led us to rethink this two tier approach and to create a flat, single, full discount. The feedback from the engagement events was clear in that people agreed that individuals either need support or they don't and if they need support then they should not be at a disadvantage financially because of this.

Working with groups within this scheme was also discussed at great length at a number of our events. Groups regularly visit theatres and arts centres and many have longstanding relationships with particular organisations. Although the same organisation may regularly bring a group to see performances the make up and impairment range within this group can vary greatly from visit to visit. This means it would be necessary for organisations to apply each time they wanted to bring a different group. This seemed like an overly bureaucratic way to deal with this situation and working with engagement event participants we found a different solution which we believe to be more appropriate and workable.

Fundamentally groups will remain outside of the scheme – individuals may hold their own cards for use when visiting independently or with family and friends but group ticketing will be left to the judgement of the venues. Hynt will provide support and expertise if needed and also good practice guidance for theatres and arts centres to

follow which explains the process of risk assessing group and deciding on necessary ratios of care. And if there is any uncertainty participating theatres and arts centres will be able to call on the regional arbiters for additional support.

Another area where there was much discussion was around ticketing policy for children. Children under a certain age need to be accompanied to performances at theatres and arts centres regardless of any access issues although this can vary between theatres depending on policy. The focus of this scheme is about creating consistency and ease of access for all those who need additional support to attend the theatre. For that reason anyone, regardless of age will be eligible for the scheme although young people under the age of 16 will require the signature of a parent or guardian to authorise their application.

Finally we discussed one off situations where customers may arrive on the night for a performance – we call this a ‘walk up’. Many existing schemes will not enable customers to take advantage of their concession unless they have completed the application process. One of the main values of our scheme however is inclusivity and we want to encourage people to attend rather than turn them away because they don’t have a card.

For this reason we have identified a solution by which venues can offer a one-time concession to walk up customers. This is for individuals who believe they are eligible for the scheme and therefore require support to continue with their visit but are not yet members of the scheme. In this scenario customers would be required to log their name and address with the venue staff and the venue would provide them with the details they need to apply for one of the concessionary cards enabling them to receive their discount on any return visit.

## The Arbitration Process

Arbitration is at the core of the card scheme. Each decision is made on its own merits and reflects the individual needs of the patron.

- Arbitration can be used to help those with a need for support greater than 1:1.
- As independent regional arbiters, organisations will bring local knowledge to the scheme and be able to make their decisions factoring in accessibility issues that affect their members and service users.
- Involvement in the scheme will improve signposting to local and accessible arts and culture.
- Resources have been allocated to provide free on-site training and ongoing support for the organisations that sign up to act as regional arbiters.

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In the scheme which Diverse Cymru has been running in Cardiff, people whose eligibility fell outside the established criteria went through the arbitration process. Arbitration also acts as an appeals system so any individual who feels that they should be eligible for a complimentary ticket but has received a negative decision as they have not met the criteria is able to appeal that decision via the arbitration process. This process will also apply to Hynt but to ensure that arbitration is required as seldom as possible we will also be including a system of referrals as part of the application process.

For individuals whose impairments fall outside the initial eligibility criteria, for example those with learning difficulties or a mental health problem, applications will be able to be supported by a referral from umbrella organisations such as Mind Cymru, Catrefi Cymru or Alzheimer's Society. We will also accept referrals from the theatres and arts centres themselves where they may have experience and knowledge of existing customer's conditions.

This referral system also addresses concerns over the burden of proof required for those whose eligibility is not established via the set criteria, allowing selected and properly trained organisations to act as referees and for their customers to apply for the cards without the need to approach the arbiters.

We know that having eligibility criteria automatically makes any scheme feel exclusive rather than inclusive. We want to make sure that we are providing clear

and easy ways for people to find out about the scheme. We will make sure that our marketing is accessible and clearly communicates the wide range of people who will be eligible for the scheme ensuring that the eligibility criteria and the alternative application pathways and arbitration options are made known to encourage as large a uptake of the cards as is possible.

Throughout the course of our engagement events we made inroads in identifying organisations whose representatives were interested in bringing the role of Hynt scheme arbiter into their professional portfolios. Whilst we had previously envisioned the arbitrations as being carried out by a single person for each regional hub the responses we have received mean that we have revised our plans to include a larger network of arbiters, which will allow us to access a broader range of specialist knowledge and experiences and create a larger group of arbiters in those regions that are more likely to experience a higher volume of requests for arbitrations.

In order to make sure that there is comprehensive reporting throughout arbitration the process will be administered through correspondence, the vast majority of which will be email-based, although some may be handled through the post, since there is currently no cost-effective way to ensure that all of the arbiters have the facilities to record phone calls. Whilst this is perhaps not ideal in terms of its accessibility it will provide protection for both arbiters and those customers using the service.

Diverse Cymru has created a quality framework that independent regional arbiters will be trained to use and can refer to in practice this is included as Appendix 1 of this report. The framework will also allow Diverse Cymru to monitor the work of arbiters as the scheme goes forward to ensure consistency of decision making and customer experience.

The training will also cover the entire arbitration process and contains supporting material around the legal protections, issues of expenses and finance and transferable skills that acting as an arbiter will encompass.

## Moving Forward

The future sustainability of the scheme is a key concern for all stakeholders. Hynt should not be dependent on grant funding for its future viability and we also do not think it is fair or appropriate to ask customers to pay for the cards as is the policy of the CEA card. For this reason Hynt is dependent on a financial contribution being made by the theatres and arts centres. Under the projected budget for the scheme participating venues would be buying into the scheme on a sliding scale based on their turnover, exclusively the Theatre or Arts Centre's where they are part of a larger institution or organisational body at the following rates:

Up to £500,000: £250 per annum.

From £500,000.01 to £800,000: £500 per annum.

From £800,000.01 to £2,000,000: £1000 per annum.

From £2,000,000.01 to £5,000,000: £2000 per annum.

Alternative metrics such as seating capacity, box-office turnover and the levels of council subsidies received, as well as whether or not there would be a different buy-in for groups operating several venues or for venues administered wholly by local authorities, were considered and discussed both prior to and during the engagement events.

As it stands we believe that any site wishing to join the scheme will be asked to pay individually. Theatres and arts centres that's share services or management will be charged per site as each site will benefit independently from training and development as well as from individual access guides and listings, and audience development work.

Another key concern for some venues was the proposal to use their turnover, which they felt could be skewed by the presence of a restaurant, café or bar as the benchmark for pricing levels. However we feel overall that any money coming into the organisation's bottom line is the most equitable way of delineating between the venues. We also think it is worth considering that customers who join this scheme are also potential customers for any catering or retail outlets not just for the performance spaces.

As part of the future management of this project we also want to ensure that Accessibility and Inclusivity are permanently on the agenda for all theatres and arts centres in Wales. Creu Cymru already manages a number of consortia which are dedicated to the development of specific art forms; Drama, Dance, Music. These consortia meet regularly and are well attended they plan new joint projects, share information, and engender critical debate. We will set up a new Access Consortia to take the lead in this area and continue to develop the work of the scheme for example leading on shared resources for accessible performances, on which the second wave of training the scheme offers will focus.

## **Contact us**

In order to engage as many of the schemes potential stakeholders as possible this version of the report will be available online from 9 September 2014 to 8 October 2014 and would love to hear from anyone who has input on taking the scheme forward.

For more information or to send feedback to be incorporated into the final version of this report please contact us at any of the email addresses below.

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## Appendix 1 – Arbitration Framework

This Appendix includes a copy of the proposed arbitration framework and an example communication that a customer would receive from an arbiter.

### Example Communication

Dear

The circumstances you describe lead me to recommend that **name** is eligible for Hynt and is therefore entitled to a ticket, free of charge for their personal assistant or carer.

#### **Hynt Scheme rationale:**

Hynt is a peer led scheme, there was considerable discussion and engagement with disabled people and representative organisations during the development of the scheme.

It was agreed that individual venue managers do not have the experience or expertise to assess the needs of disabled customers. There was an established need for a fair, transparent, consistent and credible carer concession across the theatres and arts centres network in Wales.

Through extensive engagement across Wales, we listened to the views of disabled people to identify appropriate and fair eligibility criteria for Hynt. The result of this research and engagement was a benchmark of assessed need, using existing processes where a disabled person has undergone an assessment with agencies such as Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and/or Local Authority Social Services as the basis of Hynt. The assessed needs agreed on are:

- Enhanced PIP Daily Living Component
- DLA High Rate Care Component
- High Rate Attendance Allowance
- Certificate of Visual Impairment
- War Disablement Pension
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

- Direct Payments
- Social Services Care Package

Hynt's Arbitration process takes account of circumstances outside of the prescribed eligibility criteria and uses the expert knowledge and experience of arbiters to consider applications on an individual case by case basis taking. We take into consideration circumstances which may not be represented or present in the existing eligibility criteria.

The arbiters decision is based on a clear framework and all of our arbitration systems and processes are monitored by Diverse Cymru.

Your application will now be processed based on our recommendation and you will receive your card within 7 days.

Best wishes

## Arbitration Framework

### Venue supported application

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Customer name                                 |  |
| Venue name                                    |  |
| Sponsor name                                  |  |
| Job title                                     |  |
| Rationale for application/supporting evidence |  |
|   |  |

### Care support needs

| Customer name                           |  | yes | no |
|---|--|-----|----|
| Customer has learning disabilities      |  |     |    |
| Customer has dementia                   |  |     |    |
| Customer has a mental health impairment |  |     |    |
| Care support needs described:           |  |     |    |
|   |  |     |    |

### Transport support needs

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Customer name                           |  |
| Accessible transport barriers described |  |
|   |  |

### 1: 2 Carer support / 1:3 Carer support

|                      |  |     |    |
|----------------------|--|-----|----|
| Customer name        |  |     |    |
| 1:2 request          |  |     |    |
| 1:3 request          |  |     |    |
| Supporting evidence  |  |     |    |
| Social Services      |  | yes | no |
| DWP                  |  | yes | no |
| Health Service       |  | yes | no |
| Customer description |  | yes | no |
|                      |  |     |    |

Framework

|   | Yes | No | N/A | Comments |
|---|-----|----|-----|----------|
| Venue supported/sponsored application   |     |    |     |          |
| Initial customer email identifies sufficient description of care support needs at the venue             |     |    |     |          |
| Customer has learning disabilities requiring support to attend venues safely                            |     |    |     |          |
| Customer has dementia   |     |    |     |          |
| Customer has a mental health impairment requiring support to attend venues confidently                  |     |    |     |          |
| Initial customer email identifies sufficient description of accessible transport barriers               |     |    |     |          |
| Initial customer email identifies sufficient description of excessive distance to the application venue |     |    |     |          |
| Customer evidenced the need for 1: 2 Carer support  |     |    |     |          |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Customer evidenced the need for 1: 3 Carer support |  |  |  |  |