

Welsh communities and the arts

A report about making the arts more popular in Welsh communities



This document was written by **Recongition Wales**. It is an easy read version of 'Findings and recommendations report on widening creative and cultural engagement with the semi-rural community of Penderwyn and its surrounding area'.

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How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 18**.



Where the document says **we**, this means **Recognition Wales**. For more information contact:

Website: www.recognition.wales

E-mail: Jon@recognition.wales

Phone: 029 20 318095



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Introduction



The **Arts Council of Wales** and **National Museum of Wales** are doing a big project.

The project is about making the Welsh arts more **inclusive** and **accessible**.



Inclusive means everyone can take part, and everyone has a fair chance.

Accessible means it is easy to go somewhere. And to get around. It also means something is easy to understand.



The arts are not popular in some Welsh communities.



Arts Council of Wales and the **National Museum of Wales** want to find out why. And what they can do to change this. They asked us to help them.

What we did



We talked to people in **disadvantaged communities**.



Disadvantaged communities are places where a lot of people live in **poverty**.

Poverty means not having enough money to pay your bills to feed yourself and your family, to heat your home, to buy the things you need and to get around.



We talked to people in Penderyn, Aberdare and Hirwaun. These communities are in South Wales.



We asked these people what they think about the Welsh arts.



And what would make the Welsh arts more **inclusive** and **accessible**.

How we did it



We wanted to talk to people in their own communities. Where they felt comfortable.



We wanted to talk to people face to face, on the phone and online.



But the pandemic meant we had to change our plans.



We could not talk to anyone face to face.



We decided to only talk to people on the phone.

What we found out



We asked 72 people questions about the Welsh arts. This is what we found out:

Cultural democracy



Cultural democracy is when everyone has a say in local arts and cultural events.



Like what events to put on. And where and when they happen.



We asked people what they thought of **cultural democracy**.



Most people loved the idea of **cultural democracy**. They thought it would be good for their communities.

What people said about the arts



A lot of people said they don't know much about the **Arts Council of Wales** and the **National Museum of Wales**.



And they don't know anyone who has been helped by the **Arts Council of Wales** and the **National Museum of Wales**.



Some people know a lot about art and culture. Especially Welsh culture.



A few people said art and culture means nothing to them.



Lots of people said they don't feel part of arts and culture locally.

Popular venues and events



Most people we asked went to an arts or cultural event in the last 2 years.



Most of them went to venues around Cardiff.



They said local venues don't have many events they like.



The most visited venues were Cardiff Museum, St Fagan's, and the Millennium Centre.



Quite a few people went to the Aberdare Coliseum too. And they liked it there.



The most popular events are exhibitions, art, and music and musicals.

Why people attend events



Some events are more popular than others.



People said an event needs to be something they are interested in. And something they can understand.



People like music and musicals, plays, touring shows and exhibitions the most.



People also said events need to be **accessible**.



Most people said that cost is important too. If something is too expensive, they won't go.

Finding out about events



Lots of people said they often don't know what events are happening locally.



Or around Wales.



Most people said they prefer to hear about events from posters, leaflets, and flyers.



Lots of people prefer to find out about events online.



Lots of people said there should be better event information available.

Knowing people in the arts



Lots of people said they don't know anyone who works in the arts.



And no one knew anyone who works in a museum.
Or with the **National Museum of Wales**.



But lots of people know someone involved with the **Colstars**.



The **Colstars** do a lot of good work with local communities.



Especially getting children involved in the theatre.

What people said they wanted



Most people want more arts and crafts classes. Like cookery and painting.



A lot of people want more activities for children and young people.



And activities where different ages groups can do things together.



People told us local groups and venues need more money.



Some people think the pandemic has been bad for their community. And that the arts could help.



Some people said venues need to be more **accessible** for disabled people.

What should happen next



We listened to what people told us. And what they think would make the arts more popular.



This is what we think the **Arts Council of Wales** and the **National Museum of Wales** should do next:

1. Give people a say in their local events



Giving people a say in local events will make the arts more popular.



Because people will get events that they really want.



The **Arts Council of Wales** and the **National Museum of Wales** should work with local community groups. Together they could create events that people really want.

2. Tell people about the Arts Council of Wales and National Museum Wales



Lots of people said they don't know much about the **Arts Council of Wales** and **National Museum of Wales**.



We know this doesn't change what arts and culture people enjoy.



But it would be good if people know how these organisations could help them.



For example, the **Arts Council of Wales** can give **funding** for arts projects.

Funding is money that people or organisations can get to help them do their work.



Funding could help local community groups who need more money for events.

3. Create events for children and young people



People want more arts and cultural events for children and young people.



It's good for children and young people to have things they enjoy doing. Especially locally.



This would be good for communities too. It would help more people get to know each other.



Children and young people could do arts activities with people in care homes.



This would cheer everyone up. Especially after the pandemic.

4. Use the arts to make communities stronger



The pandemic has been hard for lots of communities.



It has made people feel lonely. Because they haven't seen other people for a long time.



It has made people feel fed up. Because there is nothing to do.



Having more local arts and cultural events could really help.



People would have more fun and interesting things to do locally.



And they would get to know more people in their communities.

Hard words

Accessible

Accessible means it is easy to go somewhere. And to get around. It also means something is easy to understand.

Disadvantaged communities

Disadvantaged communities are places where a lot of people live in poverty.

Funding

Funding is money that people or organisations can get to help them do their work.

Inclusive

Inclusive means everyone can take part, and everyone has a fair chance.

Poverty

This means not having enough money to pay your bills to feed yourself and your family, to heat your home, to buy the things you need and to get around.