



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru  
Arts Council of Wales

# Operational Plan 2022-23

March 2022



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Cover: BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales  
(Image: Yusef Bastawy)



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# Who we are

The Arts Council of Wales is the country's official funding and development organisation for the arts. We're a registered Charity, established by a Royal Charter, funded and supported by the Welsh Government. We also distribute funding from the National Lottery and raise additional money where we can from other public and private sector sources.

The objectives in our Royal Charter promote the development of the arts in Wales and a commitment to increasing the accessibility of the arts to the public, through the mediums of both Welsh and English. These objectives underpin the priorities set out in our current published Corporate Plan, For the Benefit of All and our Widening Engagement Action Plan.

Working together with the Welsh Government we support and promote the important contribution that the arts make to Wales and the World – cultural, social, educational, environmental and economic. We do this by investing in Wales' artists, organisations and communities.

Our main aim is to foster a sustainable environment in which the arts are able to flourish –

- an environment which encourages, identifies and nurtures creative talent and the infrastructure to support this, wherever it's found in Wales, to its full potential;
- an environment that is protected and nurtured for our future generations
- an environment that challenges and removes barriers to accessing the arts, – socially, culturally, geographically and economically – and which actively promotes equity, diversity and inclusion.

Our strategies are informed by the Welsh Government's Remit Letter to the Arts Council, its Programme for Government and Co-operation Agreement, and the Well Being for Future Generations Act. Our current planning is additionally guided by our commitment to the implementation of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, the proposed Culture Strategy, and the delivery of the National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales.

We are particularly focussed on the challenges from the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis; the barriers faced by culturally and ethnically diverse communities, D/deaf and disabled people and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, accessing and participating in the arts; and the increasing effect of climate change.

Our Investment Review 2023 will help shape the environment for the development of the arts over the next decade and will focus on the delivery of six key priorities which additionally embrace our commitment to co-creation and co-production with the communities of Wales and in the Welsh Language; the nurturing of talent; and the need for transformation, flexibility and adaptability in rapidly changing times.

Our work is guided by the principles of fair, open and accountable public service. These principles set the standards you should expect from us. They also inform the way that we behave – with ourselves and with you.

# Our strategy

## Our mission and our priorities

Making the arts central to the life and well-being of the nation

Our vision is of a creative Wales where the arts are central to the life and well being of the nation. We remain committed to our vision, in spite of Covid 19.

Our goal is to support the re-building of a creative Wales in which our best talents are revealed, nurtured and shared; a country in which the widest possible cross section of people in Wales enjoy and take part in the arts; a country in which excellent work is valued, protected and supported to grow. This is described in more detail in our corporate plan – [“For the Benefit of All”](#). This Operational Plan forms the final year of this Corporate Plan.

Two priorities currently underpin this strategy. They are:

1. Promoting **Equalities** as the foundation of a clear commitment to reach more widely and deeply into all communities across Wales.
2. **Strengthening the Capability and Resilience** of the sector, enabling creative talent to thrive

Council has also identified a further action to support the delivery of these two priorities:

3. **Enabling the Arts Council to work more effectively**, collaborating more imaginatively with like minded partners across Wales

## Promoting well-being and sustainability

The impact of Covid-19 means that Wales faces numerous complex social and economic challenges. Our work sits within the framework of the Welsh Government's Well being of Future Generations legislation.

This legislation has seven goals:

1. A prosperous Wales
2. A resilient Wales
3. A healthier Wales
4. A more equal Wales
5. A Wales of cohesive communities
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language
7. A globally responsible Wales

Our plans reflect these goals and are informed by “Five ways of working” that define our approach: Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, Involvement.



Sarah Thornton, Dawns i Bawb (Image: Phillip Hatcher-Moore for the project '11 Million Reasons to Dance' commissioned by People Dancing)

# The context

It feels like we are all blinking as we emerge into the light from the dark tunnel of the Covid pandemic. Of course, we're uncertain still about health and safety futures, about the impact of hybrid working on our social and cultural behaviour and about the state of the economy and public finances in troubled times.

But we are emerging, and we enter this new financial year with determination that the lessons of the last two years will not be forgotten – that they will shape our future plans and activities. The staff of the Arts Council of Wales, along with the talented artists and arts organisations we are fortunate to have in Wales, have achieved extraordinary things during the pandemic. But now we set our faces firmly forward.

This Operational Plan for the next year shows our determination to make the changes that are so urgently needed. We'll still be focused on Covid recovery in the sector and on sustainability for the talent and creativity which are so precious and crucial for the wellbeing of our fellow citizens. But at the same time as we seek to sustain and uphold, we shall be looking to make those changes that address the unacceptable inequalities and exclusions in our society.

Our commitment to equalities, to reaching more widely and more deeply across the diverse communities of Wales, has been much discussed and it has firm support among arts practitioners. It will be the key driver of our delayed Investment Review which will begin its cycle later this year. Existing members and potential new members of the Arts Portfolio will be asked to demonstrate convincingly their commitment to and planning for widening engagement.

This is a time for boldness and fair play, a time when larger organisations with a significant history of achievement and of funding support must show their value for smaller organisations and freelancers, taking their investment in development and fair treatment with utmost seriousness. We must show faster progress in opening up opportunity and access for ethnically and culturally diverse communities, disabled people and those excluded by financial poverty.

On behalf of Welsh Government, we will progress the delivery of the National Contemporary Art Gallery in conjunction with our partners under the Collaboration Agreement – National Library of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru. This project will bring a distributed model of galleries across Wales to showcase Welsh talent in exciting new ways based upon the principle of co-curation and engagement with communities and promoting opportunity across Wales to experience and enjoy.

Overarching and shaping all this commitment to equalities is the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, a great Welsh achievement and engine of change. And this will be the prism for our attention to the demands of climate justice and the reduction of carbon emissions. As a sector, we must grapple creatively with our response to the climate crisis, both operationally and thematically in our artistic work. Key initiatives such as the distributed model and development of an anchor gallery of the National Contemporary Art Gallery will contribute to this through reducing the need for audiences and participants to travel to engage in high quality creative activity.



*Mewn Datblygiad,  
Frân Wen and  
Kristina Banholzer*

There's so much extraordinary work going on in the arts in Wales. We are at the leading edge of programmes mainstreaming the creativity of artists in Education and in Health and our Creative Learning through the Arts and our Arts and Health funding streams will continue to have significant impact in the coming year.

At the Arts Council of Wales, we fully support the Welsh Government's commitment to growing the numbers of Welsh speakers and we know how powerful cultural activity can be for creating a sense of welcome and invitation to connect with the Welsh language as a lively and enriching dimension of all our lives in Wales. We are focused strongly on increasing arts activity in the medium of Welsh.

Finally, as ever, our work will seek to support and nurture a wide range of voices, new talents, diverse artforms and bold and innovative acts of artistic creation. 'The best for the most' will always be our aim.

It's a huge task we've set ourselves. But we have the people to achieve it, in the sector and in the Arts Council of Wales. And we have a Government and other funding partners who have declared their commitment to what we aim to do in collaboration with the people of Wales.

As our eyes adjust to the light, the landscape is full of challenge and difficulty, tensions and obstacles. But it is also full of potential – the potential to build a Welsh cultural future which is distinctive of our nation and our values. That's what this Plan is all about.

**Phil George**

**Chair**



*Sincere as Objects*, Volcano Theatre  
Company Bourdon Brindille, 2022

# Our key programmes of work in 2022/23

We have identified 9 key programmes of work for this year's Operational plan. These are set out below and detail the key priorities we have identified in order to progress each of these. These priorities are supported by a number of internal actions against which we will monitor and report progress.

For each programme area we have identified its relationship to the 7 goals and 5 ways of working of our Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, and to the 6 shared goals for this year in our Welsh Government Remit Letter. The following icons are used to identify these relationships:

## Glossary of icons

### Wellbeing Goals



A Prosperous  
Wales



A Resilient  
Wales



A More Equal  
Wales



A Healthier  
Wales



A Wales of  
Cohesive  
Communities



A Wales of  
Vibrant Culture  
and Thriving  
Welsh Language



A Globally  
Responsible  
Wales

Alignment of our programmes of work against the 5 ways of working is detailed under each of the programme areas below.

### Term of Government Remit Letter Goals



- Decarbonisation;
- Addressing all inequality and achieving an anti-racist Wales;
- Improving access and participation for all;
- Promoting health and well-being;
- Creating opportunities for young people; and
- Projecting a powerful and positive image of Wales to the world

Our 9 key programmes of work are as follows:

# 1. Investment Review

During this year we'll be recommencing work on our deferred Investment Review – our periodic review of our Arts Portfolio Wales. The aim of the Investment Review is to identify the organisations best able to help us to deliver our cultural priorities.

Traditionally our Investment Reviews take place roughly every five years and they are our main way of refreshing and reviewing who forms the Arts Portfolio Wales.

Early discussions with the sector have told us that we need to look at how we undertake our Review so that we can create a Portfolio that better reflects Wales and its people. A consultation document to be published in July 2022 and a formal consultation period ends in October 2022.

This piece of work must get to the stage where a wider, more diverse group of people and organisations have been given the opportunity to provide their thoughts and for these to be brought together into a new 'vision' document.

The vision document will also need to include consideration of key areas of Arts Council priorities such as those published in our Corporate Plan "For the Benefit of All", the Well Being of Future Generations Act, the finalised version of the Cultural Contract and our 're-setting the dial' document.

This document will tell us what's currently missing, what could be improved and how we can use the Investment Review to get there.

Informed by the Vision for the Review, we will define the terms of reference of the Review and the key outcomes we want to achieve as its result. We will also consider what the application process may consist of, ensuring that it both provides the necessary clarity and promotes accessibility. Council will approve our Vision for the Review by December 2022 and the Terms of Reference will be published.

The Investment Review is scheduled to open to application in January 2023. The assessment and decision making will take place throughout 23/24. Funding arrangements for the new Portfolio will take effect from April 2024.

## Our key priorities:

1. Develop and publish our Vision for the new Arts Portfolio Wales
2. Develop and publish terms of Reference for the Investment Review for application launch in January 2023
3. Develop and publish application process for the Investment Review, for January 2023 launch

## 5 Ways of Working

**Long term:** to achieve genuine change we will need to fund a sector that truly represents the diversity and opinion of the people of Wales and will contribute to the achievement of our priorities for the next 5 years.

### Integration:



Improving Access and Participation  
Addressing Inequality, achieving Anti Racism

**Involvement:** A number of external consultation exercises and workshops, involving communities across Wales, including those who are from currently under-represented groups, will help inform the Vision and terms of reference for the Review.

**Collaboration:** This work will be undertaken by Officers of the Arts Council, under the guidance and direction of its Council. In order to achieve success, it must include increased collaboration with the sector and our stakeholders, including Welsh Government and their Programme for Government, alongside the crucial framework of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act

**Prevention:** A key outcome of the Investment Review is to remove the barriers faced by communities and groups in Wales – particularly culturally and ethnically diverse communities, D/deaf and disabled people and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage – to accessing and participating in the arts

## 2. Recovery and Transformation

The world looks very different today to how it did before Covid 19. We've seen an unprecedented impact on our economy, our culture and our way of life. Overnight, the global pandemic led to the suspension of all public activities and a collapse in the social, living and working environment for everybody.

For the last 2 years our default position has been 'emergency response.' Now as we embark on learning to live with the pandemic and consider 'what next' it can't be based on 'business as usual'. Instead, we must take a fresh look at how we can achieve a strong and resilient arts sector that properly reflects culture and society in modern day Wales. It's not just a question of how quickly venues can re-open or audiences can return to public events, important though this is. It's about how we can encourage and support audience confidence to return and what happens when they do, providing new and increasingly accessible opportunities for engagement with and enjoyment of our rich culture that celebrates Wales, and its people. We also recognise and build on the positive learnings that have come from the pandemic such as exploring digital making and capacity.



Tanio Light Painting Project,  
Andy O'Rourke and Bettws  
Boys and Girls Club

During this year we will be taking action to evaluate the impact and challenges of the pandemic on the Sector – organisations, creative individuals and freelancers, and audiences and participants – and seek ways in which we may offer support and development opportunities including career paths to support those who wish to work in the arts – including initiatives that support and nurture leaders, and that encourage audiences and participants to return to – and increase their engagement with – the arts.

We will do this through a number of ways:

- through developing and embedding the Cultural Contract principles into all grant funding,
- working in partnership with those that share our values to create opportunities we couldn't alone including the network of Disabled People's Employment Champions to promote disabled people in the workforce
- responding to the findings of the Cultural Freelancers Wales report with targeted funding
- developing an apprenticeship programme for the arts workforce
- invest in supporting digital skills development and making
- Working with the sector to explore options for increasing audience levels and confidence

To help facilitate these actions, we want to develop a new, mature relationship with artists and arts organisations – one based on openness, trust and mutual respect. We will promote and facilitate artform specific discussions to identify areas for targeted support and development.

We will establish a new partnership with the PRS Foundation to support emerging music creators and, together with Creative Wales, support the first year of POWER UP in Wales, which will seek to do groundwork to address the dual barriers facing black artists in Wales: racism and a lack of infrastructure. We also aim to tie this in with a proposal to support 'Accelerator' in Wales, a programme supporting artists around key development points in their career.

We will work with Welsh Government on the development of the new Culture Strategy. As this work develops specific actions to progress these will be included in future Operational Plans. Meanwhile, through our Capital programme we will progress the administration and monitoring of funding from Welsh Government for the extensive Theatr Clwyd refurbishment.

The success of this work will also rely on a sound infrastructure in place to support it. Therefore, we also evaluate the impact of our Capital Programme and seek resource to develop a new Capital Strategy.

Under the current Programme for Government, the Co-operation Agreement, and in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales we will continue to lead on the development of the National Contemporary Art Gallery Wales project via a 'distributed model' of gallery spaces across Wales and the development of an anchor site.

### **Our key priorities:**

1. Understanding and responding to challenges facing organisations following the Covid-19 pandemic
2. Understanding and responding to the challenges facing individuals and freelancers following the Covid-19 pandemic
3. Create inclusive career opportunities for the arts workforce
4. Contribute to and support development of Welsh Government's new Culture Strategy
5. Develop a successor to the extended 2012-2017 Lottery Capital Programme
6. Developing and delivering arts focused strategic projects
7. Progress Welsh Government's National Contemporary Art Gallery project
8. Capital development of Theatr Clwyd



*Wild Thoughts*, National  
Dance Company Wales  
(Image: Mark Douet)

## 5 Ways of Working:

**Long term:** this work focuses on the challenges that the arts now face and develop positive responses that protect and sustain the sector over the longer term, increasing accessibility and enabling creativity to continue to grow and adapt in response to the impact of the pandemic.

### Integration:



Improving Access and Participation  
Addressing Inequality, achieving Anti Racism

**Involvement:** This work must include dialogue with both the Sector and the public, to truly identify and understand the extent of what is required to enable increased opportunity for all to experience the arts, whether through career paths, audience or participation. We will be inviting artists, arts organisations and advisers to work more closely with us as partners on the development of policy and strategy. Artists, arts workers and arts organisations should be involved in defining those measures designed to support their work and to strengthen the sector. This is consistent with the goals of sustainability and wellbeing.

**Collaboration:** We will work with the sector, our stakeholders, including Welsh Government, a range of local, national and international partners including existing partners such as Weston Jerwood. With some bodies we have specific partnership agreements or memorandums of understanding. These include our partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru and National Library of Wales in the delivery of the National Contemporary Art Gallery, organisations as varied as BBC Cymru Wales, British Council and Natural Resources Wales. We will also work with new partners including network of Disabled People's Employment Champions to promote disabled people in the workforce.

**Prevention:** Defending and protecting the arts against the impact of the pandemic has been at the centre of our work for the last 2 years. Now, as restrictions ease, our focus changes to addressing the barriers that the Sector and the public face in delivering and accessing a thriving cultural offer. We must take a fresh look at how we can achieve a strong and resilient arts sector that properly reflects culture and society in modern day Wales and develop positive responses that protect and sustain the sector, where creativity can continue to grow and adapt and be accessible to all in ever challenging circumstances. Working closely with Welsh Government on the development of key initiatives such as the Culture Strategy will help deliver this.



*Ngaay-Konesans, Shiraz Bayjoo and Brook Andrew, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery (Image: Polly Thomas)*

### 3. Widening Engagement and Equalities

We are committed to developing an approach to arts and culture that actively engages individuals and communities across Wales in deciding what counts as culture, where it happens and who makes and experiences it.

There are significant challenges and barriers faced by individuals and communities in relation to engaging with the arts. Over recent years these have been evidenced through the voices of the Black Lives Matter and “WeShallNotBeRemoved” campaigns which brought into sharp focus the impact of structural racism and ableism that has been prevalent in society as a whole, and has prevented engagement with the culture and the arts. So too have the voices of those facing social-economic disadvantage been heard, telling us clearly about the barriers and challenges they face in creating and accessing the arts.

We strongly believe that culture in Wales should reflect the lives of all its citizens.

People and communities facing barriers to engagement, neuro-divergent, deaf and disabled people, and people facing social-economic disadvantage, not least those in post-industrial communities, are integral and central to our cultural life. And our priorities have been set to provide targeted actions to help make his happen.

We will deliver against our commitments in our published action plans and the Programme for Government. We will listen and understand the barriers faced and take action to address these. We will form new strategies and work in partnership with others, including our Portfolio organisations, to deepen and widen our engagement with groups and communities across Wales, particularly those currently under-represented, and through the delivery of targeted Equality action plans. These include our Strategic Equality Plan, Welsh Government’s Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and, in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru, our joint published Widening Engagement Action Plan.

## Our key priority:

1. Implement recommendations and commitments contained in our published Strategic Equality Plan, Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and, in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru, our joint Widening Engagement Action Plan

## 5 ways of working

**Long term:** Our priorities recognise that long term commitment to delivery and resourcing is essential to bring about the substantive changes needed. These build on and develop current Action Plans and longer term strategies.

### Integration:



Improving Access and Participation  
Addressing Inequality, achieving Anti Racism

**Involvement:** Our priorities and actions, including those in our published Action Plans, have been informed through engagement and dialogue with people, communities and groups across Wales. This dialogue will continue as we evaluate the impact of our actions and their effectiveness in achieving a culture in Wales that truly reflects the lives of all its citizens.

**Collaboration:** The step change we desire to see cannot be delivered by us alone. We will deliver this work in partnership with our key stakeholders, including Welsh Government, Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Centre for Learning Welsh. We will also form new partnerships and collaborations as this work progresses.

**Prevention:** These priorities aim to address inequality of access, whether cultural, physical, social, geographical, economical or through language and to remove barriers which prevent engagement amongst specific communities.

## 4. Arts, Health and Wellbeing

The importance of the Arts for health and wellbeing is central to our mission and becoming ever-more widely accepted. The positive impact that creative activities have on our wellbeing has never been more evident than during the pandemic when people, communities and frontline workers have increasingly turned to the arts as a vital source of enjoyment, connection, meaning and comfort.

Wellbeing is a healthy ambition that requires a holistic approach across all aspects of life. The Wellbeing agenda underpins our wider strategy and activity – it's not limited to Arts and Health.

However, our resources are small in relation to Health. This is why we align our work with the priorities of Government and the Health Boards – supporting Welsh Government initiatives such as Age Friendly Wales and improving mental health provision and sustaining the work of the Co-ordinator posts – and to respond to the challenge of making scalable interventions in key areas of wellbeing and health in the Welsh population. This year we will also establish an internal Arts and Health programme team to carry this work forward.

In addition to the Health Boards, we will work with existing partners such as the Welsh NHS Confederation and the Baring Foundation as well as invest in relationships with key strategic bodies to continue the important work of areas such as the Cartrefi initiative and to support social prescribing to tackle isolation and support well-being, including mental health.

We will improve opportunities for front line workers to also benefit from arts interventions through the delivery of our online resource, the 'Cultural Cwtsh' and seek to identify and source additional funds to support our Arts and Health programme.

## Our key priority:

1. Consolidate and further develop our approach to Arts and Health in Wales

## 5 ways of working

**Long term:** We will support and further develop this programme through additional resourcing, physically and financially, to ensure the people of Wales – including those who work in health and social care environments – continue to benefit from the positive impact of the arts on their health, mental health and wellbeing.

**Integration:**



Promoting Health and Wellbeing

**Collaboration:** Partnerships underpin all our Arts & Health work. We work closely with colleagues within the NHS and Social Care to embed and grow creative approaches to healthcare within the system as well as develop links out to the arts community.

**Involvement:** Our Arts & Health work involves some of the most marginalised and vulnerable people in our communities delivering benefits across the full ranges of age, class and geography in Wales.

**Prevention:** The positive benefits of arts and culture on physical and mental health and wellbeing are proven. Further development of this work and increased social prescribing may offer an alternative option to prescribed medication in many individual cases.

## 5. Young People and Creative Learning

An active engagement with the arts can transform the way children and young people learn and explore the world around them. It can change the way they see themselves, their aspirations, as well as helping them to develop the self respect and worth that will be such an important part of their life skills for the future.

Creative Learning has placed the arts and creativity at the heart of the school curriculum. It has used the power of the arts to reinvigorate the school day and through ambitious professional development to re ignite the creativity of teachers themselves.

As we embark on the next phase of the Creative learning through the arts programme our strategy continues to pioneer new ways in which more schools can draw on practical ways of bringing the excitement and inspiration of the arts into the classroom and develop the creativity of our young people.

Our work in this area will also take us outside of the school setting as we explore options for supporting a 'Summer of Fun' including a school holiday enrichment programme.

We want to contribute to the eradication of child poverty in Wales and support those young people whose life chances are disadvantaged through social and economic influences.



Criw Celf Illustration  
Masterclass with  
Jon Williams.

Our approach therefore focuses on three objectives:

- reviewing and evaluating our Criw Celf scheme that provides support to our young people to develop their creative skills and talents, and providing opportunity for a further year of funding;
- provide opportunities for children and young people facing specific barriers to engaging in the arts including looked after children and care leavers
- provide increased opportunities through our Young Promoters initiative

We want as many young people as possible in Wales to believe that the opportunity is there for them to be the best they can – or want – to be, performing with their peers at the highest level, celebrating and demonstrating their creative talents and having a voice in our strategies that will set the course for their, and future generations. To facilitate this we will be exploring options for creating a Young Peoples’ Network and a cohort of Young Associates.

We want young people to have the opportunity to produce, enjoy and take part in creative activity that they find relevant, contemporary, and exciting.

### **Our key priorities**

1. Deliver year 1 of the 3 year extension to Creative Learning
2. Develop and support opportunities for children and young people to engage in the arts outside of the school setting.
3. Embed the involvement of young people in strategies across the Council’s wider work

## 5 ways of working

**Long term:** Creative learning through the arts has transformed the learning experiences of learners across Wales since 2015. This year will be the first year of our 3 year extension to our flagship Creative Learning programme, supporting the Curriculum for Wales 2022.

**Integration:**



Creating opportunities for young people

**Collaboration:** We work in partnership with Welsh Government's Education Wales in developing proposals to support the school curriculum, and closely with other stakeholders including Early Years Wales, Talk Pedagogy, Think Learning Network, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the National Academy for Educational Leadership. Intrinsic to the Programme activity is the collaboration between Creative Agents, Creative Professionals and the schools they work with, to deliver targeted, relevant creative activity in support of the curriculum. We will now look to developing new partnerships to increase and find new opportunities of young people outside of schools.

**Involvement:** Over the seven years of the programme, Creative learning through the arts has engaged with over 1,240 state-maintained schools (83% of schools in Wales), provided opportunities for over 148,000 learners to engage in arts and creative learning activities and over 5,000 engagements from teachers participating in professional development and training linked to developing creative skills in the expressive arts. Young people's voices will be at the heart of developing new initiatives outside of the school setting.

**Prevention:** By placing the arts and creativity at the heart of education this ground-breaking programme has supported schools in developing new approaches to curriculum design to help support pupils who may otherwise become disengaged with education and the school environment, supported teachers in exploring innovative approaches to teaching and supported learners to grow as independent, creative learners. A key area of activity this year will include offering opportunities for schools not previously engaged with the programme to experience creative learning projects. New areas of activity will focus on providing opportunities for young people facing significant life challenges such as looked after children and those in the justice system.



Ffotogallery and Creative Learning Wales

## 6. Promoting the Welsh Language

Nothing makes Wales more distinctive than the Welsh Language. It is part of what defines us as a nation and we have a crucial role towards achieving the Welsh Government's target of one million speakers by 2050. We'll insist on the fair and equal treatment of Welsh. It's not just a matter of compliance with the requirements of Government language legislation. It's about committing to development and seizing the opportunities that Welsh language creativity offers.

We will form new strategies and work in partnership with others, including the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mentrau Iaith and Urdd. We will require our Portfolio organisations to deepen and widen engagement with the Welsh Language and Welsh Language product across Wales, and through the delivery of their targeted Welsh Language action plans. We will progress the recommendations in our response to the published 'Welsh Language Mapping Report'.

Promoting the Welsh Language is extensive and will be largely informed by the outcomes of the specific discussions and supported through a series of targeted actions. In the meantime we may summarise this work into one key priority:

### Our key priority:

1. Develop and launch Welsh Language Strategy that will support and promote the Welsh Language and Welsh Government's priority for 1m Welsh language speakers by 2050 and include:
  - a. Increase partnership working with National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mentrau Iaith and Urdd
  - b. Implementing the recommendations in our response to the "Welsh Language Mapping report" published in 2020
  - c. Requiring our Arts Portfolio Wales organisations to adopt ambitious Welsh Language plans that include clear targets for the inclusion of Welsh speakers in their governance structures, workforce and activities

## 5 ways of working

**Long term:** Our actions are in support of the Welsh Government's target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. We provide funding and investment that funds inclusive creative activity in the participants and audience language of choice and that sustains opportunities for all people across Wales to enjoy and take part in the arts, now and for future generations.

### Integration:



Improving Access and Participation  
Addressing Inequality

**Collaboration:** Work in this area is far reaching and we can't deliver these actions on our own. We work with Welsh Government and a range of partners to deliver our work – stakeholders, including Welsh Government, Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mentrau Iaith and Urdd and artists and arts organisations. We will also form new partnerships and collaborations as this work progresses.

**Involvement:** Our priorities and actions, including those in our published Response to the Welsh Language Mapping Report, have been informed through engagement and dialogue with people, communities and groups across Wales. This dialogue will continue as we evaluate the impact of our actions and their effectiveness in achieving a culture in Wales that truly reflects the lives and language choice of all its citizens.

**Prevention:** Wales is unique in its language, and the people of Wales should be able to participate in and engage with the arts through their preferred language. These priorities aim to address inequality of access through language and to remove barriers which prevent engagement.

## 7. International Activity

In 2021 we set out to re-think our international work in the context of four seismic global challenges which are felt locally in Wales – the Covid Pandemic, Climate Emergency and social justice and equalities and establishing new international relationships following the EU exit.

Covid-19 restrictions and quarantines have affected the ease of international travel. But as international working becomes possible again, it will be essential that those Wales-based artists and organisations who depend on international work for their livelihoods are able to nurture new opportunities. It will also be important to share those opportunities with emerging talents in Wales, removing barriers to artists from minoritised communities by eradicating potential inequalities in our processes and programmes. Movements like Black Lives Matter, We Shall Not Be Removed as well as the Climate Emergency have highlighted the value of Wales' Wellbeing Act to “build back equal” and in a sustainable way. During this year we will be developing a Framework, which may be used across the Council, by which we may evaluate the impact of our work against the 7 Wellbeing goals.

We can learn from the pause in international travel and consider how a ‘blended approach’ of digital and physical activity can benefit the arts in Wales to connect internationally and in a sustainable way that will contribute to the Welsh Government’s carbon neutral targets. Whilst we continue to deliver and adjust our existing commitments, we will be delivering Cymru Fenis 10 and reviewing Wales’ relationship to Venice Biennale and other major events in the context of the Climate Emergency, Brexit and our commitment to Equalities and Access for the future.

The growth of digital content responding to the wellbeing agenda in Wales during the pandemic was an un-planned but welcome development. We must learn from the growth in our sector in how content created for digital platforms is now designed with and for international and local audiences.

We will continue our investment in and development of “Bro a byd – local and global wellbeing goals”, developing a new approach to diversity diaspora communities in Wales and connecting out international work to the wider diversity and equalities agenda of Council and through our Lottery funding programmes continues.

New arrangements post Brexit UK/EU Trade Agreement represent a fundamental change to how we engage with our European and global partners. Following the creation of the UK Arts Infopoint, in partnership with Arts Council of England, Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Creative Scotland we are now gathering the intelligence and information now needed for organisations to continue to employ European artists, present artistic programme and tour in the EU.

Delivery of projects that support the realisation of its International Strategy and action plans are key this year. These will include:

- Programme development for priority regions and countries
- Programme development to support year 1 of UN Decade of Indigenous Languages
- Scoping and development of potential programme for learning exchange through networks building on existing learning and professional development opportunities build into international programmes
- #pethaubychain campaign

## Our key priorities:

1. Review, reset and deliver our international activity
2. Working with the Welsh Government on projects that support the realisation of its International Strategy and action plans.

## 5 ways of working

**Long term:** International working requires long term development and thinking. Large events worldwide are changing their models and our work is set to respond to that agenda

**Integration:**



Projecting a powerful and positive image of Wales to the world

**Collaboration:** Our partner with a number of organisations in collaborations and discussions including Welsh Government, neighbouring arts councils, Future Generations Commissioner Office, Wales Cultural Alliance, Disability Arts Cymru and Watch Africa Cymru.

**Involvement:** We will work with partners in the sector and communities in Wales to achieve our international ambitions as well as engage with international counterparts to share and benefit from learning and best practice. Securing the broad support of the sector and making sure that they see the new approach working for them will be important to us.

**Prevention:** We respond to the critical issues facing international work with the need to address these in the immediate and longer term. In particular, diversity and accessibility in respect to participation and representation in our work at all levels. The environmental impact of international working is identified as immediate concerns and set out in our guiding principles.



*We Echo*, Taylor Edmonds

## 8. Arts and Climate Justice

We will be proactively supporting the Welsh Government's Net Carbon 0 ten year action plan for all public sector Bodies in Wales to meet their Carbon 0 targets by 2030. We are developing a number of initiatives to facilitate this work.

We are developing an activity plan with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to drive forward our Memorandum of Understanding to deliver a Creative Nature Partnership. This includes developing working approaches between us and NRW to identify areas of collaboration with a focus on maximising and sharing resources to support the creative sector to move towards net-zero carbon.

Following the appointment of a Project Manager – Creative Nature in 2022, we will be introducing our new Creative Nature Fellowships for 8 artists across artforms to create new work, in and /or about the environment, to inspire new approaches to practice that strives for innovation and challenges established ways of working. Activity will address and connect with wellbeing and sustainability issues, natural environment, the climate emergency and through this engage with communities.

Cultural Sector Route to Net-Zero: will identify areas of collaboration with a focus on maximising and sharing resource to support the creative sector to move towards net-zero carbon. This includes international working and Wales Arts International and drawing on NRW Carbon Positive Team and relevant agencies to develop initiatives, resources and inform policy and approaches.

We will work with the Future Generations Commissioner to establish benchmarks and protocols to monitor the environmental and wellbeing impact of activities, including:

1. Projects funded through Lottery
2. APW portfolio
3. international activities including those of the Arts Portfolio Wales

We will develop or own working practices to drive decarbonisation and support the Green Agenda, including reviewing and improving our own recycling and waste reduction and reviewing our future working models to consider more environmentally and staff well-being friendly approaches such as hybrid working. Environmental considerations, including decarbonisation will be embedded in all of our project and procurement activity.

All of this work may be summarised into one key priority:

### **Our key priority:**

1. Developing and delivering our own plan for Climate Justice and the Arts

## 5 ways of working

**Long term:** This work supports the Welsh Government's 10 year Net 0 Carbon Action Plan, requiring us to achieve our own Net Carbon 0 targets by 2030, to help protect our planet from the impacts of climate change for present and future generations.

**Integration:**



Decarbonisation

**Collaboration:** We will work in partnership with a number of stakeholders and organisations, including Welsh Government, The Future Generations Commissioner, NRW, and with the assistance of our Portfolio organisations who themselves will be required to set ambitious climate justice targets as part of the Funding Agreements.

**Involvement:** We will require organisations and individuals who we may engage with, for example through grant project funding or commissioning for specific services to consider the impact of their work on the environment as part of their proposal. Our own staff will be encouraged to seek ways in which they may reduce their own carbon footprint and we will introduce measures in our office to support this.

**Prevention:** Our work in this area is targeted at supporting climate justice and reducing the impact of our own carbon footprint to prevent further harm to the environment and our planet, protecting it for future generations.



Xenson @ Egin Artists Residency  
(Image: Steve Peake)

## 9. Future of Ways of Working for the Arts Council

This Operational Plan forms the final year of our published 5 year Corporate Plan “For the Benefit of All.” Much has happened since this plan was first published in 2018, the planned and the unplanned, local, national and global. However, the overarching principle that the arts and the impact of our work should truly be ‘For the Benefit of All’ is still very much our guide star, by which we set our direction of travel, under the constellation of the Future Generations Act.

A crucial piece of work for us this year will be to produce and publish our new Corporate Plan, that will guide and support our work over the next 5 years. It will include the objectives of our Investment Review and the yardstick by which the new Portfolio will be evaluated. It will consider how we transform the arts in Wales and those who rely and engage with it – navigating the waves of the pandemic. It will set a clear course of action to help reduce the harm to our environment, support climate justice to safeguard our planet for future generations. It will prioritise initiatives that support health and wellbeing, offer opportunities to young people and those who suffer discrimination in any form, across all of the protected characteristics and under-represented groups and communities, those facing socio economic and geographical challenges. It will direct us to review our own grant making procedures ensuring they are simplified and allow for improved monitoring and reporting of impact. It will enable us, as an organisation, to widen our engagement, deeper into society to engage and listen to the under – represented voices in our society, and to develop our own working practices to ensure we maximise efficiencies and safeguard our own resources so that we may deliver a challenging agenda. And it will all be underpinned by the principle of the Future Generations Act.

However, we cannot – and should not – do this alone. We will engage with existing partners and forge new relationships to achieve shared goals.

We will develop our own workforce, introducing equality and diversity champions, and encouraging and offering opportunity for staff to learn Welsh. We will review our own working arrangements to ensure we support our objectives and our staff.

Meanwhile, we will also ensure this Operational Plan has enabled us to meet our desired outcomes in ‘For the Benefit of All.’ [More on how this has been achieved may be found on page 46.](#)



Carlos Bunga, *Terra Firma*,  
Glynn Vivian Art Gallery  
(Image: Polly Thomas)

## Our key priorities:

1. Develop our new Corporate Plan through which we will embed Future Generation principles to include:
  - a. Review of current priorities
  - b. Welsh Government Programme for Government and Remit Letter
  - c. Increased focus on climate justice
2. Revisit and revitalise our public value partnerships identifying how we can co-invest public funding in shared priority areas, building on current arrangements
3. Develop our own workforce and Council in areas to include greater representation/awareness of the following :
  - a. Equalities
  - b. Accessibility
  - c. Welsh language
  - d. Self development
  - e. Wellbeing (including health and mental health)
  - f. Return to office/hybrid working arrangements
  - g. Review our effectiveness in grant making

## 5 ways of working

**Long term:** Work in this area will set our direction of travel for the next 5 years. The impact of specific areas of work, for example on Climate Justice, will be in support of Welsh Government's 10 year action plan Net Carbon 0.

**Integration:**



Decarbonisation

Improving access and participation for all

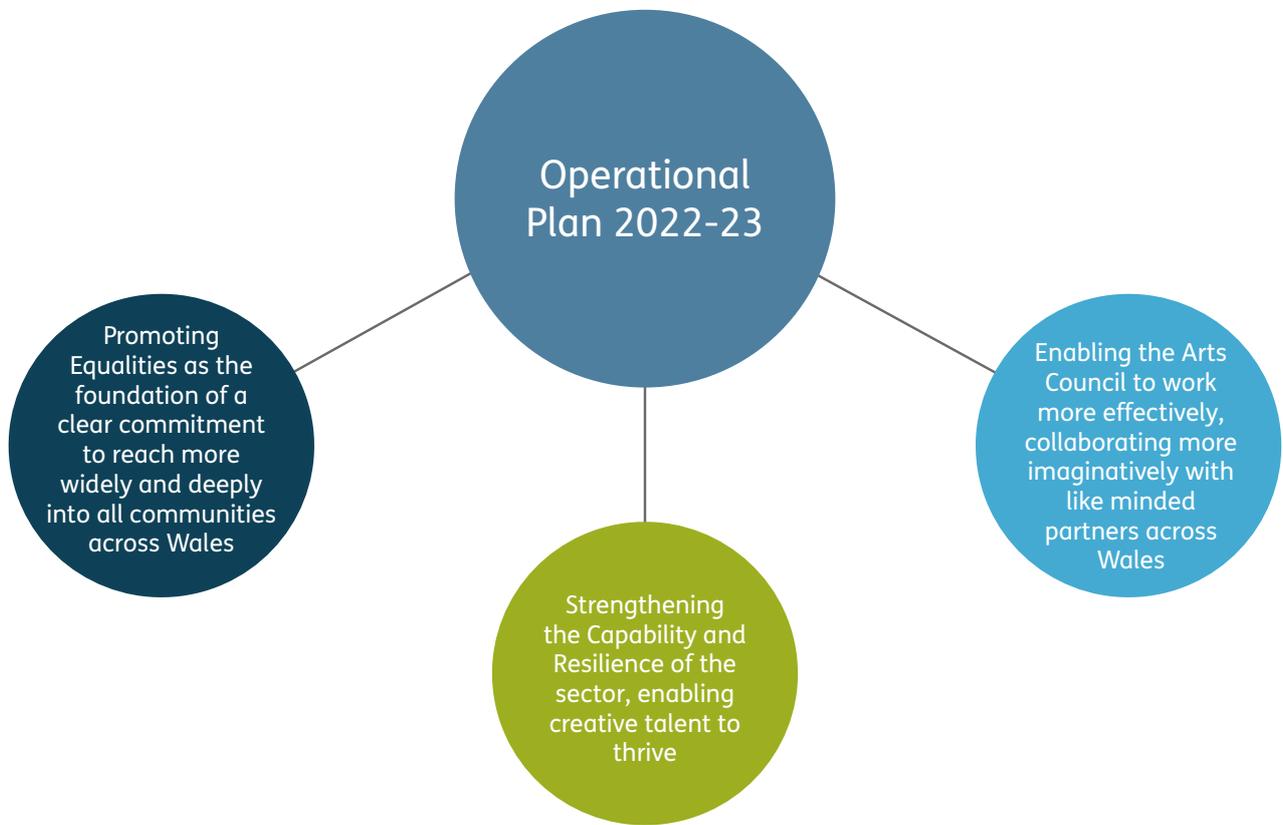
**Collaboration:** We will work with a number of partners and stakeholders, including Welsh Government, Future Generations Commissioner and our Portfolio organisations

**Involvement:** Our work will include engagement and consultation with the wider sector and the public, particularly those from under represented groups and communities.

**Prevention:** This work will ensure we continue to develop and improve our offer and ourselves as an organisation, improve our relationships and engagement with the people of Wales and prevent the inequality, marginalisation and harm to others and our planet.

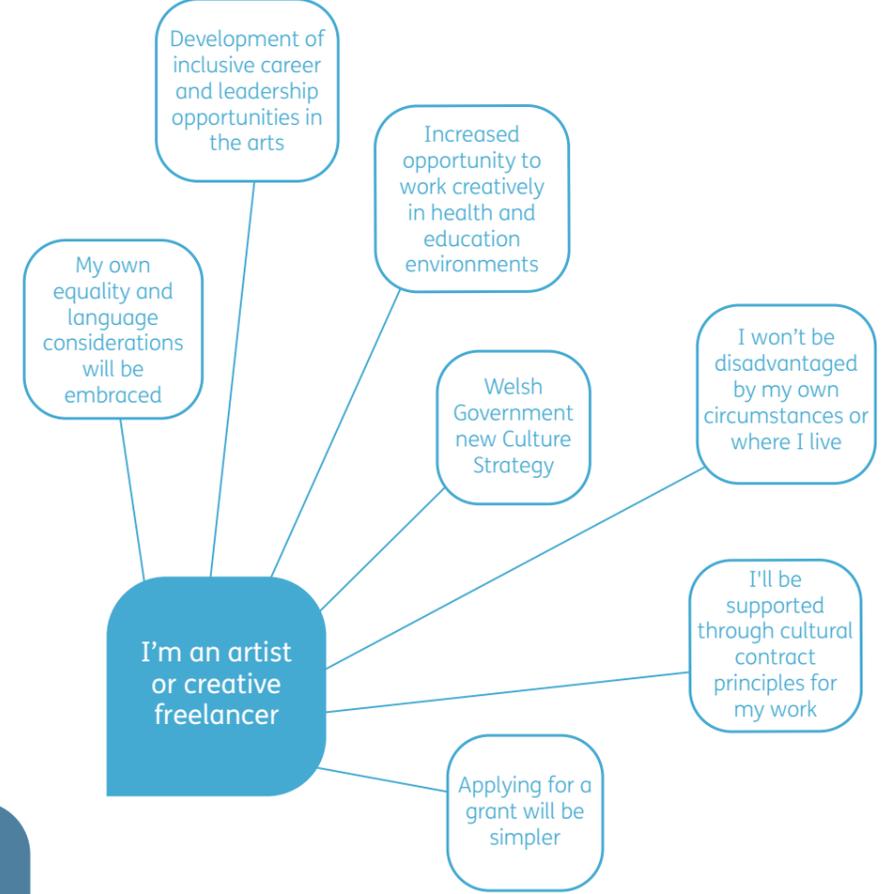
# What this Plan means for you

The arts are for everyone and our Operational Plan aims to ensure that whomever you are, there is a way by which you will be able access and participate in the arts. So what does our Operational Plan mean for you?



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investment Review</li> <li>2. Recovery and Transformation</li> <li>3. Widening Engagement and Equalities</li> <li>4. Arts. Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>5. Young People and Creative Learning</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Promoting the Welsh Language</li> <li>7. International Activity</li> <li>8. Arts and Climate Justice</li> <li>9. Future Ways of Working for the Arts Council</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

What this plan means for you



# Measuring our success

The public rightly expects that the institutions they fund are efficient and cost effective. And because we're publicly funded, we must be able to demonstrate the benefit that our work delivers, and the extent to which we're making a difference.

Our Plan is based on supporting activities that provide the greatest possible cultural, economic and social return. We need to be able to explain, clearly and accurately, the impact that our investment is having in achieving our priorities.

We do this in a number of different ways:

- reviewing funding data
- surveying the activities of our Arts Portfolio Wales
- surveys of the Welsh public
- evaluating the impact of specific initiatives or funding programmes
- reporting on our progress to the Welsh Government, our Council and its Committees
- publishing annual reports

In the tables below we give overall examples of some of the ways that we measure our success.

Programme of Works	Measure of Success
<p><b>Investment Review</b></p>	<p>Published Vision document that clearly resonates with external feedback, promotes our published priorities and defines the Council’s expectations of the Portfolio Members</p> <p>Published Terms of Reference that clearly define the Investment Review criteria, process and timetable.</p> <p>Clearly defined and concise application process that promotes clarity and ease of use, accommodates accessibility considerations and language preferences.</p> <p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>Our Arts Portfolio Wales will deliver against our strategic priorities and provide sustainable creative activity for the benefit of all.</p> <p>Creativity will be sustained and further developed in a post Covid environment.</p>

Programme of Works	Measure of Success
<b>Recovery and Transformation</b>	<p>Increase digital capacity and capability within the sector</p> <p>Fair rates of pay, gender equality, language and environmental considerations are adopted as standard across the arts</p> <p>Increased collaborations with local communities, groups and creative sectors to share good practice and develop skills</p> <p>Consultation undertaken to identify the key areas that could be covered by a future Capital programme</p> <p>Evaluation completed to identify areas of success/improvement</p> <p>Draft strategy elements decided</p> <p>Increased exhibition space and access for selected works to be displayed and enjoyed by the public across the whole of Wales</p> <p>Improved facilities and arts provision for North Wales</p> <p>Original music creators in Wales will access tailored support addressing gaps in provision and historical lack of opportunities for Black music creators in Wales to fulfil their potential</p> <p>Increased knowledge and awareness of current pressures faced and health of specific artforms to help inform and direct future policy</p>
	<p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>As a post-Covid recovery takes effect we expect to see existing barriers to engagement removed ensuring that more people from all communities and backgrounds in Wales will be able to access the arts through improved provision and infrastructure and choose to make the arts part of their lives. Key initiatives including our collaborations with National library of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru to deliver the National Contemporary Art Gallery and with Welsh Government in the development of the Culture Strategy will help deliver this.</p> <p>We'll have evidence of the contribution our grant recipients have made to the Well-being of Future Generation Goals. Outcomes will be evident in the overarching impact of the Cultural Contract ambitions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth potential</li> <li>• Fair work and opportunities for freelance workers and individuals</li> <li>• Promotion of health, skills and learning in the workplace</li> </ul> <p>Environmental and well-being principles, including lowering of the Carbon Footprint</p>

Programme of Works	Measure of Success
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**Widening Engagement and Equalities**

Collaborative responsibility in the achievement of outcomes to promote equality and increase accessibility for and engagement with people and communities facing barriers to engagement

Through our quarterly updates we will evidence to Council its Committees and Welsh Government progress against our key priorities as set by our Council and through the Programme for Government. These include our Strategic Equality Plan, Welsh Government’s Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and, in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru, our joint published Widening Engagement Action Plan.

Equality Action Plans from Arts Portfolio Wales organisations will be reviewed to assess their progress in achieving stated goals.

**Impact**

Re-prioritisation of funding will ensure a fairer distribution of investment and provide opportunities for more D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people and ethnically and culturally diverse people to develop their creative talent.

More diverse creative activities shows the true diversity of Wales’ creative talent, raising the profile of previously under-represented individuals and organisations.

Through our direct action and partnership working, the arts will become more inclusive and representative of all individuals and communities in Wales. This will drive change across the sector and lead to new opportunities to enjoy, take part and work in the arts.



Composer Teifi Emerald working with Hijinx Theatre actors as part of Tŷ Cerdd’s CoDI Move project (Image: Matthew Thistlewood)

Programme of Works	Measure of Success
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**Arts Health and Wellbeing**

Increased concentrated resource and advocacy to continue and further build on Programme’s flagship progress to date

Increased provision and resource to support and deliver strategic arts interventions focused on improving people’s mental health as we emerge from the pandemic

Additional Well-being support for NHS and social care workers that is easily accessible with a variety of content updated on a regular basis

Increased opportunities for artists and organisations to showcase their work

**Impact**

Delivery of strategic arts interventions focused on improving people’s health and mental health

Support and opportunities for those who work in the health and social care setting to engage in the arts.

Increased awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of engaging in the arts amongst the public, policy-makers, clinicians - within and beyond Wales.

Creativity is established as a core component of WG’s Social Prescribing framework; the range of delivery models and exemplar programmes grows.

*Moving Beyond Compliance, National Dance Company Wales delivered in partnership with Cartrefi Cymru, to explore how movement can benefit the wellbeing of staff working in care settings. (Image: Jim Elliot)*



Programme of Works	Measure of Success
<p><b>Young People and Creative Learning</b></p>	<p>Increased opportunities and support for young people within the school setting through the continuation of Creative Learning</p> <p>Increased opportunities and support for young people to engage with the arts outside of the school setting</p> <p>Developmental areas and strategies include increased representation of young people’s voices and our future generations</p> <p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>Continued and enhanced opportunities for schools and young people to engage in arts activity that supports the new Curriculum through the extended Creative Learning programme</p> <p>Increased opportunities for young people and emerging artists to work in the arts, including opportunities outside of the school setting.</p> <p>Increase in the number of apprenticeships available in creative and supporting roles.</p>
<p><b>Promoting the Welsh Language</b></p>	<p>Published Welsh Language Strategy that clearly evidences Council’s support and promotion of the Welsh Language and Welsh Government’s priority for 1m Welsh language speakers by 2050.</p> <p>Improved Welsh Language provision and opportunities across the Sector and for audience/participants</p> <p>Increased representation of the Welsh language across the Portfolio Members, including through resources, Boards and creative output</p> <p>Welsh Language Action Plans from Arts Portfolio Wales organisations will be reviewed to assess their progress in achieving stated goals.</p> <p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>Re-focussing resources with specific Welsh Language focus will drive change across the sector and lead to new opportunities to enjoy, take part and work in the arts through an individual’s language of choice with no differential in experience or opportunity.</p>

Programme of Works	Measure of Success
<p><b>International Activity</b></p>	<p>Creation of logic model to help guide strategic decisions for international investment and programme and evaluation framework, against the seven goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. This will include a new programme to de-carbonise international work in the arts in Wales and contribute towards the arts sector’s carbon neutral targets.</p> <p>De-colonise our approach to international work as part of our commitment to being a globally responsible nation. Develop a local/global model across all areas of Arts Council’s work including global citizenship and climate justice.</p> <p>Focussed investment in international artist led activity that support changing approaches to international working and responds to needs across the diversity of the sector.</p> <p>More investment for artists (including visual artists) and sector to develop international potential and capacity in a sustainable way and developing new approaches to showcasing with UK and international partners.</p> <p>Strong strategic and working partnerships and profile within Europe, unlocking opportunities for collaboration and learning for the sector through network engagement</p> <p>Through the International strategic agreement with Welsh Government, active contribution towards meeting the goals set out in Welsh Government’s international strategy and action plans, underlining the strong contribution arts, and increased opportunities for the sector to connect internationally.</p> <p>Increased advocacy, intelligence sharing and co-investments into new sustainable approaches to international work across the four nations in relation to international working and in respect of devolved policies; programme of joint activity that increases international opportunities for the sector and contributes to Wales’ international strategy; increased information provision and support for artist mobility, including post Brexit, through Arts Infopoint.</p>
	<p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>We’ll be able to demonstrate that we’re making a clear and positive contribution to the Well-being goals through our work home and abroad.</p> <p>The arts will become more inclusive and representative of all individuals and communities, locally, nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Organisations and individuals will be able to build back international working in a sustainable and resilient fashion.</p>



*Parallel Realities,*  
Clare Marie Bailey - Gisle Naatas  
(Image: Are Carlsen)

Programme of Works	Measure of Success
<p><b>Arts and Climate Justice</b></p>	<p>Increased access to the arts within the context of the environment for more people across Wales, particularly those from groups and communities who are currently under-represented</p> <p>Reduction in our own carbon footprint through continued hybrid working and use of digital alternatives considerations supporting the Welsh Government's carbon neutrality by 2030 objectives.</p> <p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>We'll capitalise on the innovation and learning emerging from the Sector's response to the COVID pandemic, helping to build back better, more fairly and more sustainably.</p> <p>The impact of our work on wellbeing goals, including health and the environment, and in support of Welsh Government goal to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 will be evidenced.</p>
<p><b>Future Ways of Working for the Arts Council</b></p>	<p>The production and publication of a Corporate plan that clearly defines our key priorities and activities and their alignment with local, national and global priorities</p> <p>We are able to evaluate, evidence and report on the impact of our work and the work of our Portfolio on the 7 well-being goals</p> <p>Maximising our public value partnerships, public bodies co-investing in to achieve more together than separately in areas of mutual priority</p> <p>Skilled and experienced workforce that feel supported and fully resourced in their role and in self development and wellbeing opportunities</p> <p>Supporting the principles of Reflecting Wales in Running Wales</p> <p>Revised working arrangements that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet the needs of both the organisation and the staff</li> <li>• are outcome focussed</li> <li>• Capitalise and further improve on the operational efficiencies and positive impact on environmental, wellbeing and financial considerations evidenced through existing pandemic working arrangements</li> </ul> <p>Relevant and effective grant programmes accessible to all</p> <p>Processing efficiencies reduce processing times</p> <p>Improved accountability</p> <p>Improved reporting of impact of grant funding, including increased case studies</p> <p>Improve monitoring of existing grants</p>

Programme of Works	Measure of Success
<p><b>Future Ways of Working for the Arts Council</b></p>	<p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>Partnerships and collaborations are working towards shared objectives allowing for increased resources, maximised efficiencies and shared learnings enabling the success of delivery to have maximum impact.</p> <p>Our priorities and activity, internally and externally, will be clearly aligned to the Well-being of Future Generations Act and principles, ensuring fairer and sustainable opportunities for people to enjoy, take part and work in the arts.</p> <p>We'll be able to demonstrate the contribution of our grant recipients, as a result of our funding, to the Well-being goals</p> <p>Increased support and sustainability for the Sector, for both organisations and individuals.</p> <p>Increased proportion of support within our funding programmes for applicants, particularly those who are currently under-represented in our funding</p> <p>Increased resource and financial efficiencies, improved work life balance and positive contribution to Welsh Government's decarbonisation agenda through introduction of hybrid working model.</p>



**Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru**  
**Arts Council of Wales**

**Operational Plan**  
**2022-23**