

Arts Council of Wales's response to the research:

‘Welsh-language development
pathways for creative workers
in the arts – report and
recommendations’



In January 2022, Arts Council of Wales commissioned research to find out what were the Welsh-language development pathways for creative workers in the arts. The tender was advertised in December 2021 and Arad Research was appointed, starting its work at the end of February 2022.

The purpose of the research was to question and identify suitable approaches to address one of the 10 recommendations set out in the [Mapping the Welsh Language Arts 2019 report](#): Recommendation 7 “Develop clear and creative pathways to develop a sustainable career in the arts in Welsh...”

The shortage of creative practitioners across the creative sector is causing concern and challenges for organisations and participants. We know that a lack of Welsh language confidence and skills within the sector is an issue that needs to be addressed in a number of ways and we cannot do this alone. In many areas, it is necessary to leave Wales to take higher education courses or to take these courses only through the medium of English within Wales. A national strategic effort is needed to address the challenges within Wales. The situation worsened following the pandemic with some areas now facing a serious situation.

This research and these recommendations gather the challenges together and present practical solutions, some of which are already underway and others that need to be developed from the beginning. They equip us to tackle the various challenges across Wales. While each arts specialism needs to be looked at separately at times, some national strategies will apply to all. We welcome these suggestions and thank everyone who has taken the time to respond to our questions adding useful experiences and information.

A few suggestions support the need outlined in the Mapping and Marketing report (2022). The most obvious is the demand for a database of Welsh creative practitioners. We respond to each recommendation individually below.

Arad did the research and wrote the report and the response was compiled by the Welsh Language Enabler and the Welsh Language Committee. This report is part of broader developments being planned and implemented by the Enabler. The report discusses the agreement with the National Centre for Learning Welsh, the Welsh Art Consortium and supportive programmes for creative individuals such as Synhwyro'r Iaith (Sensing the Language) and Llais y Lle (Voice of Place). These programmes continue to be developed and to respond directly to the findings of this report.

We welcome the clarity of the report, which has prioritised the requirements within four sections:

1. developing Welsh language skills and creative workforce's understanding
2. increasing activity in Welsh
3. encouraging opportunities for collaboration across the arts, which can enrich creative work for artists and increase audience engagement
4. further research.

We accept the report's recommendations and set out actions over the next decade to address the challenges and opportunities that have been identified.

Context

The Welsh Government has clearly signalled in its Welsh language strategy, [Cymraeg 2050](#), the ambition to have one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

In support of this, the Welsh Government's [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) sets out that the Welsh language is one of its well-being aims ("A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language"). We have a clear role to play in supporting the aims of [Cymraeg 2050](#).

As a public body, we have legal responsibilities to meet the Welsh Language Standards in the Welsh Language (Wales) Bill 2011. We also have a [Policy to Promote the Use of the Welsh Language](#). We work with a range of partners, stakeholders and artists and the arts organisations we fund.

A new 10-year strategic plan is being developed by the Council which replaces a previous plan, 'For the Benefit of All'. The scheme is guided by 6 principles, one of which is the Welsh language.

The aim of the research

The aim of the research was to assess needs and opportunities to increase the creative workforce who are confident to work through Welsh and bilingually.

The objectives set out in the specification for the study were:

- gathering information on the various pieces of work currently taking place to support the creative workforce¹
- gathering information on the shortfalls and creative workforce development opportunities
- discussing needs and ideas with the creative workforce, arts organisations and creative course providers
- formulating recommendations about the development methods of the above areas.

The concept of ‘career pathways through the Welsh language’ or ‘Welsh language development pathways’ could be interpreted in several ways. Each career path is unique to that individual, and the use of Welsh depends of course on personal preferences, on the opportunities available, on context and external factors. In the context of this report, the term is used to mean those opportunities available to artists and creative workers to use the Welsh language as part of their work.

Priorities and recommendations – overview

Action is needed at many levels to support the development of career pathways in Welsh. We should prioritize three interconnected areas:

- developing Welsh language skills and the creative workforce's understanding of the language
- increasing activity in Welsh
- encouraging opportunities for collaboration across the arts to enrich creative work and increase audience offering.

1. We define creative practitioners as specialist practitioners who create, present or support arts activity and products. This includes practitioners in the fields of dance, drama, visual art, music and technical.

Priority 1: Developing Welsh language skills

- i. Workforce capacity needs to be supported by expanding provision to support Welsh language skills among creative workers. There is also a need to ensure that there are ongoing training and professional development opportunities for bilingual creatives who wish to upskill and develop expertise in their field. This aims to strengthen the Welsh-speaking creative workforce.
- ii. Alongside investing in workforce skills, we should consider how to raise awareness and understanding of the relevance of the Welsh language among leaders and management boards in those arts organisations where they can increase activity in Welsh. We should be working closely with organisations, building on approaches developed by Academi Wales/Welsh Government's Welsh language division as part of the Leading in a Bilingual Country project.

Priority 1	
Recommendation 1a	Arts Council of Wales should ensure that all funded arts organisations commit to supporting the ability of creative workers to work bilingually – whether full-time staff or freelancers employed by organisations on a temporary basis.
Recommendation 1b	Opportunities available through the courses developed by the National Centre for Learning Welsh and tailored to the arts sector by the Learning Coordinator for Welsh should continue to be developed.
Recommendation 1c	The Arts Council should implement a pilot mentoring scheme, working in partnership with Welsh-language creative organisations who have developed mentoring tools to support artists' skills and confidence to work in Welsh. The effectiveness of the mentoring scheme should be evaluated in its pilot form.

Priority 1

What will we do?

1. The Welsh language is one of 6 central principles of the work and plans of all arts organisations seeking our funding. Everyone is being asked to increase their Welsh language offerings and activity as well as increase the language skills of the workforce and sector.
2. We will continue to run a Work Language service for the arts through an agreement with the National Centre for Learning Welsh which will include bespoke advice, support and planning provision for the sector.
3. We will strategically plan the growth and development of the scheme with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and enter into a formal partnership.
4. We will investigate creative learning approaches for the sector and produce a relevant learning programme for them in collaboration with the National Centre for Learning Welsh.
5. We will continue to provide Welsh language learning opportunities and support for freelance individuals.
6. We will use Synhwyrō'r Iaith (Sensing the Language) resources to create language implementation courses and raise confidence for higher level learners in partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh.
7. We will ensure that there are mentoring and training schemes in collaboration with external partners and internal programmes including the Creative Learning Programme.

Priority 2: Increasing activity

- i. There is a clear correlation between activity in Welsh and development pathways. Performances, productions and exhibitions in Welsh provide opportunities to improve skills and progress professionally and creatively. The Welsh-language activity of organisations needs to be increased in several ways:
 - creative **output** in Welsh through productions
 - how organisations across the sector **communicate** with the public in marketing and advertising
 - **overall Welsh language profile** across the sector.
- ii. The Arts Council can directly influence this through grant allocation methods and their associated terms and conditions. But care is needed in influencing and ensuring that organisations are supportive of and committed to the expectations and demands placed upon them.

Priority 2	
Recommendation 2a	<p>The Arts Council should consider the feasibility of an alternative model of funding arts organisations, including the introduction of grant conditions that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure training and professional development opportunities for employees to be able to work in Welsh; • encourage organisations to increase the use of Welsh within programmes, products and corporate activity.
Recommendation 2b	<p>As part of implementing the Marketing Report’s recommendations, the Arts Council should work with organisations across the sector to increase understanding of and engagement with Welsh-speaking audiences.</p>

Priority 2	
What will we do?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Welsh language is one of 6 central principles of the work and plans of all arts organisations seeking our funding. Everyone is asked to increase their offerings and Welsh language activity, publishing their plans annually.2. There will be encouragement for organisations to apply for the Cynnig Cymraeg (Welsh Offer) quality mark.3. All organisations will be required to openly publish the language in which their activities or products are offered giving more details to general terms such as ‘bilingual’ by stating how much of the product/activity actually is in Welsh.4. We will offer a mentoring scheme to organisations and the requirements will be supported by our officers, and particularly the Welsh Language Enabler.5. We will continue to assess audiences through the work of the Audience Agency and our internal research team.6. We will continue to develop relationships with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and respond to the Welsh language learning needs of the sector.7. We will continue to maintain a community network through the Council’s Night Out programme to understand the needs and opportunities of creative community products and ensure local audience growth.8. We will forge a constructive working relationship with the Mentrau Iaith and the Urdd to increase the product and its availability and relevance to Welsh audiences.

Priority 3: Collaboration and partnerships

- i. The research highlights that there is potential to increase development pathways in Welsh by supporting partnerships and collaboration. There is an opportunity to build on the work of the Welsh Art Consortium, which has become an important strategic forum to identify and support priorities in relation to the Welsh language.
- ii. The enthusiasm that exists among organisations working in Welsh should be exploited. There is scope for the Arts Council to lead and co-ordinate the work so that this collaboration takes place in a purposeful way and responds to gaps in provision and professional development opportunities.
- iii. There are also opportunities to support partnerships between organisations and artists already working in Welsh and organisations/individuals keen to develop their language skills and ability to work in Welsh in the future. The Council should consider how organisations could be matched or grouped to work collaboratively in specific areas or as part of strategic priorities.

Priority 3	
Recommendation 3a	The work completed to date through the Welsh Art Consortium should be built upon, operating in the priority areas that have been set.
Recommendation 3b	The Arts Council is committed to developing networks to guide further activity to ensure that the Welsh language is central to creativity. Focused terms of reference should be prepared and shared for these networks, working with relevant local partners.
Recommendation 3c	On the theme of Synhwyrō'r Iaith (Sensing the Language), the Consortium has embarked on the process of creating a toolkit and training programme for using the arts as a way of engaging with the Welsh language. Use of the toolkit and training should be evaluated in different contexts and areas.
Recommendation 3ch	Similarly, the projects receiving lottery grants should be evaluated as part of the theme Llais y Lle (Voice of Place), identifying any lessons arising from the work in relation to development pathways in Welsh.

Priority 3	
Recommendation 3d	The Arts Council should work with strategic partners in the education sector and arts organisations to understand what types of support will be needed and to identify suitable models for providing the support.
Recommendation 3dd	The Arts Council should investigate how to meet the demand for a database of practitioners who can (or wish to) conduct work or perform in Welsh or bilingually.
What will we do?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will continue to maintain a consortium of specialist creatives to advise and input on the arts sector’s Welsh language schemes. 2. We will continue to develop relevant and specific networks. A Night Out network has already been established and there are plans for Theatre and Health and Wellbeing networks to be established before 2024. 3. We will support growth in Welsh networking activity in partnership with networking organisations. 4. We will collaborate with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Welsh Universities on further education schemes and the Welsh language within creative courses. 5. We will pilot a community mentoring and training scheme for creative individuals in partnership with the Mentrau Iaith. 6. We will investigate further the national Welsh creative apprenticeship scheme. 7. We will share and grow a Synhwyr’r Iaith (Sensing the Language) resource for creative practitioners through our website, mentoring schemes and training in collaboration with the Creative Learning Programme. 8. We will continue to support and assess the needs and successes of Llais y Lle (Voice of Place) schemes ensuring resilient community partnerships. 9. We will share the findings of the assessments of Llais y Lle (Voice of Place) and Synhwyr’r Iaith (Sensing the Language) with the Welsh Government’s Cymraeg 2050 unit. 10. We will continue to investigate the ways of operating a database that are most relevant to the sector.

Priority 4: Diversity and inclusion

- i. It has not been possible, within the scope of this study, to examine in detail the opportunities and challenges faced by individuals with protected qualities in their use of and engagement with the Welsh language.

Priority 4	
Recommendation	The Arts Council should consider conducting research into how opportunities to use Welsh and Welsh development pathways are promoted among i) people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and ii) disabled and neurodiverse people. These studies could examine the barriers experienced by individuals from diverse communities in using or trying to improve their Welsh language skills.
What will we do?	We will commission specific research to investigate the situation and recommendations of creative Welsh-language development pathways for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds ii. disabled and neurodiverse people.