

Priorities for Culture 2024-2030

Integrated Impact Assessment Summary

What action is the Welsh Government considering and why?

The Welsh Government is proposing to publish Priorities for Culture 2024-2030 ('the Priorities') which is a new policy framework for Wales' public and culture sectors, defining the strategic direction for the arts, museums, libraries, archives, and the historic environment sectors. It also sets a strategic framework for other sectors, policy areas and partner organisations who are committed to supporting and promoting culture in Wales.

The draft Priorities for Culture document is structured around three priorities. Priority One is 'culture brings us together', Priority Two is 'a nation of culture', and Priority Three is 'culture is resilient and sustainable'. These priorities are underpinned by a series of ambitions.

The intrinsic value of culture is recognised within the new policy framework and there is a commitment to the principle which is 'every person in Wales has the right to access, create, participate in, and to see themselves reflected in the cultural activity of our nation'. The development of the Priorities document has been guided by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA) and the five sustainable ways of working. These ways of working lay the foundation for how we intend to deliver the outcomes we want to see.

- **Long-term**

One of the challenges identified in the document is the significant current financial constraint for those in receipt of public funding. The Welsh Government believes there is a need to outline strategic priorities and to continue to ensure these priorities are regularly reviewed.

- **Prevention**

The Priorities document has been developed with consideration to how problems can be prevented in the future. It includes forward thinking and long-term ambitions which consider how culture can prevent potential negative social, economic, and environmental impacts.

- **Integration**

In addition to the seven well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, the Priorities document clearly aligns with other Welsh Government legislation and policy initiatives including Cymraeg 2050, Equality Plan 2020-2024, the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP), A healthier Wales: long term plan for health and social care, the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, the Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget, the Digital Strategy for Wales, Age friendly Wales: our strategy for ageing society and the Creative Skills Action Plan.

- **Collaboration**

The Priorities document is intended to provide the framework for future collaborative activity across the culture sectors and with wider sectors in Wales. The Welsh Government is committed to supporting collaboration and working in partnership to achieve greater impact and this ambition is apparent in the new policy framework.

- **Involvement**

The Priorities were developed on the basis of considerable engagement with stakeholders across the arts, culture, and heritage sectors in Wales. The initial engagement process included over one hundred conversations with sector representatives, community representatives, digital experts, staff at national cultural bodies, social partners, and policy makers. Internal and external stakeholders have monitored the development of the Priorities as part of an internal policy reference group and an external steering group, which included independent sector specialists and freelancers. Both the internal and external groups will continue to monitor the final stages of policy development.

This Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Summary presents contextual data and research relevant to the culture sector in Wales and the potential impact of the proposed Priorities. The document gives a broad overview of the potential social, economic, cultural, and environmental effects of the Priorities as a new policy framework. A range of evidence, data and stakeholder views have been incorporated as part of developing this IIA Summary.

This document will be revised as new evidence emerges prior to publication of the Priorities particularly with regards to views from the public as part of this consultation process. It is the Welsh Government's intention to publish a final version of this Integrated Impact Assessment alongside the final publication of the Priorities.

Conclusion

How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

The Means, working in collaboration with Arad Research and Bop Consulting were appointed in 2023 to independently facilitate a series of one hundred engagement conversations and seventeen consultation workshops with a broad range of sector stakeholders and interested groups. Their findings informed the Priorities document. Stakeholders who attended workshops included young people, older people, people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, Welsh speakers and other people who may be affected by the new Priorities.

We know involving the public and stakeholders is central to successful policy-making and delivery. In keeping with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we are committed to continuing to involve people in advance of the Priorities document being published.

What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

Views from stakeholders and the latest evidence and data have been used to inform this Integrated Impact Assessment Summary to consider any significant impacts of the new Priorities. Additionally, we are currently in the process of consulting with relevant policy teams across the Welsh Government to discuss any significant impacts which will inform the final Integrated Impact Assessment.

Evidence demonstrates access to culture is important to people living in Wales. Recent evidence from the National Survey for Wales¹ demonstrates 72% of respondents reported they attend or participate in arts, culture, or heritage activities at least three times a year. Separately, 64% of people attended an arts event in the past year and 18% of people said they had participated in an arts activity in the previous 12 months.

Every person in Wales has the right to access, create, participate in, and see themselves reflected in the cultural activity of our nation. Priority One of the Priorities is 'culture brings us together' and emphasises how culture can bring diverse communities together and how culture connects people across age groups, place, and socio-economic status. People in Wales are not simply consumers of arts, culture and heritage activities, they are active participants and creators. Evidence from the National Survey for Wales (2021-22) demonstrates public support for funding of cultural services remains high, as 83% either strongly agreed (49%) or tended to agree (34%) it is right there should be public funding of arts and cultural services. These are similar results to 2018-19 when this survey question was previously asked. When asked whether the arts enrich their quality of life, 63% of respondents cited they agreed (33% strongly agreed, 30% tended to agree). Overall, the majority of those asked (59% strongly agreed) believe arts and culture make Wales a better place to live.

The Priorities promote the general duty under the Equality Act 2010 which states 'public authorities should consider things like discrimination and the needs of people who are disadvantaged or suffer inequality, when they make decisions regarding how they provide their services and implement policies'. One of the ten well-being objectives under the current Programme for Government commitments is to 'celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all its forms'. The Priorities document strengthens the Welsh Government's commitment to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling everyone's right to equitable inclusion in their choice of cultural activity. However, evidence demonstrates there are a range of barriers which prevent people who share protected characteristics from accessing culture and heritage. These include physical, perceived, and financial barriers. People who are living in low-income households, people from ethnically diverse communities, people living in rural locations and vulnerable groups may find it more difficult to access cultural sites, cultural experiences and to participate fully in cultural activity in Wales. Recent data from the National Survey for Wales² 2021/22 provides an example of this and reveals a clear pattern, across four cultural subsectors in Wales (which include museums, libraries, archives, and the arts), cultural engagement tends to be

¹ National Survey for Wales headline results: April 2022 to March 2023 | GOV.WALES

² National Survey for Wales headline results: April 2022 to March 2023 | GOV.WALES

lower in more deprived areas of Wales. To illustrate, less than one-third of respondents from the most deprived quintile reported visiting a museum in the past year, whereas over 50% of respondents from the highest quintile had visited a museum.

The new Priorities outline ambitions to remove, reduce, or mitigate barriers for people who share protected characteristics. Evidence on recent engagement trends from the Cultural Participation Monitor³ (wave 7) reports despite older groups still engaging less with arts and cultural activities than younger groups, their attendance had risen from the previous wave⁴ of the monitor. Similarly, disabled people were found to have lower in-person engagement than non-disabled people overall (83%) however this had increased since the previous wave (61%). Young people were most likely to engage with art and heritage activities online, with 81% of 16-24-year-olds attending an activity during the last year, compared to 36% for those 65+. Black (78%), Asian (70%) and Mixed (80%) ethnicity groups were found to be much more likely to have attended online arts and cultural activities than other ethnicity groups.

Latest figures from the Wales Omnibus Survey⁵ report demographic and regional variations in both attendance and participation in arts events in Wales from 2020. Key findings indicate arts event attendance declined with age in 2020, 87% of those in the 16-24 age group attended once a year, this declined to just over half (59%) of those in the 65+ age group. In 2019, the youngest age group also had the highest levels of attendance with 90% of those aged 16-24 compared to 75% of those in the 65+ age group. When looking at arts attendance by socio-economic grade, 80% of those in the ABC1⁶ socio-economic group attended compared to 70% of those in the C2DE⁷ group, leaving a gap between the two groups of 9.4 percentage points. This pattern of attendance by these two socio-economic groups follows the general trend from previous years with the higher socio-economic groups experiencing more frequent levels of attendance over the last ten years. More women (77%) than men (73%) attended arts events in 2020, a gap of 4.1 percentage points. This evidence suggests cultural activities may need to be nuanced and tailored to meet the needs of diverse groups, adopting careful non-prescriptive approaches to ensure accessibility and inclusion. This is reflected in the new Priorities.

The Priorities clearly set out a commitment to children. As outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 31 states every child has the right to relax, play, and take part in a wide range of cultural activities, and the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity should be encouraged. Additionally, Article 29 states every child has a right to an education which develops their personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. Young people are already cultural consumers, creators, participants, service users and are the future caretakers of culture in Wales. For children and young people from economically disadvantaged

³ [Wave 7 | Autumn 2022 | Audience Answers](#)

⁴ [Wave 6 | Spring 2022 | Audience Answers](#)

⁵ [2020 Wales Omnibus Survey Adult Engagement in the Arts](#)

⁶ ABC1 is defined as professional, qualified, and non-manual occupations.

⁷ C2DE is defined as skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled manual workers and non-working people.

and/or minority backgrounds, exposure and access to cultural and heritage experiences as well as to cultural education in school is vital. The new Priorities document states many of our cultural and heritage organisations already offer free programmes and events which are important to tackling exclusion from cultural activity due to poverty and these should be enhanced. The latest Children's Omnibus survey⁸ results demonstrate in 2019, 87% of children and young people attended artforms at least once a year. This represents a 2.6 percentage point decrease compared to 2018. The percentage of children and young people not attending any artistic events has increased to levels similar to 2017, with 13% not attending events in 2019. Similarly to attendance, the highest participation levels are found amongst children aged 7-10, 96% of whom take part in artistic activities at least once a year. This is a 2 percent decrease from 2018.

Evidence demonstrates cultural and heritage activities can often be more difficult to access for people living in rural areas of Wales. The Welsh Government's Natural Resources Policy⁹ identifies one of the benefits derived from Wales' natural resources are the cultural services in rural areas for recreation and their associated health and wellbeing benefits. Rural Wales is a diverse territory encompassing communities in very different settings¹⁰. Rural poverty has been described as 'hidden' in comparison with urban poverty. The report by Aberystwyth University in particular highlights 'digital deprivation' with often dated, slow or unreliable broadband or digital mobile phone infrastructure available. This is potentially an additional barrier for people living in rural communities being able to access arts and cultural events digitally, in addition to other barriers including access to transport and costs.

Priority Two aspires to Wales being 'a nation of culture'. Culture is central to our distinctiveness as a nation and to our sense of being Welsh. Evidence from the Wales Visitor Survey 2019¹¹ identifies a motivation to visit Wales included the Welsh language itself and one of Wales' perceived strengths was its distinctiveness which was found in its history, language, and sense of national pride. The Cymraeg 2050 strategy highlights one of the Welsh Government's aims is to 'ensure the Welsh language is safeguarded as an integral part of our contemporary culture' and one of the key ambitions of Priority Two is 'culture supports and promotes the Welsh language and reflects Wales as a bilingual and multilingual nation'. Key stakeholders who were consulted as part of developing the new Priorities document emphasised the Welsh language is a key component of culture in Wales and is something which belongs to us all. This is supported by evidence from the Wales Centre for Public Policy¹² which states the Welsh language is linked to cultural well-being which includes supporting opportunities for the use of Welsh and ensuring Welsh speaking communities are protected. Recognising the value of the Welsh language, promoting it, and celebrating it as part of cultural activity must be embedded across all our

⁸ Annual Surveys | Arts Council of Wales

⁹ Welsh Government Natural Resources Policy

¹⁰ Rural Vision Evidence Report Final Eng

¹¹ Wales Visitor Survey 2019: Qualitative Research Findings

¹² [Wales Centre for Public Policy - Cultural Well-being](#)

sectors. The Welsh-medium cultural offer is well established and the new Priorities will have a positive impact by reinforcing this as a strategic objective going forward. Data from the National Survey for Wales (2021/22)¹³ offers the current picture in terms of attendance at Welsh language arts events. Respondents were asked how often they had attended or participated in a Welsh language arts event in the last 12 months. Of these, 25% said they attended once a month or more which has increased from 17% in 2018/19. Some 44% of respondents attended a few times in the last 12 months and 31% of respondents said they had attended or participated once in the last 12 months.

The WBFGA includes the goal to create a healthier Wales, and a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised. The Priorities actively support and contribute to this goal. It is understood there is a strong link between individual and community participation and engagement with culture and arts and improved health and wellbeing outcomes. The Welsh Government has undertaken research which robustly examined the relationship between culture and wellbeing (2020)¹⁴. The research identified health and wellbeing factors were positively impacted depending on individuals' access to arts and culture. Critically, the research found attendance or participation in cultural activities plays a role in predicting if someone will report high well-being. However, the research caveats these results do not signal causality. Other research supports this finding, a World Health Organisation review¹⁵ from 2019 explored the role of the arts in improving health and wellbeing and synthesised international evidence covering over 3000 studies. Findings show how the arts can affect the social determinants of health, support child development, encourage health promoting behaviours, help to prevent ill health and support care giving. One of the key policy considerations identified is to recognise the potential cross sectoral nature of the arts and health disciplines. The What Works Centre for Wellbeing has undertaken a rapid review and evidence synthesis of the wellbeing evidence from place-based and cultural interventions¹⁶ (2022). They report targeted museum-based interventions via a volunteering or social prescribing component led to improvements in subjective and mental wellbeing for people with low wellbeing, particularly when the interventions were rooted in local heritage/culture and involved forging connections with others. They also found increased cultural participation through mega-events led to some temporary effects on overall happiness and life satisfaction as well as increases for bridging social capital.

Priority Three is 'Culture is Resilient and Sustainable'. The Priorities emphasise the current challenges which exist around the storage of collections. One of the ambitions is 'our collections and historic assets are cared for and used to support learning, creativity, place-making and cultural well-being'. The Wales Centre for Public Policy¹⁷ reports promoting intangible cultural assets can improve overall community well-being and 'enhance feelings of community pride, cultural and

¹³ National Survey for Wales

¹⁴ Welsh Government: Exploring the Relationship between Culture and Wellbeing

¹⁵ What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review

¹⁶ The social value of place-based arts and culture: rapid review and synthesis

¹⁷ [Wales Centre for Public Policy - Cultural Well-being](#)

national self-confidence, and a sense of togetherness and purpose'. The Welsh Government recently commissioned an independent review of our national collections to inform the improvement of collections management and reduce costs for cultural organisations, support the decarbonisation of collections storage and improve access for researchers and the public. Evidence suggests overcrowding is a key issue within many collection stores, and this can result in difficulties in providing effective collection management. The report states there is a need for a co-ordinated approach on a Wales-wide basis to tackle the problem of inadequate collection stores and provides a series of recommendations.

The new Priorities acknowledge the significance of new digital technology, including emerging Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities which will continue to transform the culture and heritage sector in the future, increasing access in new ways and enabling people to engage with cultural collections and activities. Better digital infrastructure within our sectors will ensure better future proofing. Evidence from the European Union¹⁸ identifies the use of AI in the cultural and creative sectors 'has the potential to create rich ways for users to navigate through cultural content.' It is understood the availability of data on the digitisation efforts across arts, museums, libraries, archives, and the historic environment sectors in Wales is limited. However, we do know the sectors are looking to improve digital services and infrastructure to ensure equitable access to culture across diverse groups and geographies. Welsh Government Officials have started to work with organisations across the sectors to determine the current use of AI and ways in which the Welsh Government can support the assimilation of new tools. The Priorities will strengthen this by including the ambition 'culture is supported and enhanced by good digital practice'.

Culture is also a driver for sustainable development. The Priorities document identifies the need for resilience to be built in the sector in response to the climate and nature emergencies. Creative approaches can be utilised to inspire the public, and stakeholders can learn from good practice taking place across the sector which can then be shared to implement broader positive change. In 2023, the Welsh Government commissioned a review of the culture sector evidence base in Wales¹⁹ which identified 'the availability of data concerning the environmental impact of organisations across arts, museums, libraries, archives, and the historic environment sectors and their commitment to decarbonisation is extremely limited'. Following this, the Welsh Government has commissioned a specific review to gather evidence on the Welsh culture sector's awareness, attitudes, behaviours, and existing approach to tackling the climate and nature emergencies, and to provide suggested recommendations for the culture sector in Wales. This review report is not yet published however the evidence gathered and final recommendations will inform the Priorities document and the final Integrated Impact Assessment. Evidence from the latest Cultural Participation Monitor²⁰ (2023 wave) suggests decarbonisation and the issue of climate change is important to attendees of cultural and arts events. 51% of survey respondents said they would generally prefer to go to cultural venues which

¹⁸ [The use of artificial intelligence in the cultural and creative sectors \(2020\) - European Union](#)

¹⁹ [Review of the culture sector evidence base in Wales | GOV.WALES](#)

²⁰ Summer 2023 | The Audience Agency

share their values particularly when it comes to the climate crisis, and they were more likely to attend certain cultural venues if organisations take an active stance on these issues.

The Priorities recognise the need for the culture sector to have a strong and robust workforce, which is anchored in expertise. Culture is an important source of employment in Wales, with a range of skills and professional expertise required to deliver cultural services. In 2022, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport identified over 14,500 workers were employed in the arts, museum, library, and archive sectors in Wales.²¹ This figure does not include volunteers, who are a significant feature of the culture and heritage workforce, nor does it include employment figures for the heritage sector, which was estimated to employ 30,000 FTE jobs in Wales in a study carried out in 2010²². One of the key ambitions outlined in the new Priorities is ‘the culture sector in Wales is a great place to work and volunteer, with a professional and skilled workforce’.

How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

The impact of the proposal will continue to be monitored and evaluated as it progresses. It is important the priorities and ambitions can be updated and enhanced as needed. The Welsh Government is committed to an initial update of the Priorities document in 2026 and it will remain under review thereafter. The three Priorities have been mapped against the National Well-being Indicators of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. In 2023, the Welsh Government’s Culture Division commissioned a review of the culture sector evidence base in Wales²³. The evidence review aimed to identify and assess existing sources and evidence gaps across museums, the arts, libraries, archives and heritage sectors which has informed the development of the Priorities.

²¹ Economic Estimates: Employment in DCMS sectors and Digital sector, January 2022 to December 2022

²² [Research | Cadw](#)

²³ [Review of the culture sector evidence base in Wales | GOV.WALES](#)