



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Fusion

Creating opportunities through culture

Delivery in 2019-20



#CyfunoFusion

<http://gov.wales/fusion>

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*Names and personal details in case studies in this document have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals

Front cover image: © Lucy Donald

Introduction

The powerful role culture, heritage and the arts play in transforming life chances of individuals is being strengthened by the **Fusion: Creating Opportunities through Culture** programme.

The Fusion Programme was established by the Welsh Government in response to the **Culture and Poverty report** written by Baroness Andrews and published in 2014. The report encouraged culture and heritage organisations to work closer with bodies such as local authorities thereby increasing opportunities for those in areas of economic disadvantage.

Fusion has encouraged and developed a range of partnerships, resources and innovations to work towards the aims of the report. By enabling and encouraging involvement in culture and heritage it was hoped that residents in disadvantaged areas would benefit from the opportunities they provided.

As part of the programme a pilot grant scheme was set up in a number of Community First areas across Wales. After this scheme proved successful eight Challenge Grant partnerships were established in 2017 and are now working with both national and local culture, heritage and arts organisations to support early years and learning - across all age groups, mental and physical wellbeing, and community cohesion and to increase opportunities for work experience.

Fusion is also taking forward initiatives including training placements, volunteering modules, and enabling youngsters to organise and manage performances within their own communities and supporting the takeover of culture and heritage venues all as part of the wider objectives of the Fusion programme.

Case Study: John's story

In partnership with the Swansea Music Hub, Fusion has started a 6 month programme with the Stroke Association to bring a mobile studio and musical instruments into their group meetings. The aims of the sessions are to increase wellbeing and provide other ways for the group to communicate, via music and song.

John came to the first session and was very nervous about getting involved. He didn't want to face the fact that he might not be able to play a guitar anymore. For 6 months since his stroke, he hadn't picked up his guitar. However he joined in with the music technology and singing and started to relax as the session went on.

John was encouraged to try his hand at the guitar and by the end of the session picked up the guitar and played a song. He was overcome with emotion and was thoroughly pleased that he was still able to play.

With support John and the other members of the group can be helped to find different ways to communicate through music and through regular supported sessions.

Context

- The Fusion embodies the **Well-being of Future Generations Act**. The programme is being increasingly aligned with the Act. The reporting systems for the the Challenge Grant areas and the cultural and heritage bodies involved with the Fusion programme are currently being revised to meet the Wellbeing Goals.
- The Fusion programme enables the cultural sector to contribute to several objectives in **Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021** and **Prosperity for All**, including volunteering, employability, supporting young people and boosting digital skills.
- **Light Springs through the Dark** outlines the Welsh Government's vision for culture in Wales. It articulates how culture, through Fusion, can empower people and develop confidence, skills, and employability.

Early years of Fusion

Led by the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD) co-ordinated action has been taken to develop and embed the objectives of Fusion across the sector.

Since 2015, MALD has supported Fusion partnerships, coalitions of cultural and community bodies which provide cultural activity that help tackle poverty. Our evaluation shows local, structured partnerships, within a national programme, are the most effective way to deliver genuine collaboration and better outcomes.

Between 2015 and 2017, over 5,000 people took part in Fusion activities, involving more than 150 partners. We worked with local authorities, heritage sites, theatres, schools, museums, archives and libraries among others to help over 100 people gain a qualification, created over 300 volunteering opportunities and supported more than 1,500 pupils to do better at school.



© Victoria Rogers, Museum of Cardiff

What we are doing now: 2017-2020

The Fusion Challenge Grant Scheme

Following the successful pilot phase, in 2017 MALD launched a Fusion Challenge Grants programme. Eight Lead Bodies initially delivered 2 year strategic programmes using culture, heritage and the arts to support employability, empowerment, the early years, and health and wellbeing - for those living in the most deprived communities. This has been expanded for an additional year to 2020 whilst officials develop plans for future provision.

Each of the bodies works with a range of cultural partners, as well as other organisations including volunteering bodies, housing associations, health services, schools, community agencies, employability programmes including Communities for Work, and the Flying Start programme for the early years.

Lead bodies have all appointed local Fusion co-ordinators to enable more effective programmes and partnerships to be created and to link organisations together better.

MALD will continue to support the partnerships in a variety of ways, responding to need. That support will include:

- Regular networking and training sessions, resources and advice
- Support to obtain external funding
- Training programmes in areas such as Arts Award
- Advice and training on effective evaluation
- Promotion of and advocacy for the Fusion programme in Wales and beyond.

The lead bodies deliver and report on activities and projects that meet the Fusion performance indicators (Annex 2). Levels of participation in Year 1 and 2 were extremely encouraging and showed increased involvement and achievements across the indicators. Lead bodies reported the following results:

Fusion Indicator	17-18	18-19
F1 Supporting the Early Years and Family Learning	4979	13087
F2 Gaining a qualification	423	720
F3 Regular volunteering as route to work	332	761
F4 Completing a work experience placement	110	160
F5 Improved digital skills	50	997
F6 Improved attitude to formal learning	2689	3046
F7 Better able to manage mental well being and physical health	2941	5400

Provided by the Fusion network coordinators.

The Cultural Ambition Project

The Cultural Ambition Project - managed by Creative & Cultural Skills - is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Skills for the Future programme and match-funded by Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division. This four-year project will give 33 young people who are not in education, employment or training and who are non-graduates the opportunity to complete an NVQ level 2 qualification in Cultural Heritage, whilst undertaking placements in heritage sites across Wales over 12 months.

Cultural Ambition was developed to reach into the Fusion areas of Wales, and to work with young people who may have limited experience of their local heritage, but who have a willingness to engage and learn. To date, there have been 15 starts on the project, and we are currently recruiting for the third cohort of trainees, due to start in October 2019. Of the first cohort, we have some early successes as two trainees have gained employment, and one has gained a place in university to continue their learning.

On a day-to-day basis, the trainees are supervised to complete tasks which support their qualification - assessed by Cardiff and Vale College. The units that were selected for the qualification contribute to the overall skills and employability of the learners. They include areas such as marketing, customer service and creative learning activities.

The difference in the trainees can be seen quite early on, especially in terms of their confidence levels. Within the first three months they are demonstrably more confident, generally happier and already realising that they have valuable skills and talents.

The project isn't just impacting the lives of the young people, it is also making a difference to the organisations that host them as well. Morigan Mason from Parc Howard Museum in Llanelli had this to say about one of their trainees:

"We found his placement a truly transformative experience for the museum and the team. He has such a great deal to bring to the sector and he's very employable. We're continuing to benefit from his placement and he taught us a lot about how to support future trainees."

Current funding is due to end in December 2021, however we have ambitions to extend the project beyond that date to include more regions of Wales, and to look into the viability of working in other parts of the UK.



© Creative and Cultural Skills

Other Fusion Work Areas

In addition to the Challenge Grants programme, we will continue our commitment to key priorities requiring action at a national level.

We will:

- Continue supporting the Cultural Ambition programme of 12-month training placements targeted individuals experiencing disadvantage, working with the HLF and Creative & Cultural Skills. This has now been extended into 2020.
- Develop powerful cultural engagement programmes for young people, to increase empowerment and skills, working with partners including Kids in Museums and the Young Promoters scheme
- Help deliver a step change in cultural volunteering by supporting cultural bodies to increase opportunities and widen access to volunteering programmes.
- Work with other Welsh Government departments to ensure the cultural sector plays a greater role in supporting our priorities around employability, health, education and cohesive communities.

Case Study: Oliver and Amy

Rubicon Dance led 4 weekly half hour dance sessions over 10 weeks for Grangetown Nursery, Cardiff. Pupils developed key skills such as thinking skills, numeracy and communication whilst encouraging them to be active. It also prepared the pupils for the National Curriculum Foundation Phase by beginning to develop their basic skills, creativity, confidence, focus, engagement, and developed skills for the mind and body.

Oliver cried for the first couple of weeks when coming into the session. In order to engage him and develop his confidence the dance leader gradually encouraged his level of participation at his own pace. After a few weeks, he started to join in parts of the session keeping his coat on. The following weeks he really gained confidence and started to join in the entire session. In the last few weeks Oliver danced in a group of 3 in front of the rest of the class which was a really big step for the child.

Amy was very shy and apprehensive from the beginning. She would watch from the back of the room and look like she wanted to join in. The dance leader slowly encouraged her and she started to join in the warm up, then half way through the term she was joining in the whole lesson. Amy finished the term performing by herself in front of the parents and the rest of the class. She was fully engaged and taking part at the end of the term which was great to see.

After the 10 week pilot was complete the school requested that they carry on the sessions on a long term basis in order for other teachers to experience the sessions and for the pupils to continue to progress in their confidence and skills.

Annex 1: Fusion Challenge Grant Programmes in 2017-20

Contact details for the coordinators for each Fusion area can be obtained through the Welsh Government Fusion team: Contact us at Cyfuno-Fusion@llyw.cymru or Cyfuno-Fusion@gov.wales

Fusion area / lead body	Activity and Outcomes
Torfaen & Caerphilly Torfaen County Borough Council & Caerphilly County Borough Council	<p>Torfaen and Caerphilly local authorities are working together on the Fusion programme, using culture and heritage to support people in former Communities First and other areas. The project is seeking to change the way people think and feel about arts, culture and heritage, making them relevant and accessible to everyone.</p> <p>It is working with a wide range of partners including culture, education, health and employment and skills bodies. It is focussing on tackling barriers to employment through volunteering and work placements, supporting educational attainment, the early years, and health and wellbeing.</p>
Cardiff Museum of Cardiff (Cardiff Story Museum)	<p>Museum of Cardiff, formerly Cardiff Story Museum, operated by the City & County of Cardiff, is leading a wide range of national and local cultural and heritage partners. It is working closely with a number of programmes including Flying Start to develop a rich programme of activity, delivering accredited learning opportunities, skills development, trainee placements, volunteering and work experience, and fun and meaningful activities for children, families, young people and the elderly. These opportunities are targeted towards individuals that live in Cardiff's Southern Arc and former Communities First clusters.</p>
Swansea City & County of Swansea	<p>Building on the success of the Swansea Creative Learning Partnership, the City & County of Swansea is driving forward innovative and diverse partnership work across the city. A coalition of cultural and heritage providers are building excellent community links with existing programmes and networks, and creating new activity. The aim of the project is to provide exciting opportunities through culture to engage and support people as part of their progression and improved wellbeing, education and employability. Working in partnership, the project will ensure increased volunteering opportunities, creative skills and accredited learning.</p>

**Fusion area /
lead body**

Activity and Outcomes

**Conwy
Conwy County
Borough Council**

Conwy County Borough Council is strengthening cultural partnerships, working with a number of local and national bodies to ensure that residents from a number of disadvantaged areas within the County have access to cultural provision. There is a strong focus on supporting children and families, as well as employability and employment through volunteering, accredited learning, and improving skills. Activities include storytelling, art workshops, museum visits, archive projects, events, volunteering opportunities, and photography and drama opportunities.

**Neath Port Talbot
Tai Tarian**

Tai Tarian (Formerly NPT Homes) is supporting volunteering opportunities, employability, financial literacy and numeracy programmes and arts and culture opportunities in Port Talbot and beyond. One of its most important programmes is with Ysgol Bae Baglan school where it is using film, media and culture as a way of boosting engagement and attainment. Tai Tarian is working closely with partners including the actor Michael Sheen, National Theatre Wales, and Ffilm Cymru.

**Gwynedd
Cyngor Gwynedd**

Cyngor Gwynedd is delivering a programme of activity working with partners including Storiell, the National Library of Wales, Gwynedd's library service, Pontio, Cadw, the National Slate Museum and others. It is focussing on supporting young people and families through the Family Learning Signature programme, developing new approaches to increasing volunteering, and supporting literacy and the early years.

Cyngor Gwynedd is concentrating its work mainly on the former Communities First cluster in Bangor, Caernarfon and Talysarn, as well as other communities.

**Carmarthenshire
Carmarthenshire
County Council**

Carmarthenshire County Council and its partners are delivering a wide range of cultural projects and activities. It is working alongside Welsh Government Tackling Poverty programmes and key employability programmes such as Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus. They are focussing our work on the Llanelli area and areas that are experiencing economic disadvantage. The main aim of the programme is to create opportunities that will support individuals to access employment. Working in partnership, culture and heritage bodies are prioritising volunteering opportunities, work placements, training, wellbeing, and encouraging individuals to become involved in local culture.

**Fusion area /
lead body**

Activity and Outcomes

**Newport
City of Newport
Council**

The City of Newport is focussing on reducing barriers to accessing culture, working with a wide variety of cultural partners including Newport Museum, Cadw, Amgueddfa Cymru, It's my Shout, People's Collection Wales and the Chartist Trust. It is working closely with the Flying Start, and Communities for Work legacy programmes as well as social landlords. It is focussing on creating opportunities for young people to take part in culture and heritage to support their learning, creating work placements and volunteer opportunities to increase employability, promoting digital inclusion, and supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing.



Annex 2: the Eight Fusion Indicators

Performance measure	WFG Goals	Definition	Examples of Cultural Activity supporting outcome
F1 Supporting the Early Years and Family Learning	A more equal Wales	Participants attend structured cultural activities promoting learning and development from birth through school age. Delivered with a range of community and other partners, including childcare providers, programmes such as Families First and Flying Start, and schools. Outcomes are developed to benefit both child and parents/ carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schemes to encourage parents and carers to be more willing to read/ undertake cultural activity with children. • Using cultural activity as part of the Family Learning Signature tool. • Dedicated family learning sessions at cultural venues. • Cultural organisations delivering family learning activities in community settings.
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language		
F2 Gaining a qualification	A prosperous Wales	The client attains a recognised qualification which is primarily intended to develop the client's employability. This includes CQFW qualifications and related awards e.g. Agored Units, NOCN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through participation organised by cultural body, client receives a recognised accreditation/ qualification. Can include Arts Award Bronze, Silver and Gold levels and units such as Agored, OCN and others.
	A more equal Wales		
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language		

Performance measure	WFG Goals	Definition	Examples of Cultural Activity supporting outcome
F3 Regular volunteering – ideally as a route to work	A prosperous Wales	The client undertakes volunteering within a cultural setting or as part of a cultural or heritage body on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural body provides volunteering opportunity for clients, and works with employability support programmes, community agencies and other partners to identify and support suitable participants. • Cultural bodies reward volunteering for example through time-banking initiatives and also recognise time-banking credits as payment.
	A more equal Wales		
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	This is ideally but not only, as a route to work.	
F4 Completing a work experience placement	A prosperous Wales	The client completes a work experience placement within a cultural setting and/or as part of a cultural or heritage body for a specified time. Client to have attended at least 75% of the time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural body work with employability support programmes or other referral programmes to identify participants and provide placements.
	A more equal Wales		
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language		

Performance measure	WFG Goals	Definition	Examples of Cultural Activity supporting outcome
F5 Improved digital skills	A prosperous Wales	Client has been supported to develop their digital skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accredited, recognised ICT training (mainly through public libraries). • Participation in accredited or structured digital heritage programmes (e.g. People's Collection Wales). • Participating in a cultural project of which the primary focus is to improve digital skills.
	A more equal Wales		
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language		
F6 Improved attitude to formal learning	A more equal Wales	The client demonstrates a measurable improvement in their attitude to formal learning, and potentially attainment, through engagement with culture. Evidence should be provided by the school or agency rather than being self-reported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural bodies work with schools and community agencies and other bodies (e.g. referral units) to offer structured activities designed to support young people to improve motivation, confidence and skills and result in an improved attitude to learning. Improved academic performance may in some cases also be evidenced and reported.
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language		

Performance measure	WFG Goals	Definition	Examples of Cultural Activity supporting outcome
F7 Better able to manage their mental well being and physical health	A healthier Wales	<p>Clients report having better management strategies for their mental well being and/ or receives support to help them improve their physical health, through taking part in cultural and heritage activities of which the primary focus is to improve their health and well being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP referral / prescription schemes using cultural activity. • Volunteer programmes. • Reminiscence/care home work using cultural activity. • Practical cultural participation such as arts and crafts as a therapeutic activity – as evidenced in Mind Body Spirit. • Participation in physical arts and performance activity with clear health benefits (e.g. dance, singing). • Cultural activities that contribute to the ‘Five ways to wellbeing’ (New Economics Foundation).
	A more equal Wales		
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language		

Performance measure	WFG Goals	Definition	Examples of Cultural Activity supporting outcome
F8* Improved community cohesion	A more equal Wales	Clients report feeling a greater sense of belonging to and integration within wider society.	Cultural projects where the primary aim is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and celebrate cultural diversity, working to break down feelings of fear and mistrust between people from different racial, religious or cultural backgrounds. • Break down barriers to participation by people from different cultural, racial, religious and disabled backgrounds. • Provide support for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and settled communities during the integration process.
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Minority groups and clients report that they found activities at cultural and heritage venues relevant to themselves and their communities.	
	A Wales of cohesive communities		

*Performance Indicator F8 was added in 2019.