



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Priorities for Culture







“

Culture, including our arts scene, our historic environment, and our cultural organisations, has the power to transform lives.

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It gives me great pleasure to introduce these new Priorities for Culture. They place culture where it belongs: at the heart of Welsh life.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed – directly or indirectly – to developing these Priorities for Culture and accompanying ambitions. Your insights, expertise, and passion have shaped a shared vision that is both aspirational and rooted in reality.

Culture, including our arts scene, our historic environment, and our cultural organisations, has the power to transform lives, whether by igniting the imagination of a child, providing solace and connection for someone who is lonely, or simply adding colour to the richness of our day-to-day lives. It is a vital part of our individual and collective well-being. Culture should never be considered the purview of a privileged few. It belongs to us all and I am determined that no-one will be excluded from accessing these benefits.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act sets out in law that the cultural well-being of Wales is everyone's business. These Priorities stretch far beyond the arts, museums, libraries, archives and the historic environment sectors. They offer a framework that is relevant to all policy portfolios, from education and health to tourism and social care.

By working together to realise these shared ambitions, we can provide a platform from which our culture sector can thrive, innovate, and reflect the true diversity of our nation. Through our collective efforts, with these Priorities guiding the way, we will deliver a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable cultural future, providing opportunity, enjoyment and inspiration for all the people of Wales.

Jack Sargeant MS  
Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership







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## Introduction

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (“the Act”) recognises the importance of improving the cultural well-being of the people of Wales. One of the central goals of the Act is to create A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language. Actions that must be taken towards achieving this goal are enshrined in law and are relevant across Welsh Government, local authorities, and many public bodies in Wales.

There is an expectation that all sectors will consider how to respond to these new strategic priorities for culture, how they can embed the priorities and ambitions in their strategic and operational planning and how they can work in partnership with the culture sector to support, nurture and promote culture.

In this document, we use the words ‘culture sector’ as a term to include the arts, museums, libraries, archives and the historic environment sectors in Wales. We are not setting strategic priorities for sport or for the creative industries, however, there is a clear link between their work and cultural well-being and these sectors should consider how they will embed these priorities and ambitions in their delivery plans.

We will keep these strategic priorities under regular review. Our ambition remains that culture in Wales will be thriving, properly resourced, with a long-term, strategic plan for investment.

## Our values and principles

The development of these priorities has been guided by the Act’s five sustainable ways of working: long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration, and involvement.

These priorities recognise the importance of the Welsh language – a language that belongs to the whole of Wales, to our nation’s history and culture, with a unique and significant role to play in Wales’ future.

Above all, we recognise the intrinsic value of culture and commit to the principle that every person in Wales has the right to access, create, participate in and to see themselves reflected in the cultural activity of our nation.



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## Priorities for Culture



### **PRIORITY 1:** Culture brings people together

- 1: Culture is inclusive, accessible and diverse.
- 2: Cultural democracy and cultural rights are central to culture.
- 3: Culture is embedded in place-making.
- 4: Culture reflects the needs and aspirations of children and young people, and strengthens the connection between generations.
- 5: Cultural participation supports individual and community well-being.



## PRIORITY 2: Celebrating Wales as a nation of culture

6: Culture supports and promotes the Welsh language and reflects Wales as a bilingual and multilingual nation.

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7: Culture has a high profile in how Wales is marketed to visitors and in how we establish and develop international relationships.

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8: The profile of culture is raised by celebrating and promoting culture at a local, national and international level.

## PRIORITY 3: Culture is resilient and sustainable

9: Organisations caring for our historic places and collections have strategic approaches to recognising significance and collecting.

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10: Our collections and historic assets are cared for and used to support learning, creativity, place-making and cultural well-being.

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11: Our intangible cultural heritage is recorded and supported to thrive.

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12: Culture and heritage bodies will work collaboratively to maximise the full potential of specialist teams and collections, working with others to explore and leverage the power of culture.

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13: Culture is supported and enhanced by good digital practice.

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14: Culture has a collaborative and long-term approach to research and to gathering and sharing evidence.

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15: The culture sector is a great place to work and volunteer, with a professional and skilled workforce.

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16: The culture sector demonstrates leadership and collaboration in its approaches to sustainable development, building resilience, and tackling the climate and nature emergencies

## PRIORITY 1: Culture brings people together



### 1.1 Connecting with people and communities – inclusivity, diversity and accessibility, and supporting cultural rights

Wales has the legislative and policy context in place to provide real leadership in driving forward inclusivity, accessibility and diversity. Our cultural workforce, collections, spaces and places must promote a modern and diverse Wales, reflecting the variety of people and cultures who call Wales their home.

Many people already benefit from the positive impacts of creativity and cultural participation, but barriers and challenges continue to prevent some groups and communities from fully accessing these benefits. Affordability and

transport can be barriers to participation. Having access to inclusive and accessible cultural spaces at a community level is important, and the availability of free, local cultural services remains a priority.

We want to focus on creating meaningful, inclusive opportunities for people to engage with culture, to participate in and be represented in our cultural activity, and to benefit from the expertise and enthusiasm of our wide-ranging culture sector. The principles of cultural democracy and cultural rights – letting people decide what counts as culture, and involving them in decision-making – should be fundamental to how we design and deliver cultural services.

Culture should take an inclusive, thoughtful and balanced approach to interpreting, commemorating and presenting our past, to how we consider and respond to contemporary issues, and to how we look to the future.



## 1.2 Connecting through a sense of place

Communities have their own cultural identities, often linked to landscapes, place names, local history, buildings, objects, documentary heritage, migration, traditions, and stories. Culture and heritage can be seen in our landscapes and townscapes, and in countless historic buildings and ancient monuments all around us. This sense of place is defined within the Curriculum for Wales as 'cynefin' where the historic, cultural and social place shapes the community.

Getting people actively involved in identifying and supporting the conservation of their local cultural assets develops a sense of belonging and of pride in their community, creates a sense of stewardship, connects communities and supports community well-being.

Community-driven initiatives play a vital role in preserving, enhancing and celebrating culture at a local level. Culture and heritage-led regeneration is powerful and transformative, and culture should be an important consideration in regeneration, economic and business development.

## 1.3 Connecting with children and young people, and an intergenerational approach

In Wales, we have demonstrated a clear commitment to supporting generations by establishing the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, and the Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Children and young people are the future caretakers of culture in Wales. We want to ensure that all children and young people can participate in cultural activity and enjoy cultural experiences from an early age and on a regular basis. For children and young people from poorer backgrounds, exposure to cultural experiences and to cultural education at school is crucial. A focus on play can also provide early opportunities to engage with and explore culture.

Young people should be empowered not only to enjoy culture but to influence and shape it. Cultural organisations should develop opportunities for young people's voices to be heard, where their energy is valued.

Family-friendly services, spaces and programming should be integrated into all areas of the culture sector.

We believe culture plays an important role in connecting generations. Cultural venues can support participation and keep older people connected within their communities.

We want the culture sector in Wales to continue to seek out the insights and experiences of all generations when planning programmes and services, and to promote the benefits of intergenerational approaches, connecting generations for mutual benefit.

## 1.4 Connecting through well-being

The positive impact of culture is evident everywhere.

The ways in which cultural participation and creative activities support health and well-being are well understood. Engaging with culture through volunteering, education and training programmes, and accessing cultural places and activities can have a positive impact on health and well-being and help combat social exclusion and loneliness. Other initiatives such as social prescribing can provide opportunities for many people who are disconnected from culture to broaden their horizons and benefit.

There are excellent programmes happening right across the culture sector to support well-being and good mental health. We want to see approaches to improving well-being strengthened further, at a local and national level, by deepening existing partnerships and developing new ones.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 has a broader focus on improving cultural well-being in Wales. There is growing evidence for how culture can help deliver wider policy aims, including health and well-being, education, tackling the climate and nature emergencies and the economy.

### Our ambitions:

- 1: Culture is inclusive, accessible and diverse.**
- 2: Cultural democracy and cultural rights are central to culture in Wales.**
- 3: Culture is embedded in place-making.**
- 4: Culture reflects the needs and aspirations of children and young people, and strengthens the connection between generations.**
- 5: Cultural participation supports individual and community well-being.**

## PRIORITY 2: Celebrating Wales as a nation of culture



### 2.1 A bilingual and a multilingual nation

The Welsh language belongs to the whole of Wales – it is part of our nation's history, heritage, and traditions, and is key to its future. Recognising the value of the Welsh language, promoting it and celebrating it must be embedded across all areas of activity in our sectors.

The Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy has a clear ambition of achieving a million Welsh speakers and doubling daily language use by 2050, and the Welsh language should be a valuable skill in the culture sector.

We must also recognise the cultural importance of languages used by communities throughout Wales. Languages broaden horizons, deepen learning and understanding and open doors to new experiences.

We want to see the culture sector embracing the challenge of embedding additional languages into its programming. Developing BSL and Braille resources and experiences and responding to the linguistic needs of local communities will ensure that our sectors are as inclusive and accessible as possible.

### 2.2 Promoting Wales to the world

Wales is widely recognised as a place of adventures, of world and Welsh heritage, outstanding natural landscapes, and with a rich calendar of cultural events.

We want culture to play an important role in tourism and for it to be represented and embedded in how we promote Wales to the world.



There are many opportunities to ensure the whole visitor economy – from accommodation, hospitality, attractions, events and the night-time economy – plays a role in promoting culture within our nation and to the rest of the world.

Developing international relations through the exchange of cultural, creative and artistic practice and experience should be integral to how Wales develops formal and informal relationships with other regions and countries. International sporting events and collaboration with the creative industries offer valuable opportunities for promoting culture. The breadth and diversity of the culture sector in Wales should be integral to our cultural diplomacy activity.

## 2.3 Celebrating culture

Culture is central to our distinctiveness as a nation and to our sense of being Welsh. We can embrace our history, heritage, languages and traditions while also welcoming the new, creating a constantly evolving sense of nationhood through culture.

Wales is fortunate to have a deep and broad cultural and creative offer that we should celebrate, enjoy and share with others. We want our cultural organisations and services to support the people of Wales to be collectively, individually, and uniquely Welsh.

Innovation and excellence should be fundamental to our aspirations for developing and celebrating culture.

We must continue to seek and create opportunities across the year to celebrate culture in Wales in all its variety.

### Our ambitions:

- 6: Culture supports and promotes the Welsh language and reflects Wales as a bilingual and multilingual nation.**
- 7: Culture has a high profile in how our nation is marketed to visitors and in how we establish and develop international relationships.**
- 8: The profile of culture is raised by celebrating and promoting culture at a local, national and international level.**





## PRIORITY 3: Culture is resilient and sustainable



### 3.1 Caring for our cultural places and collections

Caring for our historic places and collections requires an understanding of their special qualities and significance, depends on specialist skills, legislation, regulation and guidance, and funding.

There is a need for continued investment to ensure conservation and maintenance of our unique historic buildings and monuments, particularly those in public and community ownership, which contribute so much to our cultural identity and tourism economy.

Challenges exist around the storage of collections. Continued and strategic capital investment is required to support the safe storage of collections, and to create welcoming, inspiring spaces where the public can interact with them.

Our collections and historic assets should be relevant to a diverse and contemporary Wales, and be leveraged to inspire creativity and support learning and place-making. Access to our collections should reflect our desire to address inequality and ensure the cultural well-being of all the people of Wales.

We also recognise the importance of intangible cultural heritage or living heritage in Wales. Living heritage represents intangible collections where oral and folk traditions, skills, social practices, rituals and festive events are transmitted from generation to generation.



## 3.2 Strategic collaboration and dynamic partnerships

The culture sector should not work in silos. Stakeholders have expressed a clear desire for more collaborative working, and a proactive approach to strengthening existing relationships and establishing new partnerships.

There is already good collaborative working between the culture sector and other sectors, including health and social care, Natural Resources Wales, national parks, sport, tourism and private sector businesses. These efforts are resulting in dynamic and creative partnerships, knowledge sharing and joint funding approaches.

We want to explore more cross-sector working, particularly with areas such as health, education, economic development, tourism, the natural environment, tackling poverty and social justice.

## 3.3 The power of digital

We need to formulate a more strategic, collaborative and co-ordinated approach to the opportunities and challenges of operating in the digital world.

### Creating, Managing and Preserving Digital Content

Digital content is vulnerable and fragile. It can become inaccessible by technical obsolescence, is at risk of being lost or corrupted, and cultural organisations can be subject to damaging cyber-attack. We must protect and care for our digital culture and heritage as carefully as our physical heritage by ensuring we create high quality digital content, capable of long-term preservation and stored securely. Investing in, and building a sustainable, robust digital infrastructure alongside our physical infrastructure, and strengthening the foundations of our digital services in line with the ambitions of the Digital Strategy for Wales will ensure our sectors can develop world-leading and secure digital offers.

### Digital Skills

We need appropriate digital skills at all levels, from front-of-house volunteers using ticketing software, to archivists and curators with expert knowledge of digital preservation standards and best practices, to leaders who can focus on strategic digital developments based on an understanding of audience trends.



### New Technologies

Our sectors need support to innovate and to grow their digital capacity. We want to strengthen the use of new technologies to enhance how people connect with and create culture in Wales. However, using new technology carries a carbon cost, and we must be mindful of the energy costs and carbon footprint of maintaining digital content.

### Digital Connectivity

By hosting cultural content online, we can connect communities across Wales and highlight the best of our varied culture to the world. Digitised collections, exhibitions and performances can offer people across Wales the opportunity to engage in culture that would otherwise be inaccessible.

There is a divide between larger cultural bodies with the resource, equipment, capacity and skills base to digitise, and smaller, particularly local, organisations without these assets.



### 3.4 Investing in research

In 2023, the Welsh Government commissioned a review of the existing evidence base for the culture sector in Wales. The report highlighted the need for a more comprehensive and cohesive approach to gathering data and evidence from across our sectors to support sector development and to inform decision-making.

Effective and engaging dissemination of research findings will allow the sector to plan more efficiently for the future.

Continuing to develop links with research partners, strengthening the focus on culture and heritage in Wales, and developing a national research agenda should be shared objectives between the culture sector and higher education.

### 3.5 The culture sector workforce

The Welsh Government works with social partners to promote fair work, to adopt behaviours and practices consistent with fair work, and to promote the importance of trade unions in the workplace, recognising that they contribute to improving the experience of work, worker voice and representation.

Freelancers and portfolio workers are key features of the culture sector workforce, and there needs to be a collective, strategic approach to developing and sustaining freelancers in both the culture and creative sectors. This should include a commitment to supporting Wales-based freelancers, to improving skills development and working conditions, and to growing our understanding of the freelance workforce in Wales.

Improving equality, diversity and inclusion across the workforce at all levels continues to be a clear goal, as does addressing pay differences in relation to gender, ethnicity and disability.

Some areas of the culture sector are wholly reliant on volunteers, including independent museums and grass roots arts and community heritage organisations. We recognise the importance of volunteers and the benefits volunteering can bring.

Many of our sector organisations have well-established volunteer policies and principles around voluntary working and this learning could be shared more broadly across the sectors, but a gap exists in how the culture sector recognises the efforts of volunteers, and there is currently no cohesive, cross-sectoral approach to promoting voluntary opportunities.

There are specific skills shortages in the culture sector – these range from specialist builders familiar with the needs of historic buildings through to digital skills, specialist librarians, curators, archivists and conservators, and carbon and climate emergency specialists. The arts sector is finding it increasingly difficult to source technical support for stage productions and other specialist skills. The heritage sector in Wales needs a strong supply of skilled archaeologists, conservators, heritage management specialists and construction companies capable of maintaining our historic assets and the wider historic environment. Whilst we recognise the short-term financial constraints, we are determined that we should protect, prioritise and nurture the development of these skills during the lifetime of these strategic priorities.



Stakeholders told us that there are challenges to attracting Welsh language skills into the sectors in some areas of Wales, and to supporting specialist staff to continually develop their professional skills and keep up-to-date with new technological innovation, especially when staffing levels are fragile.

Developing a skilled workforce requires careful and deliberate planning over an extended period of time.

## 3.6 Culture and sustainable development

Culture can enhance the public's understanding of the climate and nature emergencies, broaden our knowledge and perspectives about its complexity, encourage behaviour change, and develop creative solutions to stave off the worst consequences of climate change. Sustainability must be embedded as a golden thread at the heart of what we do.

We need to build resilience in the sector to manage the impact of a changing climate. Storms and floods have resulted in damage and loss of assets. Long term trends such as hotter, drier summers, a longer growing season, rising sea levels and increasingly extreme weather events will potentially have the greatest impacts on the historic environment, on the survival of vulnerable heritage assets, and on the delivery of events and services. The long-term preservation of collections will be affected by a greater prevalence of pests and our ability to stabilise fluctuating temperatures and relative humidity in internal environments.

We must take a whole-system approach to climate resilience and sustainable development in the culture sector, with the aim of addressing the combined, interdependent actions needed across different policy areas and stakeholders to build resilience.

### Our ambitions:

- 9: Organisations caring for our historic places and collections have strategic approaches to recognising significance and collecting.**
- 10: Our collections and historic assets are cared for and used to support learning, creativity, place-making and cultural well-being.**
- 11: Our intangible cultural heritage is recorded and supported to thrive.**
- 12: Culture and heritage bodies will work collaboratively to maximise the full potential of specialist teams and collections, working with others to explore and leverage the power of culture.**
- 13: Culture is supported and enhanced by good digital practice.**
- 14: Culture has a collaborative and long-term approach to research and to gathering and sharing evidence.**
- 15: The culture sector is a great place to work and volunteer, with a professional and skilled workforce.**
- 16: The culture sector demonstrates leadership and collaboration in its approaches to sustainable development, building resilience, and tackling the climate and nature emergencies.**

## Our Ways of Working

Welsh Government has developed these strategic priorities in accordance with the sustainable development principle in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. We have looked into the long-term, involved people, collaborated with partners, considered how we can prevent problems and ensured an integrated approach. These ways of working will continue as we implement the priorities.

The priorities and ambitions have been informed and enriched by contributions from stakeholders and from the public. We thank all those who have been part of developing and finalising the Priorities for Culture.

# Priorities for Culture and the National Well-being Indicators

The table below shows which National Well-being Indicators ([www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-national-indicators](http://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-national-indicators)) the priorities could support, reflecting the sustainable development principles and making progress towards the well-being goals.

## How these priorities could contribute to the national indicators:

	Culture brings people together	Celebrating Wales as a nation of culture	Culture is resilient and sustainable
06. Measurement of development of young children	●		
16. Percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn at least the real Living Wage			●
17. Pay difference for gender, disability and ethnicity	●		●
22. Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups			●
23. Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area	●		●
24. Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need	●		
26. Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live	●	●	●
27. Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect	●		
28. Percentage of people who volunteer	●		●
29. Mean mental well-being score for people	●		
30. Percentage of people who are lonely	●		
35. Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least three times a year	●	●	●
36. Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh	●	●	●
39. Percentage of museums and archives holding archival/heritage collections meeting UK accreditation standards			●
40. Percentage of designated historic environment assets that are in stable or improved conditions			●
41. Emissions of greenhouse gases within Wales			●
42. Emissions of greenhouse gases attributed to the consumption of global goods and services in Wales			●
44. Status of biological diversity in Wales			●
46. Active global citizenship in Wales	●	●	●
48. Percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport			●
50. Status of digital inclusion			●