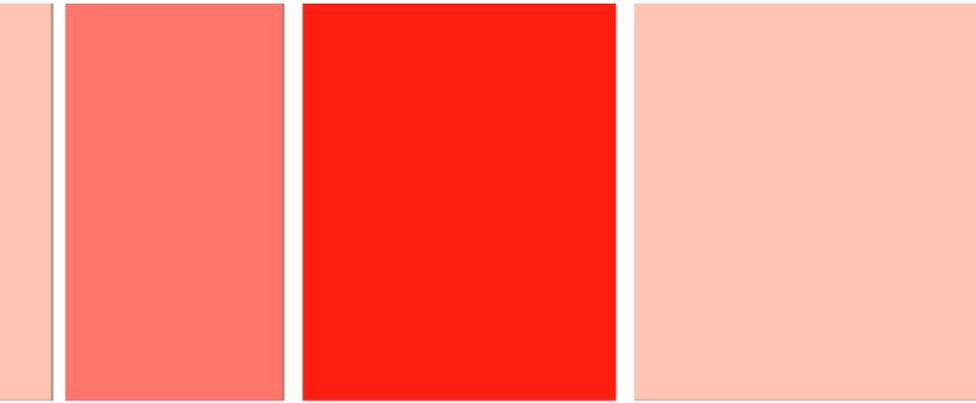


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# Pioneer Area Programme Pilot Year Evaluation Final Report



Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.



# Pioneer Area Programme Pilot Year Evaluation Final Report

Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales / Welsh Government

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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## **Glossary**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
ACE	Arts Council England
ACW	Arts Council of Wales
AC-NMW	Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales
BME	Black and Minority Ethnicity
CASE	Culture and Sport Evidence Programme
DCMS	Department of Culture Media and Sport
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FLS	Family Learning Signature
KAS	Knowledge and Analytical Services
LA	Local Authorities
LDB	Local Delivery Body
NAO	National Audit Office
NLW	National Library of Wales
PCW	People’s Collection Wales
PA	Pioneer Areas
PDG	Pupil Deprivation Grant
RSPH	The Royal Society for Public Health
SfC	Skills for Care
TFCC	Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy
TPAP	Tackling Poverty Action Plan
WEA Cymru	Workers’ Educational Association Cymru
WG	Welsh Government
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
WEMWBS	Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

# 1. Introduction

1.1 The Welsh Government has placed tackling poverty, especially persistent poverty amongst some of the poorest people and communities across Wales, at the heart of its agenda for the current Assembly term, as set out in the Programme for Government. The Tackling Poverty Action Plan (TPAP)<sup>1</sup> published in July 2013 provides the main focus for coordinating anti-poverty action and programmes across Wales. It brings together all government policy areas and key partners and stakeholders at all levels to help communities and individuals out of poverty. Communities First - the Welsh Government's community-focused tackling poverty programme - is a key mechanism for the delivery of the Action Plan. The programme works with communities, in communities, setting in place a local infrastructure which focuses on supporting the most vulnerable people in the most deprived areas of Wales. It aims to make these communities more prosperous, healthier, more skilled and better informed, and has three strategic objectives:

- healthier communities
- learning communities
- prosperous communities

1.2 Communities First is based on small groups of communities known as Communities First Clusters. There are 52 Clusters in total across Wales. Further details on the programme can be found on the Communities First website.<sup>2</sup>

1.3 Within the Action Plan, the role of culture, heritage and the arts in helping to tackle poverty and support community regeneration has been explicitly recognised (p. 15) and since its publication an in-depth examination into the connections between access to culture and social justice has been undertaken, led by Baroness Kay Andrews OBE. This review culminated in the publication of a report in March 2014, which called on the Welsh Government, local government, cultural organisations, community bodies and schools across Wales to collaborate more effectively in order to maximise the benefits cultural participation can have for individuals living in Wales' most

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government (2015) *Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan*. [Online]. Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/socialjustice/130703takeforpovactplanen.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Further information can be accessed via the Communities First web-page on the Welsh Government's website. Available at: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitiesfirst/?lang=en>

deprived communities.<sup>3</sup> The report acknowledges the valuable contribution made by the cultural sector to the tackling poverty agenda in recent years, but highlights new opportunities and avenues for increasing access to, and participation in, cultural activities. The report complements and builds upon an independent report on the Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales<sup>4</sup> produced by Professor Dai Smith for the Welsh Government in September 2013.

- 1.4 The Welsh Government published its response to Baroness Andrews' Report in November 2014, which sets out in detail a programme of work that responds directly to the report's recommendations and highlights the progress made to date in meeting the report's key targets.<sup>5</sup> As part of this programme of work, a new policy initiative was launched in May 2015 under the title 'Fusion: Tackling Poverty through Culture'. The initial pilot phase for the initiative ran for one year from April 2015 and involved the establishment of six Pioneer Areas across Wales<sup>6</sup>. Within each Pioneer Area, national, regional and local cultural and heritage bodies are working, in collaboration with Communities First clusters and local community groups, to explore opportunities for increasing participation in cultural activities at a local community level, particularly amongst those individuals and communities who would not normally engage with these types of activities.

The key objectives for each Pioneer Area were to:

- consider the recommendations in the report by Baroness Kay Andrews OBE and, where appropriate, identify and implement actions contributing to the agenda;

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<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2014) *Culture and Poverty: Harnessing the power of the arts, culture and heritage to promote social justice in Wales*. [Online]. Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/140313-culture-and-poverty-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Smith, D. (2013) *An independent report for the Welsh Government into Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales*. [Online]. Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/130920-arts-in-education-en.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government (2014) *Baroness Andrews' report Culture and Poverty – Response by the Welsh Government*. [Online]. Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/141111responseen.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> The Pioneer Areas that are participating in the pilot year include Swansea, Wrexham, Gwynedd, Cardiff, Newport and Torfaen. Each Pioneer Area is co-ordinated by a local partnership led by a Lead Delivery Body; in most cases this is the Local Authority, with the exception of the Cardiff Pioneer Area which is being led by Cardiff University. Membership of each partnership is determined locally, but typically includes national, regional and local cultural bodies; Local Authority leads on culture, libraries and museums; local arts and heritage bodies; Communities First cluster managers; Local Education Authorities; schools; Higher and Further Education institutions; and other community bodies such as Housing Associations [see Welsh Government (2015) *Fusion: Tackling Poverty through Culture. The Pioneer Area Programme Pilot Year*.]

- participate in the Pioneer Areas programme pilot year in 2015-16; contributing to the evaluation of the programme as a whole and provide relevant data;
- provide a mutual learning and information exchange;
- identify and share good practice within the Pioneer Area and more widely;
- identify new project, programme and funding opportunities for partnership working; and
- evaluate and publish good working practice.<sup>7</sup>

1.5 A critical element of the Pioneer Areas Pilot Programme is to demonstrate the value of the approach of establishing Pioneer Areas and, specifically, to ascertain their likely impact on the Welsh Government's priority areas of improving educational attainment, tackling poverty and supporting people living in deprived communities. The evaluation of the pilot year of the programme had two over-arching aims:

- i. To analyse the effectiveness of the Pioneer Area programme's processes, in terms of its design and delivery (the 'Process Evaluation'). In order to achieve this, the specific objectives were to:
  - understand the context within which the Pioneer Area programme is working and the extent to which it aligns with other tackling poverty initiatives in Wales;
  - provide evidence of what works in relation to using culture-based interventions to tackle poverty on a regional, national and international level;
  - examine the design, implementation and delivery of the Pioneer Area programme on a local level;
  - identify which aspects of the programme's design and implementation worked and why, and which aspects of the programme need improvement and why;
  - identify how joint planning and collaborative use of resources at a local level had an impact on organisational ways of working.

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<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government (2015) *Pioneer Areas Programme - Pilot Year 2015-16. Programme Initiation Document*. Cardiff: Welsh Government

- ii. To examine the extent to which the Pioneer Area pilot programme has been successful in increasing the number of young people, adults and families living in Communities First areas to actively participate in culture, arts and heritage activities in ways that help them gain in learning, skills and confidence (the 'Outcome Evaluation'). Sitting beneath this, the specific objectives were to:
  - examine the extent to which key partners and target groups have been effectively engaged;
  - provide an assessment of the likely impact of engagement with cultural activities on target audiences in the Pioneer Areas;
  - identify which activities have been particularly successful and provide examples of good practice;
  - highlight cases where activities have worked less well and how any difficulties / obstacles have been overcome.

## **2. Evaluation methods and timeline**

- 2.1 During its pilot year, the Pioneer Area programme set up methods for monitoring, evaluating and sharing learning from its collaborative working model to generate evidence around the impact of culture-based interventions to tackling poverty, specifically on Communities First outcomes, and establish a national body of evidence.
- 2.2 Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales (AC-NMW) took the lead on the evaluation of the pilot programme, with support from the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS). A senior researcher, jointly funded by AC-NMW and the Welsh Government, was responsible for coordinating the research and evaluation phase of the programme and worked alongside a researcher from KAS to undertake fieldwork, data analysis and reporting of the findings.
- 2.3 A multi-method approach, involving primary, secondary, and mainly qualitative approaches, were used to meet the evaluation objectives outlined above within the timeframe available. Key details of each stage of the evaluation and the research timeline are provided below.

### **Activity 1: Literature and evidence review (July to October 2015)**

- 2.4 This stage involved two key tasks. First, an in-depth examination of the legislative framework and wider policy context within which the Pioneer Area programme was implemented, and the extent to which it aligns with other initiatives in Wales and the UK. Second, a review of the existing evidence base on the role of culture in tackling poverty has been undertaken to identify any gaps in the literature and highlight examples of best practice. This provides an insight into what works in relation to using culture-based interventions to tackle poverty on a regional, national and international level.

### **Activity 2: Assessing programme delivery and performance through stakeholder consultation (August to December 2015)**

- 2.5 In-depth interviews were undertaken with members of each Pioneer Area partnership, including representatives from the Lead Delivery Body, and Communities First Cluster managers involved in developing and managing the Pioneer Areas programme. Additionally, the lead representatives from each of the pilot areas were asked to nominate up to six key cultural partners involved in each local partnership to participate in further in-depth interviews. In order to obtain breadth as well as depth of information, it was suggested the interviews should include a variety of partner organisations, such as local authority representatives, national, regional and local cultural and heritage bodies, local community groups, cultural providers and schools. Across the six pilot areas a total of 30 interviews were undertaken between September and December 2015.
- 2.6 The lead representatives for each area contacted the key partners on behalf of the researchers to notify them of the evaluation and invite them to participate. Most of the interviews were carried out face-to-face, with the exception of three that were undertaken by telephone, and ranged in duration from approximately 45 minutes to two hours. Participants were offered the opportunity to participate in either Welsh or English and eight were conducted in Welsh. Having obtained permission from each participant, the interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes.
- 2.7 The purpose of the interviews was to understand:
- the rationale behind the design of the programme within their area;

- area characteristics (location and size, local conditions - demography, economy, employment and income, skills, housing, health, education, tourism, crime etc., key opportunities and challenges);
- programme delivery at a local level (management and governance structures, key agents and influences, approaches to engaging / linking with local cultural providers, skills and capabilities of key actors, any key challenges i.e. impact of LA restructuring processes);
- the type of cultural activities being developed / implemented (key themes, alignment to other local programmes and services, spatial coverage, target groups etc.);
- how outputs were measured and captured;
- anticipated outcomes (short-term) and longer-term impacts (work with each Pioneer Area to identify 3 to 5 per project).

### **Activity 3: In-depth local area case studies (October to December 2015)**

2.8 Further in-depth case study work was undertaken in each area to construct a more detailed picture of what has or is likely to be achieved in each Pioneer Area and to provide a qualitative understanding of what works in relation to using culture-based interventions to tackle poverty. Key activities undertaken during this stage of the evaluation process included:

- maintaining ongoing dialogue with PAs Lead Delivery Bodies to identify and define measurable outcomes for inclusion in the final evaluation report;
- undertaking further informal discussions / in-depth interviews with Pioneer Area representatives to gather further information and evidence on outcomes / impacts;
- carrying out secondary analysis of Communities First / Pioneer Area data drawn from key sources, including the CEMP database, Aspireview<sup>8</sup>, and other monitoring outputs (where available).

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<sup>8</sup> The evaluation team were provided with a limited degree of performance monitoring data by Lead Delivery Bodies from the CEMP and Aspireview software systems. This did not include access to the software itself. CEMP is used by several Lead Delivery Bodies, and Aspireview is a centrally managed software system used by the Welsh Government. The software

## **Activity 4: Synthesis of evaluation evidence**

- 2.9 The final phase of the evaluation involved bringing together all of the evaluation's evidence strands to provide an overall assessment of the Programme's implementation and an early indication of impact. Key activities included:
- thematic analysis of interview and case study material;
  - statistical analysis of secondary socio-economic data and Communities First monitoring data (where available).

## **3. Literature and evidence review**

### **National Policy Context**

- 3.1 The Pioneer Area programme is part of the tackling poverty agenda in Wales. Tackling poverty is a fundamental priority for the Welsh Government. Central to this agenda is the Welsh Government's TPAP - a cross-cutting and overarching policy initiative, and the focal point of anti-poverty action and programmes across Wales.
- 3.2 The Welsh Government's Communities First programme is a key delivery mechanism for TPAP. The Communities First programme focuses on 52 of the most deprived communities in Wales with an emphasis on supporting the most vulnerable individuals, families and groups in these communities.
- 3.3 The Communities First Programme has three strategic objectives: Prosperous Communities, Healthier Communities and Learning Communities. The TPAP recognises that Communities First will play a key role in promoting joined up approaches and enabling mainstream programmes to work to greatest effect in the communities in which it operates.
- 3.4 A significant principle in taking forward the TPAP is using culture to tackle poverty through the development of "action and targets to help children from low-income families benefit from the arts and culture more generally, including the historic environment" (Welsh Government, 2015, p. 16). In pursuit of this, the policy initiative Fusion: Tackling Poverty through Culture was launched in May 2015. In its pilot year in 2015-16, six Pioneer Areas were launched within 15 Communities First clusters, across the Local

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systems are designed to enable clusters, Lead Delivery Bodies and the Welsh Government to monitor data against each Communities First Performance Measure.

Authority areas of Cardiff and Merthyr, Gwynedd, Newport, Swansea, Torfaen and Wrexham. Maps outlining the Communities First clusters within each Pioneer Area can be found at **Annex One**.

- 3.5 The Pioneer Areas programme seeks to maximise the opportunities for the arts, culture and the historic environment to play a role in Communities First efforts to tackle poverty. It links national, regional and local cultural groups with Communities First clusters in the Pioneer Areas, providing a range of opportunities for people to engage with culture.
- 3.6 Through cultural organisations working in collaboration with Communities First clusters and local community groups, the intention is to catalyse participation in cultural activities amongst individuals and communities who would not ordinarily take part. The focus of the Pioneer Areas pilot programme is on embedding culture into Communities First and broadening access to cultural activities that directly support clusters in meeting their existing outcomes around Healthy Communities, Learning Communities and Prosperous Communities.
- 3.7 The Pioneer Areas programme is being co-ordinated by the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of the Welsh Government, in collaboration with other Welsh Government departments, local authorities and a range of other bodies.

### **Background to the Pioneer Areas Programme**

- 3.8 Culture is identified by the Welsh Government as making an important contribution towards helping individuals and communities out of poverty. Fusion: Tackling Poverty through Culture was launched by the Welsh Government in response to Baroness Kay Andrews' report (Welsh Government, 2014). Commissioned by the Minister for Culture and Sport in July 2013, this examination into the connections between access to culture and social justice called for government in Wales, cultural and heritage organisations, community bodies and schools to work together to maximise the benefits cultural participation can have for people living in Wales' most deprived communities.
- 3.9 In the context of this report "culture [is] taken to mean not just the arts, but also heritage and the historic environment, including the contribution of museums, libraries and the media" (2014, p. 3). It is this definition which has

been adopted by the Fusion policy initiative. The report captures how museums, libraries, archives, historic monuments and arts organisations are key resources that can inspire people to learn and gain new skills; and can help individuals and communities to develop confidence and a sense of identity.

- 3.10 The principle underlying the Baroness Kay Andrews report is that the benefits of access to and participation in all forms of culture should be available to all, and that particular efforts are needed to ensure that those in the most disadvantaged communities can enjoy these opportunities. Whilst recognising that a great deal of good work is being done in the delivery of culture in Wales, according to the report, much of the work done is sporadic and there is a lack of focus across Wales for the equal benefit of its people, particularly for those living in some of the most disadvantaged communities. It calls for more strategic thinking and closer collaboration so that more people from disadvantaged backgrounds and communities can realise the benefits.
- 3.11 The recommendations in the report are wide-ranging and focused on the mainstreaming of access to culture in several key areas. First, there are recommendations on embedding culture within communities in Wales through, for example, the Communities First programme. Second, there are recommendations around making sure that the arts, culture and heritage are mainstreamed in schools, and wider again through community learning and volunteering. This recommendation builds-upon Professor Dai Smith's earlier independent report for the Welsh Government, titled Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales (Smith, 2013), which considered the role of the arts in formal educational contexts and argued that the arts can, and should, play a central role in improving educational attainment. Both reports set out the important role that culture can play in inspiring people to learn and gain skills and emphasises the importance of cultural activities to improving people's aspirations, ambitions and prospects. Third, the Baroness Kay Andrews report recommends a number of mechanisms to guide progress at both local and national levels.
- 3.12 According to the Welsh Government, underpinning these recommendations is the mainstreaming of access to culture in two key ways: one, through a focus on disadvantaged communities as an integral part of cultural organisations', facilities' and services' approach to engaging with citizens; and two, ensuring

that arts, culture and heritage opportunities are an integral part of the offer in other policy areas.

- 3.13 A key piece of legislation with implications for the arts, culture and heritage agenda in Wales is the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).<sup>9</sup> The Act aims at improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by placing a legal duty on several key public bodies – including the Arts Council of Wales (ACW), National Library of Wales (NLW), and the AC-NMW to adopt a longer-term and more joined-up approach to the seven well-being goals listed under the legislation. The goals are designed to work together and each is defined as important as the others. For example, one of the goals, 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh', is described as a "society that promotes and protects culture, heritage, and the Welsh Language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation" (p. 6). This is clearly relevant to the work being undertaken through the Pioneer Areas pilot, particularly when interpreted against the wider framework of the Act. For example, there is a goal for 'A more equal Wales'. This goal is described as a "society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances)" (p. 6) which, especially when read together with the other well-being goals, resonates strongly with the values underpinning the Fusion policy initiative. The consultation seeking views on the set of national well-being indicators for Wales that are intended to measure progress in achieving the seven well-being goals has recently closed. The Welsh Government is due to report on the consultation in early 2016.

### **Mainstreaming culture as a social justice issue**

- 3.14 Historically, a concern for cultural participation and its effects has in general been framed as a key economic issue. For the best part of three decades, cultural policy measures in the UK have mostly been discussed in terms of the need for a more resourceful and adaptable work force. For example, the British Labour Government's decision to establish a Creative Industries Task Force as a key activity of its newly established Department of Culture Media

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<sup>9</sup> Welsh Government webpage, 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'. Last updated 28 April 2015. Available at: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en> [Accessed: 4 January 2016].

and Sport (DCMS) introduced the concept of creative industries to the mainstream policy discourse. Since 1998, when the DCMS identified the creative industries as comprising a large and growing element of the UK economy (DCMS, 1998)<sup>10</sup>, policy measures have been introduced that acknowledge the significance of creativity and cultural contribution to the UK, with a stronger focus on economic wealth generation.

- 3.15 Political agendas of social inclusion were also broadened during the late 1990s to be promoted through the cultural sector. The DCMS (1999) provided a policy statement on the role of creativity and cultural contribution as a social justice issue with its expanded definition of culture, claiming cultural services' extrinsic value in "tackling social exclusion, contributing to regeneration, promoting safer communities, encouraging healthier lifestyles, providing opportunities for voluntary and community activity, and stimulating lifelong learning" (DCMS 1999, p. 2).<sup>11</sup>
- 3.16 In Wales, a concern for cultural participation and its effects has been articulated primarily as a social justice issue, where access to and participation in cultural activities has been identified as an important aspect of the tackling poverty agenda. The key question driving the Baroness Kay Andrews report was how cultural and heritage bodies across Wales could contribute more effectively to reducing poverty and raising ambition. According to Baroness Kay Andrews, by way of *Fusion: Tackling Poverty through Culture*, the Welsh Government has aimed to take a lead in articulating the fundamental role that the cultural sector can play in tackling poverty (2014, p.1).
- 3.17 However, there are significant challenges. Efforts to widen cultural participation are being undertaken at a time of shrinking budgets within Local Authorities, Welsh Government departments such as Cadw, and national cultural organisations, such as NLW and AC-NMW. For example, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) (Welsh Local Government Association, 2014) has expressed concerns that budget cuts compromise the

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<sup>10</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport webpage. *Creative Industries Mapping Documents 1998*. Last updated 9 April 1998. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-mapping-documents-1998> [Accessed 5 January 2016].

<sup>11</sup> Department for Culture Media and Sport (1999) *Creating Opportunities Guidance for Local Authorities in England on Local Cultural Strategies*. London: DCMS.

ability of Local Authorities to use culture and heritage as tools for tackling poverty due to potential further cuts to services<sup>12</sup>; and according to the Welsh Government commissioned Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales 2015 (Welsh Government, 2015)<sup>13</sup> “many local museums are facing the most significant pressure on funding they have ever experienced” as a result of changes to public sector finance (p. 31). Whereas the budget for the Communities First programme has been protected for the upcoming financial year (April 2016 to March 2017)<sup>14</sup>, for both cultural organisations the national cultural organisations and Local Authorities, there are uncertainties over resources.

### Overview of the Evidence Base

3.18 The cultural sector is diverse, and correspondingly there is a complex research agenda building-up around it. The general value of culture has long been assumed, but its value to society is often talked about as intrinsic value, which is seen as private and personal: “how arts and culture illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world” (Arts Council England, 2014, p. 4).<sup>15</sup> However, culture is also understood as having wider, instrumental, impacts on individuals, communities and society beyond the immediate intrinsic experience (ibid). The brief review of the evidence presented in this section focusses on research which demonstrates instrumental impact. The emphasis is on examples from the evidence base where research on the impact of culture is most developed. This provided essential background context to the evaluation.

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<sup>12</sup> Welsh Local Government Association (2014) *Culture Group Meeting: The impact of reduced support by local authorities for cultural and art service provisions*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/download.php?id=5987&l=1>

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Government (2015) *Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales 2015*. [Online]. Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/150825-museums-review-en.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> The protection of the Communities First budget for the period April 2016 to March 2017 was announced by Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance and Government Business on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015. See *Budget Statement, Section 14.48*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/pages/rop.aspx?meetingid=3492&language=en&assembly=4&c=Record%20of%20Proceedings&startDt=08/12/2015&endDt=08/12/2015&keyword=protect>

<sup>15</sup> Arts Council England (2014) *The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society. An Evidence Review*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/The-value-of-arts-and-culture-to-people-and-society-An-evidence-review-TWO.pdf>

### *Health and wellbeing*

- 3.19 There is research which demonstrates the impact of culture in promoting social and economic goals in the area of health and wellbeing. The evidence of beneficial effects of the arts extends to clinical and non-clinical populations, and physical and mental health (Taylor et al., 2015, p. 67).<sup>16</sup>
- 3.20 A systematic review conducted by the Culture and Sport Evidence programme (CASE, a joint programme of strategic research led by DCMS in collaboration with Arts Council England (ACE), English Heritage and Sport England) highlighted evidence which suggests that structured engagement in cultural activities can improve the cognitive abilities of children and young people (Newman et al., 2010).<sup>17</sup>
- 3.21 An evidence review by ACE on the value of culture highlighted a number of studies which demonstrated how arts and cultural activities can impact positively on the symptoms of specific health conditions, such as dementia and depression (ACE, 2014).
- 3.22 There is also research which demonstrates the physical and psychological benefits of cultural based interventions with individuals using social care services. An evidence review and activity mapping study commissioned in collaboration by Skills for Care (SfC), Skills for Care and Development and Creative & Cultural Skills found that when delivered effectively, the activities helped enable social interaction and participants to pursue creative interests (SfC, 2013). The review also found benefits for social care staff through challenging preconceptions on the abilities and talents of participants (p. 3).<sup>18</sup>
- 3.23 Culture can also have an impact on subjective wellbeing. In Scotland, using data from the Scottish Household Survey 2011, cross-sectional analysis has

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<sup>16</sup> Taylor, P., Davies, L., Wells, P., Gilbertson, J., and Tayleur, W. (2015) *A review of the Social Impacts of Culture and Sport. CASE: The culture and sport evidence programme.* Culture and Sports Evidence Programme. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/416279/A\\_review\\_of\\_the\\_Social\\_Impacts\\_of\\_Culture\\_and\\_Sport.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416279/A_review_of_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Newman, M., Bird, K., Tripney, J., Kalra, N., Kwan, I., Bangpan, M. and Vigurs, C. (2010) *Understanding the impact of engagement in culture and sport: A systematic review of the learning impacts for young people.* [Online]. Available at: [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/case\\_systematic\\_review\\_arts\\_participation.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/case_systematic_review_arts_participation.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Skills for Care (2013) *What do we know about the role of arts in the delivery of social care?* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/NMDS-SC,-workforce-intelligence-and-innovation/Research/Arts-and-social-care/Briefing-Paper-FINAL-010713.pdf>

demonstrated that people who participate in culture and attend cultural places or events are more likely to report good health and high life satisfaction compared to those who had not. This is even after accounting for other known relevant factors, such as socio-economic factors (Scottish Government, 2013).<sup>19</sup> Similarly, using data from the Taking Part survey, the DCMS (2014) found that people who have attended arts events in the last 12 months are significantly happier than those who have not, even after controlling for other factors influencing happiness.<sup>20</sup> The findings are consistent with a growing body of evidence on the impact of general cultural engagement on life satisfaction and health at a population level, much of which has stemmed from Scandinavian studies based on secondary analysis of population surveys (see for example Cuypers et al., 2011).<sup>21</sup> However, neither the DCMS nor the Scottish Government study could determine causal relationships; and both highlighted the need for further longitudinal and experimental design studies to explore the direction of causality and help clarify the relationship between cultural participation and wellbeing (Scottish Government, 2013, p. 17; DCMS, 2014, p. 4).

- 3.24 Some evidence from longitudinal research elsewhere in Europe suggests a causal relationship between engagement in culture and health. For example, research conducted in Sweden by Bygren (2009) implies that promoting attendance at cultural events could lead to improved urban population health.<sup>22</sup> Another study from Sweden suggests that the effect of engagement in cultural activities is transitory, and implies that repeated engagement with

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<sup>19</sup> Scottish Government (2013) *Healthy Attendance: The Impact of Cultural Engagement and Sports Participation on Health and Satisfaction with Life in Scotland*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00430649.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Department for Culture Media and Sport (2014) *Culture, Sport and Wellbeing: An Analysis of the Taking Part Survey*. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/476322/Culture\\_Sport\\_and\\_Wellbeing\\_-\\_An\\_analysis\\_of\\_the\\_Taking\\_Part\\_Survey.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476322/Culture_Sport_and_Wellbeing_-_An_analysis_of_the_Taking_Part_Survey.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Cuypers, K., Krokstad, S., Holmen, T. L., Bygren, L. O. and Holmen, J. (2011) Patterns of receptive and creative cultural activities and their association with perceived health, anxiety, depression and satisfaction with life among adults: the HUNT study. Norway, *Journal of Epidemiol Community Health*.

<sup>22</sup> Bygren, L., Johansson, S., Konlaan, B., Grijbovski, A., Wilkinson, A. and Sjöström, M. (2009) Attending cultural events and cancer mortality: A Swedish cohort study. *Arts and Health*. Volume 1, pp.64-73.

culture is needed to produce positive effects on self-reported health (Johansson et al., 2001).<sup>23</sup>

- 3.25 In the area of health and wellbeing, since the 1990s culture and health activities have been used in community settings as part of arts on prescription programmes. This has been described by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) as a form of 'social prescribing' (RSPH, 2013)<sup>24</sup>, defined as "a mechanism for linking patients with non-medical sources of support within the community" (Care Services Improvement Partnership, 2009).<sup>25</sup> In the UK, Arts on Prescription services have emerged as a prominent form of social prescribing, and are increasingly viewed within the healthcare sector as a means of improving individual mental health and wellbeing by enhancing levels of social contact and social support within communities, particularly among vulnerable and isolated groups (RSPH, 2013, p. 37-38). The UK's central government Department of Health (2010)<sup>26</sup> for example has recommended social prescribing as a way of improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population by enhancing social capital and building social networks. According to the RSPH, the ability of arts on prescription services to link healthcare with social, voluntary and private sector resources in the community suggests that it can act as an effective model for multi-sectoral working (RSPH, 2013, p. 37).

#### *Society*

- 3.26 There is also growing evidence on the wider benefits culture can bring to society. For example, Taylor et al. (2015, p. 67-68, 81-85) highlight evidence which points to associations between participation in arts and social capital. According to Taylor et al. (2015), the bulk of the evidence indicates a positive

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<sup>23</sup> Johansson, S., Konlaan, B., and Bygren, L. (2001) 'Sustaining habits of attending cultural events and maintenance of health: a longitudinal study'. *Health Promotion International*. Volume 16, p. 229-34. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.gensstudy.org/dati/pag/4.7/doc/140.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Royal Society for Public Health (2013) *Arts, Health and Wellbeing beyond the Millennium: How far have we come and where do we want to go?* [Online] Available at: <https://www.rsph.org.uk/en/policy-and-projects/areas-of-work/arts-and-health.cfm>

<sup>25</sup> Care Services Improvement Partnership (2009) *Social Prescribing for Mental Health: A guide to commissioning and delivery*. Manchester: CSIP North West.

<sup>26</sup> UK Department of Health (2010) *Confident Communities, Brighter Futures. A framework for developing well-being*. [Online]. Available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_114774](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_114774)

relationship which suggests that participation in culture-based activities contributes to “greater social interaction, enhanced self-esteem and the development of social relationships and networks, which nurture social capital” (p. 81).

- 3.27 A number of studies focus on young people. According to Arts Council England (2014), there is growing evidence that the engagement of children and young people with culture as a knock-on impact on their wider social and civic participation (p. 32). For example, using data from Wave 2 of Understanding Society, Bennett and Parameshwaran (2013)<sup>27</sup> provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors predicting volunteering amongst young people aged between 10 and 15 years in the UK. They found strong effects of cultural capital resources (such as attending or participating in arts and culture), which suggests that youths high in cultural capital are more frequent volunteers. According to the evidence, “these cultural capital effects render social class differences in youth civic engagement insignificant” (p. 4). On the topic of arts volunteering and social capital, analysis of the Taking Part dataset undertaken by TNS UK (2011)<sup>28</sup> evidenced that culture volunteers “are more likely than average to be involved and influential in their local communities”, and significantly more likely than the general population to believe that they have some degree of influence over their local cultural facilities, and their local environment as a whole (p.8).
- 3.28 Research has also demonstrated the value of cultural participation for older people. Using qualitative methods, it has been evidenced that an arts programme designed for older people helped participants develop a stronger sense of community through collaboration as a group, and also their capacity to connect with the external community (Moody and Phinney, 2012).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Bennett, M. and Parameshwaran, M. (2013) *Briefing Paper 102: What factors predict volunteering among youths in the UK?* [Online] Available at: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tsrc/documents/tsrc/working-papers/briefing-paper-102.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> TNS UK (2011) *Encouraging involvement in Big Society. Cultural and sporting perspective.* [Online] Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/77434/Taking\\_Part\\_Big\\_Society\\_Report\\_NOV2011\\_update.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/77434/Taking_Part_Big_Society_Report_NOV2011_update.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Moody, E. and Phinney, A. (2012) ‘A community-engaged art program for older people: fostering social inclusion’. *Canadian Journal on Aging*. Volume 31, Issue 1, pp.55-64.

- 3.29 Evidence suggests a positive relationship between participation in organised arts activities and pro-social and anti-criminal behaviours amongst offenders, ex-offenders (Johnson *et al.*, 2011)<sup>30</sup> or youths identified at risk of committing a crime (Catterall *et al.*, 2012).<sup>31</sup> Catterall *et al.* (2012) conducted four longitudinal studies into the effects of culture on young people's academic and civic behaviour. In particular, at-risk young people who had a high exposure or interaction with the culture were significantly less likely to be involved with anti-social behaviour than those with a low exposure to the culture; and young people of low socio-economic status with a history of in depth cultural involvement evidenced better academic outcomes than young people of low socio-economic status with less cultural involvements (p. 24).
- 3.30 Analysis undertaken by Johnson *et al.* (2011) examines three charity case studies, to investigate the costs and benefits of using the arts to help rehabilitate people who have offended or are at risk of offending. The evidence suggests that the three charities provide both savings to the public purse and improve the life chances of offenders, thereby giving both social and economic benefits. However, the study highlights amongst its limitations the lack of a counterfactual and incomplete monitoring data (p. 39); and recommends charities develop a clear theory of change and collect high-quality monitoring and evaluation data as the first steps of improving impact measurement (p. 37).
- 3.31 CashBack for Creativity is a Scottish Government funded programme which takes funds recovered from the proceeds of crime and invests them into free activities and programmes for young people. Its outcomes-focused objectives include increasing both the opportunities for participation and the number of young people participating in cultural activities who are from deprived areas, or considered to be vulnerable or at risk of offending across Scotland. A recent evaluation of the programme (Arrivo Consulting, 2015) identified successful projects as those where the delivery organisation had a robust

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<sup>30</sup> Johnson, H., Keen, S. and Pritchard, D. (2011) *Unlocking value. The economic benefit of the arts in criminal justice*. New Philanthropy Capital, Report commissioned by Arts Alliance [Online] Available at: [http://www.artsalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/UnlockingValue\\_0.pdf](http://www.artsalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/UnlockingValue_0.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Catterall, J., Dumals, S. and Hampden-Thompson, G. (2012) *The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: Findings from four longitudinal studies*. Washington: National Endowment for the Arts. [Online] Available at: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

partnership with other organisations that engage with the target client group; and projects delivered directly by organisations that provide services for excluded and vulnerable groups or by organisations which have already gained the trust of excluded young people and the wider community.<sup>32</sup>

- 3.32 However, one example which seems to challenge the notion that engagement in culture can foster social capital is provided by Le Roux et al. (2008).<sup>33</sup> Using data drawn from the ESRC project Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion, they demonstrate that social class is strongly related to cultural differentiation, as represented by participation in different cultural activities.

#### *Education*

- 3.33 Taylor et al. (2015) identify a number of studies which support a positive relationship between culture and intermediate outcomes such as improvements in confidence and relationships and final outcomes such as educational attainment (p. 88); and Dai Smith's Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales (Smith, 2013) includes an evidence review aimed at examining how the arts can be more productively employed in educational settings to improve longer-term educational outcomes (p. 15-22).
- 3.34 A systematic review commissioned by Newman et al. (2010) cites evidence which demonstrates a positive association between participation in cultural activities and improvements in young people's cognitive abilities and transferable skills (including self-concepts and social skills) (p.13-14). The relationship between cultural activities and intermediate outcomes has been researched as part of the UK Department for Education commissioned evaluation of the Youth Sector Development Fund (the fund aims to help organisations that advise disadvantaged young people about education and work opportunities). The evaluation found that participating in cultural activities helped develop skills and increase individual achievements through 'soft' outcomes such as team working, problem solving, increased motivation,

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<sup>32</sup> Arrivo Consulting (2015) *Cashback for Creativity. Evaluation of Phase 2 of the Programme*. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.creativescotland.com/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/32502/Cashback-Phase-2-EvaluationFINAL-11\\_09-LB.pdf](http://www.creativescotland.com/data/assets/pdf_file/0012/32502/Cashback-Phase-2-EvaluationFINAL-11_09-LB.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Le Roux, B., Rouanet, H., Savage, M. and Warde, A. (2008) Class and Cultural Division in the UK. *Sociology*. Volume 42, Issue 6, pp.1049–1071.

confidence and self-esteem (Pinnock et al., 2011).<sup>34</sup> The Creative Partnerships programme (which ran between 2002 and 2011 in England) brought cultural activities into schools to help with creative teaching as a way to inspire pupils and offer a variety of opportunities for learning. An evaluation on the programme by Bragg and Manchester (2011)<sup>35</sup> identified evidence of improved relationships between staff and students, enhanced motivation to learn and an improved reputation for the school in the local community.

- 3.35 The Dai Smith report (Smith, 2013) cites research which identifies a positive association between engagement with culture and academic attainment. The report references research findings that identify improvements in literacy and numeracy with learner participation in arts based activities (p. 15). For example, research which investigated the relationship between music instruction and performance in reading is highlighted (Deasy, 2002<sup>36</sup>; Butzlaff, 2000<sup>37</sup>); as is several studies which suggest that arts involvement helped improve the academic achievement levels of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Catterall et al., 2012; Fiske, 1999<sup>38</sup>). A number of studies designed to evaluate the impact of Creative Partnerships show a positive association between schools participating in the programme and increased educational attainment (Cooper et al., 2011<sup>39</sup>; Sharp, 2012<sup>40</sup>).

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<sup>34</sup> Pinnock, K., Lloyd, R. and Craig, P. (2011) *Evaluation of the Youth Sector Development Fund: Early Findings*. DFR-RR081. [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-youth-sector-development-fund-early-findings>

<sup>35</sup> Bragg, S. and Manchester, H. (2011) *Creativity, School Ethos and the Creative Partnerships programme: Final Report of the project: Evaluation of the nature and impact of the Creative Partnerships programme on school ethos, 2009-10*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/may-2011-final-report-ou-creativity-school-ethos-and-creative-partnerships-282.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Deasy, R. (Ed.) (2002) *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Achievement*. [Online]. Available at: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED466413.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> Butzlaff, R. (2000) 'Can music be used to teach reading?' *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Volume 3, Issue 4, pp.167-178. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.artsedsearch.org/summaries/can-music-be-used-to-teach-reading#sthash.RFE4IHCv.dpuf>

<sup>38</sup> Fiske, E. (1999) *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership / President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. [Online]. Available at: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED435581.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Cooper, L., Benton, T. and Sharp, C. (2011) *The Impact of Creative Partnerships on Attainment and Attendance in 2008-9 and 2009-10*. Slough: NFER. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/CPAB01/CPAB01.pdf>

Participation in Creative Partnerships was also found to have a small, but significant, impact on primary school attendance, although no significant association was found at secondary school level (Kendall et al., 2008).<sup>41</sup>

### *Economy*

- 3.36 There is evidence of wider benefits to the economy resulting from cultural activities, such as the importance of cultural networks in spreading innovation (Schopen et al., 2008)<sup>42</sup>, the positive impact culture-aware regeneration can have on the economic redevelopment of neglected communities (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010)<sup>43</sup>, and on the economic impacts of large-scale cultural events (Langen and Garcia, 2009).<sup>44</sup>

### *Barriers to participation*

- 3.37 The literature reviewed indicates that there are barriers to participation in cultural activities, which presents a key challenge when trying to understand the value and impact of culture. These barriers were acknowledged by the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value (Neelands et al., 2015, p. 8)<sup>45</sup>; its final report stating that “the government and the cultural and creative industries need to take a united and coherent approach that guarantees equal access for everyone to a rich cultural education and the

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<sup>40</sup> Sharp, C., Pye, D., Blackmore, J., Brown, E., Eames, A., Easton, C., Filmer-Sankey, C., Tabary, A., Whitby, K., Wilson, R. and Benton, T. (2006) *National Evaluation of Creative Partnerships*. Slough: NFER. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/national-evaluation-of-creative-partnerships-nfer-2006-95.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Kendall, L., Morrison, J., Sharp, C. and Yeshanew, T. (2008) *The Impact of Creative Partnerships on Pupil Behaviour*. Slough: NFER. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/CPW01/CPW01.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Schopen, K., Rammer, C. and Trüby, J. (2008) *The role of creative industries in industrial innovation*. Centre For European Economic Research (ZEW) Discussion Papers No. 08-109.

<sup>43</sup> Markusen, A. and Gadwa, A. (2010) *Creative Placemaking*. Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Langen, F. and Garcia, B. (2009) *Measuring the Impacts of Large Scale Cultural Events: A Literature Review*. Liverpool: University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/impacts08/pdf/pdf/Impacts08-FLangen and BGarcia May 2009 Events Review.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Neelands, J., Belfiore, E., Firth, C., Hart, N., Perrin, L., Brock, S., Holdaway, D. and Woddis, J. (2015) *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth. The 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value*. Coventry: University of Warwick. [Online]. Available at: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/>

opportunity to live a creative life. There are barriers and inequalities in Britain today that prevent this from being a universal human right". According to the Commission, there needs to be more investment, participation, education and digital access to stimulate or realise the creative potential of people. They cite evidence from the DCMS to suggest that the workforce of the cultural sector is growing over four times faster than the UK's workforce as a whole and argue that a coherent approach to the sector is a "vital national priority" (see DCMS, 2015).<sup>46</sup>

- 3.38 In terms of peoples investment of their own free time in the arts and culture, evidence from the Taking Part survey (2015/16 Quarter 2) suggests a trend in England towards a modest but consistent growth in patterns of cultural participation.<sup>47</sup> However, research indicates that audiences are extremely stratified socially, and a professional job and possession of a degree remain accurate predictors of cultural engagement (Belfiore et al., 2014).<sup>48</sup> Research on the impact of childhood exposure on adult participation points to a positive relationship between attendance and participation as a child in cultural events and participation as an adult (Oskala et al., 2009).<sup>49</sup>
- 3.39 Qualitative research commissioned by the National Audit Office (NAO) explored barriers to engaging in heritage among people from three currently under-represented groups in heritage participation, namely: people with limiting disabilities; people from BME groups and people from lower socio-

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<sup>46</sup> Department for Culture Media and Sport (2015) *Creative Industries Economic Estimates, January 2015, Statistical Release*. London: DCMS. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/394668/Creative\\_Industries\\_Economic\\_Estimates\\_-\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/394668/Creative_Industries_Economic_Estimates_-_January_2015.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> Department for Culture Media and Sport (2015) *Taking Part 2015/16 Quarter 2. Statistical Release*. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/495586/Taking\\_Part\\_2015-16\\_Quarter\\_2\\_Report\\_2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/495586/Taking_Part_2015-16_Quarter_2_Report_2.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Belfiore, E., Hart, N. and Neelands, J. (2014) *The Future of Cultural Value. Education and Training*. Coventry: University of Warwick. [Online]. Available at: [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/resources/commission/cd3\\_education\\_and\\_training\\_brief\\_final.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/resources/commission/cd3_education_and_training_brief_final.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Oskala, A., Keaney, E., Chan, T.W. and Bunting, C. (2009) *Encourage children today to build audience for tomorrow: Evidence from the Taking Part survey on how childhood involvement in the arts affects arts engagement in adulthood*. London: Arts Council England. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/encourage-children-today-to-build-audiences-for-tomorrow/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/encourage-children-today-to-build-audiences-for-tomorrow/)

economic groups (Rahim and Mavra, 2009).<sup>50</sup> The research identified five common themes from the under-represented groups: lack of awareness of heritage; assumptions about typical audiences for heritage; perceived cultural irrelevance of heritage; cost barriers; and poor transport links.

- 3.40 A number of methodologically robust surveys have explored reasons for non-participation in culture, and list a range of barriers as prompts. Analysis conducted by the DCMS (Charlton et al., 2010) identifies a range of surveys against common barriers to participation as reported in these surveys (p. 16-17). Barriers reported include 'no nearby venue or facilities / poor state or accessibility of facilities' (Young Person's behaviour and attitude survey 2000), 'transport problems' (Taking Part), and 'high cost' (Taking Part).<sup>51</sup>

### **Evidence gaps and challenges**

- 3.41 Recent evidence reviews (Taylor et al., 2015; Arts Council England, 2014; TFCC, 2015) have identified considerable literature relating to the social impacts of culture, and also identify significant gaps. According to Taylor et al. (2015, p. 106), the areas of heritage and museums, libraries and archives are particularly under represented in both the quantity and quality of literature addressing their relationship with social impacts. It is acknowledged in the review however that the core database from which the systematic literature review was searched - CASE - may not have been conducive to identifying all the relevant literatures (p. 106). Indeed, a review of the evidence by Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy (TFCC 2015),<sup>52</sup> commissioned by a European research partnership which includes ACE, the Arts Council of Ireland and Creative England, somewhat contradicts the findings of Taylor et al. (2015) when it comes to evidence on the impact of museums. According to the TFCC report (2015), evidence on the impact of culture is clearly articulated

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<sup>50</sup> Rahim, N. and Mavra, L. (2009) *Barriers to Engagement in Heritage by Currently Under-Represented Groups. An Inclusion Report to the National Audit Office*. London: National Audit Office. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/0809881\\_barriers.pdf](https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/0809881_barriers.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Charlton, A., Potter, M., McGinival, S., Romanou, E., Slade, Z. and Hewitson, B. (2010) *Barriers to participation. Analysis to inform the development of the 2010/11 Taking Part Survey*. London: DCMS. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/137997/TP\\_Barriersreport.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/137997/TP_Barriersreport.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy (2015) *Cultural and Creative Spillovers in Europe: Report on a Preliminary Evidence Review*. TFCC. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Cultural\\_creative\\_spillovers\\_in\\_Europe\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Cultural_creative_spillovers_in_Europe_full_report.pdf)

and developed on the individual benefits of visiting museums (p. 10; see for example Fujiwara 2013<sup>53</sup>); and a review of existing evidence on how museums impact health and wellbeing by Dodd and Jones (2014) highlights an increasing interest in the role that culture and the arts can play in contributing to positive outcomes (p. 32-42).<sup>54</sup>

- 3.42 Amongst the lack of substantial evidence identified by these reviews, Taylor et al. (2015) highlight a lack of evidence on arts and social inclusion. Although research suggests that arts participation might differ across socio-economic factors such as class, employment and income, there is no substantive evidence of arts improving linking social capital. They cite one statistical study (not specific to arts resources) of deprived locations in Glasgow, which found that resources are sometimes closer to poorer neighbourhoods and sometimes closer to more affluent neighbourhoods (McIntyre et al., 2008; cited in Taylor et al., 2015, p. 85), which highlights how poorer neighbourhoods are not consistently disadvantaged in access to resources.
- 3.43 Amongst common deficiencies in the existing evidence base, Taylor et al. (2015, p. 106) review identifies insufficient research in a number of areas. These include a lack of evidence on the possible negative effects of culture, the differential effects of different activities, including on different sub-groups of the population, and the relative impacts of activities on individuals (such as who benefits most from different activities). The assumption that participatory arts activities in different communities and cultures would have identical social impacts has been challenged in the literature (Merli, 2002).<sup>55</sup>
- 3.44 Reporting for the Warwick Commission on Cultural Value, Belfiore et al. (2014) argue that methodological debates on the value of culture have been characterised by a lack of consensus both on what should be measured and how best to measure and understand impact.<sup>56</sup> Literature also makes

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<sup>53</sup> Fujiwara, D. (2013) *Museums and happiness: The value of participating in museums and the arts*. [Online]. Available at: [http://happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Museums\\_and\\_happiness\\_DFujwara\\_April2013.pdf](http://happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Museums_and_happiness_DFujwara_April2013.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> Dodd, J. and Jones, C. (2014) *Mind, body, spirit: How museums impact health and wellbeing*. Leicester: University of Leicester. [Online]. Available at: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/publications/mind-body-spirit-report>

<sup>55</sup> Merli, P. (2002) 'Evaluating the social impact of participation in arts activities', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. Volume 8, Issue 1, pp.107-118.

<sup>56</sup> Belfiore, E., Firth, C. and Holdaway, D. (2014) *How do we value (and undervalue) culture?* Coventry: University of Warwick. [Online]. Available at:

reference to theoretical challenges. Arts Council England (2014) conclude in their review of the evidence base that the theory behind the impact of arts and culture has not been clearly expressed in much research. As a result of this, they suggest that a theoretical framework or logic model which clearly explains the ways in which it is believed that arts and culture creates added societal value would be a useful addition to guide the further development of the evidence base (p. 40).

- 3.45 In the context of culture and policy-making, there are significant gaps both in terms of what is evaluated and how these evaluations are undertaken (Belfiore and Firth, 2014).<sup>57</sup> This overview of the evidence base identified no Wales-specific research demonstrating the impact of national policy in the context of culture.
- 3.46 A report of particular relevance to this evaluation of the Pioneer Areas pilot is the Welsh Government commissioned Ipsos MORI / Wavehill report 'Communities First: A Process Evaluation' (Ipsos MORI / Wavehill, 2015)<sup>58</sup> which identifies partnership working and shared learning as key strengths of the Communities First programme (p. 90). However, the report included amongst its recommendations that the programme's delivery bodies "place firmer requirements on community and Third Sector delivery partners to prove the alignment of their activities" to the desired Communities First outcomes (p. 89). According to the report, a critical role for the Welsh Government is to encourage a more consistent approach to monitoring activities, described as "highly varied" across clusters (ibid). The evaluation identified monitoring as a key and ongoing challenge and an area for improvement for the Communities First programme. For example, according to the report, many clusters are using case studies for collecting evidence of improvement in soft outcomes, but this is not being effectively shared with the Welsh Government (p. 91); and that similar activities delivered in different areas may be being monitored

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[http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/resources/research/commissioner\\_day\\_2\\_briefing\\_document.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/resources/research/commissioner_day_2_briefing_document.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Belfiore, E. and Firth, C. (2014) *The Future of Cultural Value*. Coventry: University of Warwick. [Online] Available at: [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/resources/research/commissioner\\_day\\_2\\_briefing\\_document.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/resources/research/commissioner_day_2_briefing_document.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Ipsos MORI / Wavehill Consulting (2015) *Communities First: A Process Evaluation*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2015/150226-communities-first-process-evaluation-en.pdf>

quite differently (p. 93). The report highlights that given the complexity of measuring some of the desired outcomes – “either due to [the] nature of the outcome, nature of the participant, or the way in which activities are attended (e.g. voluntary, periodical etc.)” – more guidance and support is needed at cluster level so that the impact of Communities First can be demonstrated more effectively (p. 93). The report also suggests that a key assumption underpinning the programme - that changing individual-level outcomes will significantly impact on area-level characteristics – should be tested as an aim of any future outcomes evaluation of Communities First (p. 89).

#### *Methodological challenges*

- 3.47 Arts Council England describes culture as notoriously difficult to define. They refer to “the varied, complex and sometimes unpredictable context in which arts and culture exist” (Arts Council England, 2014, p. 11). This makes reviewing the evidence base challenging, as the different definitions used within studies means that the data is often incomparable. In addition, when it comes to understanding cultural ‘impact’, there remains much disagreement in the literature about what impact means, and the most appropriate ways to go about measuring and evaluating it. According to Newman et al. (2010), there is more agreement on the types of value generated by investing in culture than on how best to measure, describe and transfer understandings of that value into policy.
- 3.48 However, recent years has seen the methodological debate mainstreamed. In 2012 the European Commission made the spillover effects of the arts, culture and creative industries part of its political agenda (COM(2012) 537). In response a European research partnership was created to explore these cultural and creative spillovers, defined as “the process by which activity in the arts, culture and creative industries has a subsequent broader impact on places, society or the economy through the overflow of concepts, ideas, skills, knowledge and different types of capital” (TFCC, 2015, p. 15). The partnership has found persuasive evidence of cultural and creative spillover, but also weaknesses and gaps in both the evidence and the methods used to measure impact (TFCC, 2015).<sup>59</sup> According to an evidence review

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<sup>59</sup> A collaborative website has been created dedicated to peer review and discussion to help grow, shape and steer a widening European partnership on the spillover effects of the arts, culture and creative industries. See more at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/cultural-and-creative-spillovers/#sthash.ZTz8WtPb.dpuf>

commissioned by the partnership (TFCC, 2015), causality was found to be rarely proven against scientific standards (p. 6). In its findings, the review calls for more qualitative research around the three methods of experimental studies which test cause-effect studies in a controlled setting, action research (including ethnographic techniques), and what they describe as a proxy research approach – where techniques developed in areas outside the social sciences are used (such as research into Social Return on Investment) (p. 6).

- 3.49 The Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Cultural Value Project<sup>60</sup> and the Warwick Commission's inquiry on the Future of Cultural Value (Neelands et al., 2015) highlight a recent interest in the UK of gaining a greater understanding of the value of culture to individuals, communities and wider society, and its impacts. The Warwick Commission emphasises as a particular challenge making clear the distinction between what is thought to happen when investments are made in culture, to measuring and explaining what actually happens. The Commission recognises how difficult it can be to demonstrate evidence of the contribution cultural activities can make to outcomes, but highlights as a particular concern the danger of reducing the value of culture into a purely economic value.
- 3.50 Many of the literatures highlight the difficulty of proving the personal impacts of participation in cultural activities to a scientifically accepted standard without the use of longitudinal methods focused on longer-term impacts (see for example Taylor et al., 2015; Arts Council England, 2014; TFCC, 2015). Arts Council England (2014) highlight "huge untapped potential" for using existing UK-based cohort and longitudinal studies, such as the Millennium Cohort Study and the Taking Part survey, where arts and culture variables are present (p. 41).

## **4. Process Evaluation Findings**

- 4.1 This section provides an overview of the design, implementation and delivery of the Pioneer Area programme, focusing on the roles played by the Welsh Government, the Communities First programme, Local Authorities, national, regional and local cultural, arts and heritage bodies and local community groups. The section then draws together the insights gathered from the pilot

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<sup>60</sup> Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) *Cultural Value Project*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/culturalvalueproject/> [Accessed: 30 November 2015]

areas, along with the views of cultural partners, to present an overview of the key messages and learning in terms of:

- key success factors for developing and sustaining the Pioneer Area programme within their area;
- processes of partnership working, including key challenges encountered during the pilot year; and
- how joint planning and collaborative use of resources at a local level has had an impact on organisational ways of working.

### **The design, implementation and delivery of the Pioneer Area programme**

4.2 The Welsh Government's approach to linking community and cultural partners through the Pioneer Area programme provided a unique and radical approach to tackling and addressing the causes of poverty across Wales. Accordingly, there were no 'off-the-shelf' approaches or frameworks available to guide the design and implementation of the programme. The pilot year was, therefore, designed as an iterative process to allow key contributors and participants to learn from, adapt and improve their activities during the course of the programme. Key Welsh Government departments, Welsh Government-sponsored national cultural organisations and many cultural and heritage organisations also played a crucial role in aligning their existing programmes and activities to support the Pioneer Area programme. The basic programme framework was designed by the Welsh Government lead, AC-NMW and KAS, in consultation with Communities First policy, Communities First, and cultural partners.

4.3 In terms of the structure of the programme, each Pioneer Area was co-ordinated and managed by a dedicated local partnership led by a Lead Delivery Body; in most cases this was the Local Authority, with the exception of the Cardiff Pioneer Area which was led by Cardiff University (as there is a devolved structure for Communities First delivery in Cardiff County Council). Membership of each partnership was determined locally, but typically included national, regional and local cultural bodies, local authority leads on culture, libraries, archives and museums, local arts and heritage bodies, Communities First Cluster managers, Local Education Authorities, schools, Higher and Further Education institutions and other community bodies such

as housing associations and local charities or community services directly engaged in anti-poverty work.<sup>61</sup> Each partnership adopted a formal Terms of Reference outlining their key responsibilities and duties as part of the programme. Their focus varied across the six Pioneer Areas, but was generally based on the following broad objectives:

- identifying and implementing actions collectively agreed by the partnership from the Welsh Government's recommendations;
- fostering collaboration and effective partnership working;
- providing a forum for identifying, sharing and embedding good practice;
- monitoring and evaluating the work of the partnership; and
- collecting and sharing data to feed into the research and evaluation phase of the pilot year.

## **Implementing the Pioneer Areas pilot programme**

### *Reflecting on the implementation process*

- 4.4 Overall, stakeholders from across the Pioneer Areas were overwhelmingly positive when questioned about the success of implementing their Pioneer Area during the pilot year. While emphasising that it was too early to demonstrate this success through extensive evidence of impact, all the lead partners spoke confidently about the effectiveness of their programme's structures and approach in bringing together 'the right people in the same room' to work collaboratively on approaches to tackling poverty.
- 4.5 Echoing the findings of the Baroness Kay Andrews report, the stakeholder interviews highlighted the valuable work that was already being undertaken by local, regional and national cultural and heritage organisations. Some of this activity is being undertaken through the Communities First programme, to increase access to, and encourage participation in, cultural activities. In particular, examples were provided of the important work being undertaken by large national organisations such as AC-NMW, the NLW, and local and regional theatres and arts centres, as well as the more traditional cultural resources offered in local areas such as public libraries and local museums. There was evidence, however, that much of this work was sporadic in nature,

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<sup>61</sup> Welsh Government (2015) *Fusion: Tackling Poverty through Culture. The Pioneer Area Programme Pilot Year*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

with little emphasis on developing a strategic or coordinated approach to aligning their objectives and outcomes to wider tackling poverty priorities on a local, regional and national level. The following quotes from two Pioneer Area leads emphasise this point:

*'We have collaborated with a number of cultural bodies and organisations before on other projects, so it's not a new area for us, but this is the first time for us to come together formally to look at the poverty agenda ... activities were happening and there was collaboration going on in pockets here and there, but there was no attempt to try to co-ordinate or pull it together.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'There are all sorts of cultural activities that we are actually delivering as a Council, never mind anyone else on top of that, but until now there's been absolutely no coordination around it. And I think it's just trying to realise just how much is out there.'* (Lead partner interview)

- 4.6 The value of the programme as an additional tool for facilitating a more effective and coordinated approach among the many actors and organisations engaged in the tackling poverty agenda was continually emphasised by the lead partners. In particular, they valued its focus on developing partnerships, encouraging stakeholder involvement and promoting community engagement and involvement, combining both bottom-up and top-down approaches. The programme had provided a framework for bringing together partners from across government policy areas and stakeholders at all levels. This has enabled partners to achieve shared understanding and negotiate and implement joint plans to maximise opportunities for culture, the arts and the historic environment to play a role in efforts to tackle poverty and disadvantage in Wales' most deprived communities. Some of the Pioneer Area leads noted that the programme had brought about positive changes to the way in which the issue of tackling poverty was being approached in their area - on a strategic level to develop a more holistic approach to tackling poverty, and at the grass-roots level, to engage with hard-to-reach audiences:

*'It brings together people who probably should have been talking more previously... It allows for a more on the ground strategic approach and allows the Council to have a strategic approach to tackling poverty that filters down into how we actually do it on the ground.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'It's like an additional engagement toolkit. At the strategic end on the partnership, it's about how different arts and cultural organisations can help us deliver our plans. And at a grass-roots level, it's another engagement tool to engage with those who are furthest away from the job market, who haven't got any defined career paths, who aren't going to school - all of those things. It's just getting that hook really and showing that there are other ways of doing it and how arts and culture can be used positively. If you introduce these as a potential solution to some of their issues, then they may start viewing them as part of their lives.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'It's about being able to draw on the arts, culture and heritage, and the power of engagement and participation as a tool in the slightly bigger toolbox for tackling poverty. That is something that we recognise and have recognised for a long time, but there was a trick being missed for cultural organisations to make a major contribution to the work of tackling poverty.'* (Lead partner interview)

- 4.7 A key benefit highlighted by cultural partners across the Pioneer Areas was that the programme had provided a more direct and explicit link to the Communities First programme and had validated much of the work that was already being done:

*'I think what's interesting is that it sort of helped firm up what we were sort of doing already. But the big difference, of course, is that it's put us in touch directly with Communities First areas as opposed to a slightly tangential connection.'* (Lead partner interview)

- 4.8 Similarly, representatives from the Communities First clusters valued the wider range of cultural, arts and heritage organisations with which they were now working. In some cases, there was evidence to suggest that this increased contact had started to positively influence perceptions of culture, not only within disadvantaged communities, but among Communities First staff:

*'...we realised straight away that it was about breaking down the barriers for Communities First staff as much as anything else. We knew that some community members might not feel comfortable coming to a museum, but a lot of the Communities First project workers were also saying things like, "why would I come to a museum with my group, what I am going to*

*do there?”... I’ve found that once people come in to the museum they actually start to see it in a different way and they think “oh, we could utilise this more”...’ (Cultural partner interview)*

*‘I always personally thought that galleries and things like that were for snobby people who just went round quietly looking in these galleries, looking at paintings and different things and it’s all very boring, until I actually started getting involved in the partnership and going round, seeing and listening to what people do ... and yeah, [culture is] not just about where you’re from, your background, your religion and all that sort of thing, it’s a combination of everything ... it’s about where you’re from and what you’re brought up with. Everybody’s culture is different...’*  
(Cultural partner interview and Communities First engagement officer)

- 4.9 Evidence of impact on perceptions and ways of working was not, however, confined to Communities First staff. One cultural partner noted how participation in the Pioneer Area programme had fostered a greater understanding of, and support for, the value of local cultural resources and activities among key stakeholders at local government level:

*‘We’ve worked hard in recent years to win the argument in terms of developing an arts and cultural hub and by sort of quoting the Fusion programme and saying, “look these are the sort of things that our galleries, museums and libraries are doing in your area”, we’ve been able to garner a much broader cross-section of the council’s support than we would’ve otherwise’. (Cultural partner interview)*

### **Key success factors**

- 4.10 Interview participants from partner organisations were asked to consider how well the programme has been implemented. The partners felt that the following factors have been critical to the success of the partnership, several of which were mentioned spontaneously by individuals from across the six Pioneer Area partnerships.

*Management and governance of partnerships*

*Structure and organisation*

- 4.11 The basis of each of the Pioneer Areas is a two-tier structure whereby a small group of individuals are responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the programme locally (varyingly called steering groups or

management boards) but are accountable to a wider group of stakeholders, which formed the partnership. Each area was given the flexibility to develop formal and informal management and governance processes within this basic structure. The flexibility of the pilot programme was valued by all the lead partners as it enabled their partnership structures to be developed in a number of ways to fulfil a variety of functions and to allow partners to engage in different ways according to the particular context in which they operated. In several cases, the local partnership was designed around existing structures, with some adjustments to take into account the need to draw in a wider range of stakeholders from the arts, culture and heritage sectors. Lead partners reported that this had worked well.

- 4.12 As an example, one area had integrated its programme into the Communities First Cluster structure in which it operated, specifically the cluster forum. The cluster maintained a strategic overview of the cluster's work programme and comprised representatives of the Cluster Delivery Team, members of the local community and partner agencies and organisations. Since the cluster was already engaged in delivering a range of cultural activities at community level, there was a desire to enhance and build upon this work by including the Pioneer Area programme as an integral part of its Delivery Plan. A dedicated 'sub-group' of the forum was subsequently established to co-ordinate and to deliver the work programme. Adopting this structure had brought about a number of positive changes in working practices and approaches; it avoided duplication of effort and the potential over-burdening of individuals engaged in culture and poverty work, and brought together a range of partners from across the arts, culture and heritage sectors, many of which had not collaborated previously. As this lead partner emphasises:

*'Instead of creating another partnership for the sake of just one programme we've created a new cluster network, because if arts and culture are going to be an integral part of the cluster programme, then it shouldn't stand alone - it should be integral. It really is about mainstreaming it and making it part of the solution to tackling poverty. So we've injected it into our existing structures. The governance was already there, the terms of references were already there, the commitment was already there with our key partners like CAB, Credit Union, the schools, the police, fire service and the community members, and the arts and culture organisations are now a recent addition.'* (Lead partner interview)

- 4.13 Steering groups or management boards were used by most of the Pioneer Areas to maintain overall responsibility for supporting the operational aspects of the programme. Many of the lead partners felt that this was crucial to differentiate the partnership's networking role from its wider strategic functions. In one area where this structure was reported to have worked effectively, the local partnership was led by a board which comprised key representatives from a local authority department with direct responsibility for tackling poverty across the whole of the Council. The commitment of senior local authority personnel from this particular area of the council was seen as one of the key strengths of the Pioneer Area partnership as it helped to provide strategic drive, momentum and profile. It was also an opportunity to draw directly on the skills, in-depth knowledge and resources held by key individuals with a direct influence on the tackling poverty agenda. As one of the lead partners reflected:

*'I don't think any other Council in Wales has a Poverty and Prevention Service, so having that direct link to the Tackling Poverty Unit, we're in a unique position where we can advise people what all of the Council's priorities are in terms of tackling poverty, of which Communities First is one of the major tools of delivery, and that gives us something quite different here to what other areas are going to have.'* (Lead partner interview)

- 4.14 Two of the Pioneer Areas had established smaller sub-groups as off-shoots of the main partnership, which enabled a more focussed approach to identifying shared priorities and interests across different thematic areas. Within one Pioneer Area, five project teams had been established, each headed by a project manager and based on the five core themes of the Communities First Cluster's work programme. Each team worked to an agreed delivery plan, which included detailed outlines of the activities being delivered as part of the programme in terms of the key target groups; the type of activities; the anticipated outcomes and impacts; and the monitoring and evaluation structures adopted. This approach had enabled partners to successfully develop shared activities and projects and deliver specific, tangible actions from these activities, and many observed that it gave them a level of capacity, responsibility and a degree of accountability. At the time the research was being carried out, a third Pioneer Area was in the process of adapting its structures as it was felt that the size of the partnership was becoming unmanageable. As the lead partner notes, this made it challenging to manage

the input of different partners and ensure an emphasis on practical development:

*'...there's probably about 25-30 different interests represented on the partnership and I think the group is so big and unwieldy. To create really good quality projects we probably need to split in to smaller action groups or task groups.'* (Lead partner interview)

#### *Role of key cultural partners*

- 4.15 The stakeholder interviews revealed that within each partnership, there were certain individuals or partner organisations which were seen to play a key role in both influencing the overall direction of the work programme and contributing directly to the delivery of activities. Partners across all of the Pioneer Areas agreed that the lead partner organisation had played a key 'bridging' role in the partnership, helping to shape the overall strategy of the work programme and facilitating connections between the various partners. Cultural partners from two areas made specific reference to the key role played by the lead partners, observing that they brought intelligence and ideas to the partnership. The ability of these individuals to draw on their expertise of the sector, and experience of working in the region as part of a broader remit was highlighted as invaluable:

*'I think it's important to have that individual, to advise people that are developing ideas about how to make the tangible links under the Tackling Poverty Agenda and how things can be measured ... that's what's really needed in each Pioneer Area - someone who understands what the CF delivery plans are and sees the local cultural community as a resource, and can invest time into it.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'We've been very lucky to work with [two individuals] from Communities First in the Local Authority. They've succeeded in bringing together the work that was already in progress in our area with the Pioneer Area project – they saw the potential and provided the link between the two ... They've been influential in getting this going and seeing the potential.'* (Cultural partner interview)

- 4.16 Other partners noted that the lead Communities First organisation had also played a crucial role; providing drive and coordination, and help to access funding and establish links with partners and other Pioneer Areas to share good practice.

4.17 There was also widespread agreement across the Pioneer Areas that close collaboration with Communities First Cluster teams and locally-based partners was a crucial element of the overall success of their partnerships. Partners observed that it provided invaluable access to skilled staff operating in local communities and whose existing networks, particularly with hard-to-reach groups, mean that they are trusted in the local community. In particular, it was felt that the profile, credibility and capacity of Communities First staff enabled them to drive the agenda forward, which was essential to the overall success of the programme. Their understanding of the local area, and the real needs, concerns and priorities of the communities, as well as the sector's structures and processes, enabled the partnerships to design and target activities effectively. One lead partner also emphasised the importance of voluntary and community groups in the programme, as they were generally viewed as good at implementation and very responsive and innovative in their approaches to working:

*'We did a mailshot to all organisations in our area and all our cluster partners, and we had a really good response. Then we looked at what professional expertise they could bring, and the fact that many had remits to actually work in the disadvantaged areas was a key factor. We then tried to get them to think a little bit about how they could contribute to our programme and how we could learn from their creative approaches to working with communities. And that's been a productive process.'* (Lead partner interview)

4.18 Several partnerships had benefited from the involvement of partners with a remit beyond the local pilot area – including partners operating on a national strategic level and on a more regional level. This had provided an important injection of new ideas and a different dimension to the partnership; one lead partner noted that the ability to develop activities which reached across scales and different sectors had broadened the potential impact of the programme. Indeed, in one Pioneer Area, representatives from an adjoining Local Authority had approached the partnership to become members. While it was noted that it was unlikely that they would be directly involved in delivering joint projects during the initial pilot year due to resource constraints and the additional challenges posed by the introduction of cross-authority partnership working and delivery, it offered significant opportunities for sharing ideas and good practice. This reflects the way in which the partnerships were generally

valued by members for being inclusive and equal; in all cases a broad spectrum of partners were engaged covering different sectors involved with culture, arts and heritage activities and therefore anyone could become a member.

- 4.19 The value of building and sustaining commitment from key individuals and senior level staff from within organisations, particularly at local authority level, was recognised by partners across the Pioneer Areas. It was emphasised that having these respected individuals as members and key contributors enabled the programme and its activities to be given an appropriate value, whilst also acting as an incentive for others to join the partnership. This was, however, highlighted as a complex process. One cultural partner reflected on his experience of having to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions of the value of cultural and arts-based activities among key local authority personnel within his area:

*'It's a bit of a challenge, but by and large I think that we're gaining more support than opposition ... we're trying to create a new arts and cultural hub and it's been a bit of a challenge to get people around the table to see the positives. And I think we are making significant progress in that area now. It has gone from being what was considered totally inappropriate, to being a project that I think people are beginning to embrace and accept. Through this project we've been able to show that culture and the arts are not the exclusive preserve of the rich and the highly-educated classes – it's something that benefits the whole community. So I think the fact that we've been a Pioneer Area in the Fusion project has certainly given us very good opportunities to challenge those people who say this is not for us...'*

(Cultural partner interview)

- 4.20 It was emphasised, however, that the area's involvement in the Fusion programme, along with top-down approval and endorsement from the Welsh Government has helped to foster wider political support for mainstreaming support for the arts and culture; in particular, where it can be demonstrated that they have a positive impact on reducing poverty and social exclusion.

*Openness and organic nature of partnership*

- 4.21 Overall, the partnerships were valued by cultural partners for being very open, democratic and organic in their approach to define shared purpose, clear objectives and processes and to identify how each member could contribute.

All of the partners agreed that it had been crucial to take time to successfully negotiate the early stages of the partnerships to develop shared vision and targets. Several noted that this 'organic' development of the group's remit and aims had helped to ensure ownership of the work programme and its appropriateness to the needs and priorities of the target communities. Accordingly, a number of areas felt that they had successfully established local ownership, which was valued by the partners, particularly those representing the Communities First clusters and local community groups.

- 4.22 All of the lead partners emphasised that the success of the partnerships to date had been driven by partners' exploration of the value of working together to ensure benefit for all partners and a focus on a shared objective, rather than by a specific funding remit. This encouraged a genuinely collaborative and non-competitive partnership through open dialogue. As one partner commented:

*'The work of the partnership happens because people think it's important and the work goes where the energy and need is.'* (Lead partner interview)

#### *Approaches to identifying priorities and activities*

- 4.23 The stakeholder interviews explored in detail the approaches taken by each area in the design of their Pioneer Area work programme, and in establishing collaborative relationships with the different organisations and bodies involved in the tackling poverty agenda. The responses indicated three broad approaches: building on existing activities and relationships; developing new relationships and connections with a wider range of organisations and groups; and developing cultural activities from the grass-roots level. Each approach is discussed in turn.

#### *(a) Building on existing relationships*

- 4.24 A number of Pioneer Areas were able to take advantage of existing groups and networks developed from previous or ongoing activities or initiatives. One Pioneer Area had chosen to focus its work programme around the development of a focussed project which had developed from an existing activity within the Communities First Cluster. Through discussions held as part of the Pioneer Area programme, opportunities were identified to enhance and broaden the delivery of an existing family-guided learning programme - the Family Learning Signature (FLS) - that had been implemented as part of

the Communities First work programme before the start of the pilot year. A key feature of this new project is that it is being designed and implemented in collaboration with a broader range of partners from local, regional and national organisations. It was also viewed by the lead partners as a 'practical, achievable and sustainable' project that could be delivered within the required time-scale and with the available resources.

4.25 As part of the project, the Pioneer Area is supporting the Communities First Cluster and the Fusion Partnership to create, implement and evaluate a series of bespoke family-focussed cultural interventions for families who complete the FLS. The activities provided as part of the project are being designed and delivered in collaboration with ten cultural partners based in the Pioneer Area. Interviews held with the partners as part of the evaluation indicated that they hoped the project would enrich and diversify the cultural expertise and experiences available to over 320 residents within the Communities First Cluster.

4.26 Another Pioneer Area had capitalised on existing links with People's Collection Wales (PCW)<sup>62</sup> to identify scope to develop and further enhance the effectiveness, reach and profile of its work within the area through a greater shared approach. One of the partners explained why this has been an important factor:

*'That synergy between programmes is becoming increasingly important ... you don't want to create lots of additional things, but use things that are there as vehicles to actually get the messages across.'* (Cultural partner interview)

4.27 This approach to building on existing relationships had also provided another Pioneer Area with a 'head start' in designing and implementing its programme of work, thereby fostering a greater degree of involvement during the first six months of the pilot year. As one of the partners explained:

*'The fact that it's building on the work that everybody's already doing - that makes it work. If the group itself was to start generating lots of targets that*

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<sup>62</sup> People's Collection Wales (PCW) is a contemporary and bilingual online project that was launched in 2010 to share information on the history of Wales and its people. The project draws together national collections from the three main partner organisations – The National Library of Wales (NLW), AC-NMW) and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) – with items from local and regional museums, archives and libraries, and community groups and individuals. Further information can be found on the website: <http://www.peoplescollection.wales/>

*weren't already needed elsewhere, I think it would become more difficult and time-consuming'* (Cultural partner interview).

- 4.28 The collaborative approach to designing and implementing projects and activities appeared to work particularly well in three Pioneer Areas where strong networks of voluntary, community and cultural partners had already been well established. One of the lead partners noted that an advantage of being able to build on existing relationships was the familiarity that many of the cultural partners had with one another and with the different approaches to working with local and community organisations and groups. This had created a sense of confidence in the programme, and in turn encouraged a greater willingness on the part of cultural partners to participate and contribute.
- 4.29 There was also evidence that the Pioneer Area process had strengthened existing relationships between Communities First and cultural organisations, through allowing partners to identify new opportunities for developing collaborative activities from existing partnerships. A Communities First engagement officer in one area indicated that through their involvement in the partnership, they had identified new training, volunteering and educational opportunities for particular groups (namely schools and individuals with learning disabilities and mental health issues) within their local area:

*'A lot of the organisations and groups we're working with have always been part of our Communities First programme, for example, in terms of delivering therapeutic elements, where people who suffer from mental health issues are given opportunities to do workshops, but this has just firmed up that commitment. A lot of interesting things have come out of the new relationship - we've now become aware of things we never knew that they did, which has been really useful.'* (Lead partner interview)

*(b) Developing new relationships and connections*

- 4.30 The stakeholder interviews provided evidence that new 'actors' had emerged on the tackling poverty landscape as a direct result of the pilot programme. These included, amongst others, Higher Education and Adult Learning Providers, heritage and arts organisations, charities and housing associations, the health sector and health providers and police forces. It was noted that many of these had never worked in strategic partnership with each other, or been in contact before. A number of interviewees emphasised that

this was one of the key factors contributing to the success of the Pioneer Area programme:

*'The Pioneer Area Programme is going to attempt to develop some hard outcomes, but it doesn't give the full picture about what the partnership is achieving in terms of getting people and organisations together and getting them talking. You can tell that these people haven't talked before, haven't met before in some cases. It's a new way of working.'* (Lead partner interview)

4.31 Several of the lead partners emphasised that much of this could be attributed to the support provided by the Welsh Government (through the Culture and Poverty Operational Group<sup>63</sup>) in communicating the overall aim of the programme and providing direction on the identification of potential cultural partners. A number of lead partners noted the value of having a dedicated point of contact within an organisation, which had enabled them to develop new fruitful relationships with partners that they had not come into contact or worked with previously. This process was also facilitated by their genuine willingness to engage in and contribute to the programme, as mentioned previously. Several Pioneer Areas specifically mentioned that they had established new links with Archives Departments or Trusts operating on a local and regional level to explore opportunities for joint-working on local history projects. These were recognised as a valuable and under-used resource by a number of cultural partners.

4.32 Cultural partners also continually emphasised that the Pioneer Area programme has reinforced an existing commitment by the Welsh Government to a form of programme bending (that is, 'ensuring money and support from various public programmes and organisations are directed to Communities First areas')<sup>64</sup> by encouraging and facilitating the pooling of resources to help shape and influence collaborative approaches to tackling poverty and disadvantage at community level. A number of Communities First

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<sup>63</sup> The Culture and Poverty Operational Group is a dedicated programme team that manages the Pioneer Area Programme Pilot Year. The group comprises officials from the Welsh Government (Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD); Cadw; KAS; and Communities), as well as representatives from AC-NMW and Arts Council of Wales.

<sup>64</sup> National Assembly for Wales (2010) National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee: Communities First. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.assembly.wales/Laid%20Documents/CR-LD7923%20-%20Public%20Accounts%20Committee%20Report%20on%20Communities%20First-22022010-168311/cr-ld7923-English.pdf>

representatives emphasised that while a limited amount of programme bending has been achieved through the CF programme, this has mainly been due to the fact that service providers already bend their services towards CF areas to meet their own strategic objectives (which in the case of most public bodies include tackling poverty and social exclusion). They emphasised that the main barrier to programme bending to date has been the lack of clear direction provided by the Welsh Government on how this could be effectively achieved. Lead partners across the Pioneer Areas therefore welcomed the increased top-down strategic direction and guidance provided by the Welsh Government through the Pioneer Area programme. This explicitly recognised that cultural, heritage and arts organisations have an important role in terms of contributing to the objectives of the Communities First programme and to the wider tackling poverty agenda. It was emphasised that until now, these organisations did not have well developed links with CF areas and partnerships:

*‘So there’s work that’s already going on, and this is the program bending that Welsh Government spoke about maybe three, four years ago with Communities First, but they didn’t really make it happen. But actually now what we’re seeing is Welsh Government directing its funding streams, influencing its partners or its recipients of funding and saying “this is how we want it to knit together”. So that creates a framework within which a lot of people and organisations are making contributions to tackling poverty, as opposed to loads of people just getting on and doing their day jobs. So it’s trying to achieve three things - to use the offer of arts, culture and heritage, which is so diverse, so wide, so multi-layered, to hook as many people in as possible; to give people a reason to get up in the morning and give people an aspiration. That then hopefully gives them the opportunity to follow that through into some of our more formal tackling poverty work ... We’re trying to make huge changes but we’ve only got a small amount of resource to do it. If we’ve got partners who are working in the education field, through the library, through the museum, they can all be making that added contribution. That’s more holistic, that’s more sustainable.’ (Lead partner interview).*

- 4.33 The factor that was seen to most effectively contribute to the process of identifying new partners and priorities was the facilitation of networking opportunities. In many cases, opportunities were made available for partners

to meet either before or after partnership meetings to network and share ideas and experiences. This enabled them to begin to find organisations and groups that they could potentially work with on projects in the future. Several of the lead partners emphasised that this happened naturally – all of the partners wanted to be there, and to engage in the process:

*'...in some meetings you can tell from people that they're just there because they have to be there – the meeting closes, up they go and then everyone goes their own way and that's that. You don't see that with this Creative Learning Partnership - people are still networking for 20 minutes after and they see a real value in getting together.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'The partnership has been developed as a partnership, but it's also, I would say, a network. So, there are core members, there are members who have a real interest in the Pioneer Area Programme and how they can contribute to it. And then we've got thematic groups that kind of sit round the edge of the core membership or partnership, but that are linked to the agenda of what we are doing with the Pioneer Area Programme. And it's a network that they can then dip into ... the partnership is meant to be much more organic, because it's designed to be something that will last a very long time. And people will come and go and contribute to it as and when they wish really.'* (Lead partner interview)

- 4.34 Several of the Pioneer Areas had also developed links with other areas that were focusing on similar themes of areas of work to draw on their experiences of engaging new partners and developing new and novel approaches to tackling poverty through culture. The networking meetings held as part of the Pioneer Area programme were seen to have facilitated this sharing of learning and activity across the six areas and several interviewees anticipated this as an important component of the scaling up of the programme and its approach. The discussions held during the meeting were focused on sharing ideas, experiences and best practice, and in several cases, this had extended beyond the meetings. There was scope to further improve and encourage this process should the programme be continued and expanded.

*(c) Developing cultural activities from the bottom-up / grass-roots level*

- 4.35 A number of Pioneer Areas provided specific examples of joint-working with Communities First cluster teams and local community groups to engage

community members themselves in the prioritisation of outcomes for their local areas and the subsequent design of activities. On the whole, however, it was generally felt that the programme had not been able to adopt a fully collaborative approach within local communities at this stage. This was due to it being a pilot and the necessity of implementing the programme and delivering activities quickly and over a short time period. Despite this, a number of areas envisaged a stronger emphasis on bottom-up approaches should the programme continue:

*'...the only criticism of the Andrews Report was that it does sort of imply that culture sort of is handed down. There's probably not enough in that report about bottom up culture, and that's something that we quite strongly want to develop. At the moment because of the programme and wanting to get these things underway we haven't really gotten round it. But we're working on the idea that when we are designing projects it needs to start with what the community a) want or b) feel that they need, and using what's available there are a first resource. Now that will be quite interesting to really get that going as time goes on.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'I think a lot of it is about creating a network of relationships between communities and cultural industries, so that people can feel pride and feel knowledgeable about their own heritage and culture. But also for them to realise that they are creators in themselves as well, and what they can contribute, that they are poets, that they are potential film-makers, they are writers and they are holders of heritage.'* (Lead partner interview)

#### *Openness and willingness to engage*

- 4.36 Overall, an important point emphasised by all the lead partners was that despite the widespread budget cuts and sustained reduction in public funding, there was a genuine desire and willingness among partner organisations, both new and existing, to engage in and contribute to the programme. Several of the lead partners acknowledged that in the context of cuts to core services and budgets, the need for increased joined-up working and new and innovative approaches to supporting individuals living in poverty to make effective transitions into the wider community or into working life, was even more pressing. This finding was supported by observations made by lead partners that they were approached, almost on a weekly basis, by new cultural organisations and groups at different levels and across sectors,

interested in contributing to the programme:

*'...we've got 75+ organisations, not signed up, but actively involved ... it's a bit like, a volunteer's worth ten times the forced soldier.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'We're still probably getting at least one enquiry per week, if not two, from partners, from interested groups and from others who've heard about Culture and Poverty and Fusion and want to be involved ... everybody has come together very, very willingly. Nobody's had to be persuaded, they've all come freely.'* (Lead partner interview)

#### *Welsh language needs, preferences and priorities*

- 4.37 The Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, *A living language: a language for living*, published in March 2012, aims to encourage the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language and support its greater use in all aspects of everyday life.<sup>65</sup> The strategy places a particular emphasis on the need to strengthen the "position of the Welsh language in our communities" (p.14). It calls for greater opportunities for children and young people to participate in Welsh-medium activities outside the education system, as well as greater attention being placed on the value of using Welsh language skills both economically and culturally.
- 4.38 Pioneer Areas were asked to what extent their work programme gives consideration to the language needs of Welsh speakers within its area. Evidence collected as part of the evaluation indicated that there is considerable geographical variation in use of the Welsh language across the Pioneer Areas. In one Pioneer Area, the Welsh language appeared to play a prominent role in the management and governance of the work programme. Many of the cultural partners represented on the local partnership were first language Welsh speakers, and the use of the Welsh language occurred naturally as part of its structures and processes. For example, in meetings, networking activities and informal discussions, through the provision of bilingual materials and in the recruitment of Welsh-speaking staff. There was, however, little evidence at this stage that the activities being delivered in the pilot year were specifically aligned to the Welsh language needs and

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<sup>65</sup> Welsh Government (2012) *A Living Language: A Language for Living. Welsh Language Strategy 2012-2017*. [Online]. Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/122902wls201217en.pdf>

preferences of Welsh speakers within the target communities. Assessment of local language needs and the prevalence of the Welsh language in communities within the Communities First Cluster tended to be based on local knowledge. When questioned in more depth at interview, lead partners acknowledged the value of using data (such as Census data and data on the number of pupils in Welsh-medium education), for example, to identify areas where Welsh language needs and preferences could be better targeted in future activities. However, there was little evidence of any formal use being made of this data at present.

- 4.39 Across the five other Pioneer Areas, the lead partners indicated that the Welsh language was only one of several considerations that they had to take into account:

*“We actually probably have more people who speak different languages other than Welsh, so it’s not always the Welsh language that is the requirement funnily enough ... So for example if we’re targeting the [migrant] community, we would try to consider if there is a language barrier to something that might be happening and what we can do to mitigate it. And that would also be our approach for the Welsh community.”* (Lead partner interview)

*“...there is a strong emphasis [in our work] on supporting and facilitating the Welsh language ... because of the nature of the Communities First cluster, unfortunately we don’t have one geographically connected community, but it’s fine to be like that. What we have are pockets [of Welsh speakers] within some wards ... So the linguistic needs are very varied ... because there are a number of [migrant] people moving here to live slightly different needs may arise then.”* (Lead partner interview)

In these cases, there were fewer examples of the active use of the Welsh language in formal partnership structures and processes, with activity tending to focus around the provision of bilingual printed materials or services. This limited attention to Welsh language provision was frequently attributed to the cost implications of providing a bilingual service, as this lead partner emphasises:

*“We’re trying to do things in accordance with the Welsh Language Act in general around translation/bilingualism. We don’t have the ability to have a nice little translation room at the side of our meeting rooms like the*

*Welsh Government. There are some real challenges there in terms of costs and provision.” (Lead partner interview)*

## **Key challenges in the design, implementation and delivery of the Pioneer Areas**

- 4.40 Partners identified a number of challenges in establishing and maintaining the Pioneer Area partnerships, as detailed below.

### *Management and governance of the Partnership*

#### *Structure and organisation*

- 4.41 A number of partnerships noted that it had taken time to set up the structures for the partnership, in terms of: clarifying the membership; agreeing the terms of reference; working with partners to develop a robust and comprehensive understanding of existing cultural provision and needs; identifying shared interests and priorities; and setting the overall strategic direction of their work programme. Furthermore, time constraints, alongside the dual tasks of working with cultural partners to design and deliver a collaborative work programme and demonstrate impact on target audiences within the pilot years set-timeframe, meant that managing and maintaining a balance between these processes was a particular challenge:

*‘We held our first meeting in September and in planning we followed the Welsh Government guidance, so you get together, you look at the terms of reference, you look at some priorities, you do a mapping exercise, you then start to work with partners and deliver activities. In reality it was agreed that was the wrong way round, and actually we can’t come up with the terms of reference until we understand what everybody’s doing. So we sort of took a step back a little bit, allowed various projects to actually get going so then that guided how we came together. In the limited amount of time that we’ve got left, we’ve probably got to get behind those projects that are viable and just sort of support those, rather than being completely strategic and going, right, we’re going to start from a clean sheet of paper and these are our objectives. We haven’t got the time to be able to do that so I think it’s trying to balance the two together so that the official work goes on behind the scenes, whilst the activity and the impact of that activity at the forefront.’ (Lead partner interview)*

4.42 Several of the Pioneer Areas emphasised that the process of setting up and managing the partnership required a great deal of flexibility to enable it to respond effectively to changing needs and priorities as the programme progressed. Accordingly, it was noted that each key step in the process did not necessarily follow in a linear fashion. One such example was of identifying and gaining the support of new partners, which interviewees continually emphasised was an organic process – particularly given the fact that the network of stakeholders with an interest in contributing to the work of the programme was much broader than many of the lead partners had originally envisaged. Several Pioneer Areas also noted that as their partnership progressed, the core initial members recognised the need to involve particular cultural partners, who were subsequently invited to join. Partners therefore acknowledged that membership will need to evolve with the aims of the partnership; bringing in new partners and sectors to a greater or lesser extent at different points in time.

4.43 It was also continually emphasised that the process of stakeholder engagement and involvement was also particularly challenging within the context of the pilot programme as it required investment and commitment for a potentially short-term programme. As a number of partners emphasised, much of the partnership's work, particularly during the first six months of the programme, was focused on developing an understanding of each partner organisation's particular needs, priorities and objectives and how these could be aligned. Several of the Pioneer Areas also emphasised the point that strong collaborative relationships go hand in hand with the successful design, delivery and performance of projects. This was highlighted as a key influencing factor in the overall success of their Pioneer Area:

*'...from my experience of working with communities and creative artists, I know that it can be transformative. But it takes time to develop, and I think the problem with the pilot area trying to get quick wins - that probably might show something, show that people have done stuff, but it's the making the difference that takes time. To do things well you have to build relationships and that's what takes time.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'My feeling is, a lot of the groundwork we're doing now is going to lead to a lot better pay off come May and beyond, because that's just the nature of partnership working. One should never underestimate, in this sort of work, the amount of time and effort that needs to be put in to relationship*

*building. Then it's not wasted time and effort, because once you build a really good relationship ... it will give us the basis of doing some really exciting work in the future. Our approach is based on a partnership approach, based on a co-productive approach, but for such an approach to be effective it's very time consuming. But when it is effective it's very sustainable as well, and very powerful. Because there's a lot of resources around the table.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'If you look at the list of projects and you look at the list of organisations, it's making progress. It's early days and these things take a lot of time, sometimes the seed takes longer to grow than that. As politicians I think we tend sometimes to expect immediate results, but probably some of these benefits from this are much longer term.'* (Cultural partner interview)

#### *Resource constraints*

##### *Funding challenges*

- 4.44 A number of Pioneer Areas highlighted the fact that lack of funding for the pilot programme has limited the extent to which they could realise their ideas and ambitions. Several interviewees noted that they wanted to develop new collaborative activities but a lack of funding had inhibited the progress of the partnership. As one interviewee explained: *'It may be that the partnership is where people come together, try ideas, find partners and go off. But as projects themselves develop they may need more structure and resourcing'* (Cultural partner interview, Torfaen). Without access to such funding, there were fears that both the interest and commitment of partners and the activities themselves could simply not be sustained. As one partner explained: *'...because there is little initial money with the pilot itself, we're always having to do that additional work of looking externally to find funding to be able to deliver against the ambition of the group'*.
- 4.45 The evaluation evidence indicates that the ability of cultural organisations and the Communities First programme to bring additional resources to the table - in addition to the direct funding committed to the delivery of the pilot programme - has been crucial to the successful delivery of activities; particularly in the context of recent cuts to core services and budgets. Cultural partners continually emphasised that it is important that this support is fully acknowledged. The overall success of the programme in bringing together partners with knowledge and experience of preparing successful funding bids

was also emphasised, with several areas reporting that they had successfully accessed funding and resources to develop collaborative projects, enabling partners to take forward the needs identified in partnership. Another Pioneer Area also noted that they had begun the process of developing activities and bids involving organisations that had not collaborated before.

#### *Capacity of partners and partner organisations*

- 4.46 A number of partners had also faced some issues aligning existing priorities and programmes without compromising organisational delivery requirements, remits, capacities and timescales:

*‘There has to be almost a root and branch acceptance within organisations that tackling poverty is the objective and it needs to be increasingly built in to our work programmes. If an organisation’s been involved with a long-term funded programme maybe for two or three years, to then squeeze two or three Pioneer projects into that is almost impossible. So, there’s quite a considerable lead-in time, which has to be at least 18 months, but there’s also the winning of hearts and minds of all the organisational movers and shakers to be able to say this is what we’re about. And that, I think, is an issue. You can have as detailed a project as you like, but if the section or division manager is saying, “I’m sorry I’ve got priorities, I’ve got more pressing priorities”, it’s going to be quite hard, unless they’re jumped on from a great height and told get on with it.’ (Lead partner interview)*

- 4.47 Some partners pointed out that they had limited capacity and resource to attend partnership meetings and take forward actions of the partnership due to workload and resource constraints:

*‘The programme is worth £1500 to the Local Authority. The value of the work is infinitely greater than that, but we’ve got to find the right home where the required capacity can be given to it and I think that’s a challenge at the moment. This has become so big, and the amount of work required is so big and yet it doesn’t cover its costs ... so it’s very much sort of beg, borrow and steal resources to try and make it happen. Which is exciting in one way, and it creates opportunities, but that still comes at a time cost.’ (Lead partner interview)*

- 4.48 In many cases, the Pioneer Area partners served a wider geographical remit than the pilot area and are grant-funded to deliver a specific project, which leaves limited resources for other non-funded activities. As a result, they felt that they may not be able to continue unless there were tangible and direct benefits, which in the context of the work programme could take time to materialise.

*Impact of local geography*

- 4.49 The geography of some areas posed a key challenge for delivering activities, particularly in more rural / semi-rural areas with more isolated or dispersed populations. In such areas, the costs of delivery were generally higher and residents faced transport availability and cost barriers to travelling to participate in activities. This was also highlighted as a crucial issue to consider when seeking to ensure the continuation and sustainability of these activities:

*'...there are some hidden costs that need to be found for the participants in some cases, for instance to cover childcare, transport and things like that - things that haven't been budgeted for. So we're having to find where we can get these little bits of money and that's a challenge, that's a real difficulty ... There are definitely hidden costs of visiting a free museum. If you are more than walking distance away, then apart from transport costs, you also have to think about the cost of feeding your kids if there isn't a picnic area. So I'm always slightly wary of when people sort of say, well these people think these places aren't for us, well that's just an over generalisation. But the one thing that is very uniform, is the fact that we say that we're free to enter, free to visit, but the individuals we're targeting need to get to us, and we need to do something to bring them here.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'Transport is a major, major, major challenge in this area. Although we're only 40 minutes away from the city centre, it probably takes 2½ hours on the bus, or on several buses, so that's a major hurdle that we have to find ways of overcoming.'* (Cultural partner interview)

## **Monitoring and evaluation processes**

- 4.50 This section assesses how effectively the monitoring and evaluation approaches adopted by each Pioneer Area contribute to the aims and objectives of their work programme and to the overall pilot year. Evidence has been drawn from the in-depth interviews with representatives from the lead bodies and the cultural partners in each area, as well as reviews of associated monitoring documents.
- 4.51 The evidence collected on the monitoring and evaluation processes adopted by the Pioneer Areas revealed that there was a strong focus on linking the Pioneer Area activities to Communities First outcomes. This process had been supported by completing an outcomes framework based on CF outcomes to explore how partners' organisational outcomes could be aligned. While not all activities had been designed solely for the purpose of delivering the outcomes of CF, partners had tried to align the outcomes of existing activities with the CF programme outcomes.
- 4.52 The evidence collected as part of the evaluation revealed that the Pioneer Areas were facing some challenges in evaluating their activities and partners voiced a number of key concerns around the design and effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation processes.
- 4.53 A number of Pioneer Areas encountered challenges encouraging partner organisations to adopt a culture of robust and rigorous monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation highlighted a highly varied approach to monitoring and evaluating outcomes and impacts both within the Pioneer Areas themselves (across all partner organisation) and across the six areas. There was also confusion about where responsibility for monitoring and evaluation lies within the programme – at a local, individual area and programme level.
- 4.54 Another key challenge for a number of partners was thinking about what form of evaluation would be feasible for them to carry out themselves and would be sustainable long after the project finished. Several interviewees acknowledged that different kinds of interventions or activities, and different contexts, called for different evaluation tools and methods, but that they did not have sufficient in-depth knowledge and understanding of the most appropriate tools and methods to adopt. A number of lead partners emphasised that further guidance and support was therefore required throughout the programme to allow the cultural partners to identify the most

appropriate research methods for their projects. This should take into account considerations such as the availability of data, selecting methods that are relatively straightforward to implement without requiring specialist knowledge, skills and equipment, and not placing undue burden on organisations and staff.

- 4.55 In reviewing the data and evidence captured by the Pioneer Areas through their monitoring and evaluation processes, it was clear that several areas were experiencing difficulties in defining what success means or looks like within the context of their activities. There appeared to be a tendency to measure processes and outputs, but not place adequate attention on demonstrating and evidencing impact. For example, there could be data provided on the number of individuals who have received training, but relatively little detailed data on the impact the training had on the individuals' behaviour or outcomes. Often change was measured at the individual level rather than at a wider community and organisational level, which emphasised the need to broaden the focus of the evaluation processes to measure the overall impact.
- 4.56 Partners also observed that it was often difficult to attribute specific contributions of individual organisations or activities to an observed outcome or impact, especially in the case of complex, multi-sectoral or integrated interventions. Several organisations emphasised that providing a detailed narrative of personal journeys and paths to progression as part of project outputs helped to justify any argument as to why the intervention was seen to have caused a change and the particular role of the organisation in influencing that change.
- 4.57 Insufficient resources to undertake monitoring and evaluation activities was a common complaint, with interviewees emphasising that their organisations often failed to allocate sufficient resources towards monitoring and evaluation, and vary budgets according to the objectives, scope and type of activities. Partners felt that, given the important role that sound monitoring and evaluation can play to improve the effectiveness of an intervention, factoring in adequate funds was considered a crucial and worthwhile investment.

## **5. Outcome Evaluation Findings**

### **Introduction**

- 5.1 This section examines the impact of the activities that have been undertaken in the Pioneer Areas during the pilot programme. It looks at impact by theme and draws on both qualitative and quantitative information about the activities that were implemented as part of the Pioneer Area programme. This includes data captured through the Communities First outcomes framework and the individual monitoring and evaluation processes undertaken by the cultural partners. Feedback from participants has been used, where available, and evidence from a range of participating organisations was gathered via in-depth qualitative interviews.
- 5.2 It should be noted, however, that the Pioneer Area pilot year was launched in April 2015. The first few months of the programme necessitated the initial stage of setting up each Pioneer Area, establishing the structure and operation of each local partnership, and developing a firm foundation for its membership and rationale, and identifying activity to support the Pioneer Area outcomes. Consequently, some activity started in the summer months, but further activity was identified as the Pioneer Area partnerships developed.
- 5.3 This means that for those activities that started in the autumn or are still in progress, it is only possible to capture initial outcomes and predicted impacts. The reasons for this is that there has not been adequate time to track the longer-term impact of completed activities and the planning and delivery of recent and new activities against programme outcomes is still ongoing. This is inevitable as the programme is only in its ninth month.
- 5.4 The ability to track outcomes and impacts for a further minimum of 12 months would supplement and reinforce the evidence collected during the early delivery of the pilot programme. Due to the lack of reliable monitoring and evaluation data it is not possible to draw any definite conclusions about the extent to which self-reported improvements in outcomes can be attributed to the pilot programme as opposed to other factors. The report uses the evidence collected to date to draw indicative conclusions about the impact of the programme.
- 5.5 The information provided includes an overview of the key priorities and activities being delivered within each Pioneer Area during the pilot year,

before considering the evidence of impact in the areas by focusing on the over-arching Pioneer Area programme themes, which relate to broader Communities First outcomes. These include:

- Community and Individual Wellbeing;
- Learning, Education and Skills;
- Employment and Income.

5.6 The fourth theme - 'Stakeholder Engagement' has already been discussed in the Process Evaluation section.

5.7 The over-arching themes and priorities which the Pioneer Areas were working towards under each theme are shown at **Annex Two**. It should be noted that not all of the Pioneer Areas were focusing their work programme during the pilot year around every CF theme. Each Pioneer Area identified the most relevant theme for the different needs identified in each area. They also adapted approaches or activities to support the theme. There is evidence, however, that the Pioneer Areas were working across a broad range of priorities under each theme, which reflects the fact that the cultural activities being delivered contribute to a wide range of outcomes and impacts.

Four case studies from the Pioneer Areas have been compiled from the first tranche of activity which took place between September 2015 and January 2016, and are included in this report at **Annex Three**.

### **Achieving outcomes and impacts**

5.8 Cultural partners frequently highlighted that activities based around increasing engagement with culture, the arts and heritage, were being considerably undervalued in terms of their role in tackling the consequences of poverty, because of the focus on hard outcomes such as accredited qualifications and employment. This was supported by the findings of the Communities First: A Process Evaluation (Ipsos MORI / Wavehill Consulting, 2015), which suggested a predominant emphasis on the targeting of activities and priorities with clear pathways into formal learning or employment. It was emphasised, however, that these 'pathways to progression' were rarely straightforward and clear-cut.

5.9 A number of cultural partners reported that engagement in cultural activities should be valued as an important means of tackling poverty and improving life chances in itself, rather than being viewed simply as a stepping stone to a

hard outcome such as getting a job or gaining a qualification. The valuable contribution of 'short, intensive, person-centred interventions' delivered over the course of an individual's journey in tackling poverty was emphasised and there was a feeling amongst those interviewed that this greater value needed to be placed on this:

*'It's all too easy to assume that the arts and cultural activities, they're the soft stuff, the initial engagement, but it's not. I think that the opportunities for arts, culture and heritage to deliver on the anti-poverty agenda right across the spectrum from initial engagement and participation, right through to employment opportunities, are huge. It's not just about that initial participation, but it does provide a great opportunity for some of the things that we don't necessarily measure but those opportunities that allow families to learn and interact together. These are really important things.'*  
(Lead partner interview)

*'Since 2004 we've done all sorts of mural projects, craft projects, design projects, music projects, video projects, pop music as part of Communities First, but it's been just sort of short, sharp interventions for other reasons rather than 'here's a programme of activity. And I think it's always been challenged because it's very soft - being in a pop video is not going to reduce a debt, it's not going to give you a job, it's not going to put you on a training course directly. So it sits in that difficult position for Communities First - all the Ministers want is really hard, positive outcomes, but the only way to achieve those is to do a load of soft development work with human beings, and find ways of engaging, inspiring and giving people an aspiration to follow.'* (Lead partner interview)

- 5.10 The principles underlying these arguments are clearly evident in the activities that have been implemented as part of the pilot programme. While there has been a strong emphasis in some Pioneer Areas on achieving hard outcomes through the accreditation of training and so on, this has been accompanied by a strong emphasis on improving the employability skills of individuals. In other areas, activity has focused on broader priorities linked to health and well-being and informal learning; with cultural partners recognising the significant potential contribution they can make to promoting social inclusion and in facilitating wider participation in the community and, in turn, formal learning and eventual employment.

## Community and Individual Wellbeing

### *Introduction*

- 5.11 The costs of public health care are increasing, linked to demographic changes such as an ageing population. In addition, there is growing concern over health issues linked to modern lifestyles arising from a lack of physical activity, unhealthy diets, smoking and alcohol-related problems. At the same time, there is greater understanding of health inequalities linked to social and economic deprivation, social class, age, and ethnicity (House of Commons, 2009).<sup>66</sup> Mental health issues can also have a negative impact on health and wellbeing. In particular, there are concerns about the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and adults who experience social and economic deprivation (Mental Health Foundation, 2013).<sup>67</sup>
- 5.12 Recent years have witnessed a shift in approach to public health within the medical profession, from a focus on health in terms of an individual medical model to a community-based or holistic model (O'Neill, 2010).<sup>68</sup> Within the latter model, health and wellbeing are seen to be influenced by a range of factors, including individual lifestyle factors, social and community networks and wider socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions within the local community (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991).<sup>69</sup> Increased recognition has been given in recent years to the role that culture and the arts can play in contributing to health and wellbeing. The evidence supporting this is growing, particularly within the museum sector, leading to a critical shift in thinking in policy and practice (Dodd and Jones, 2014).
- 5.13 Identifying and measuring the relationship between the impacts of cultural interventions and health and social outcomes at a population level is, however, a highly complex one. Indeed, evaluating the impact of cultural activities on the health and wellbeing of individuals can be particularly

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<sup>66</sup> House of Commons (2009) *Health Inequalities: Third Report of Session 2008-2009*. Volume 1. London: The Stationery Office.

<sup>67</sup> Mental Health Foundation (2013) *Mental Health Statistics*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>. [Accessed: 15 January 2016].

<sup>68</sup> O'Neill, M. (2010) 'Cultural attendance and public mental health - from research to practice'. *Journal of Public Mental Health*. Volume 9, Issue 4, pp.22-29.

<sup>69</sup> Dahlgren G., and Whitehead M. (1991) *Policies and Strategies to Promote Social Equity in Health*. Stockholm: Institute for Futures Studies.

problematic for small scale, short term programmes. This is because of the small amount of funding available, the complexity of capturing reliable data, and the difficulties of attributing programme or project activities to improvements in the health and wellbeing of individuals, which can only be measured effectively over the longer-term. In view of these difficulties, this summary of evidence of changes to individual and community health and wellbeing within the Pioneer Areas focuses on the more immediate health and wellbeing outcomes. The findings are based on observations by both participants and the cultural partners during the pilot year, which could influence the local determinants of broader health and wellbeing impacts in the longer-term. From the data available it is not possible to establish in a robust manner the extent to which improvements in these outcomes can be attributed to the pilot programme activities.

- 5.14 Much of the activity under this theme was focused on cultural projects and initiatives aimed at:
- promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing;
  - encouraging an understanding of a sense of place, identity and local history and cultures;
  - encouraging communities to work together to enjoy their communities and feel included.

*Improving physical and mental health*

- 5.15 The interviews conducted with cultural partners highlighted that the issue of ill-health was a particular problem across the majority of the Pioneer Areas. This was seen to be linked to many of the common health-related lifestyle factors associated with deprived communities - including poor diet, high levels of smoking and excess alcohol and drug consumption - which compound to create higher levels of acute sickness and long-standing illness. Several of the interviewees also noted that their communities were facing more long-standing socio-economic problems associated with post-industrial decline (i.e. high rates of long-term unemployment and worklessness, and long-term health problems), which had an adverse impact on the local population's health and overall well-being.
- 5.16 Of the six Pioneer Areas, two reported that they had prioritised and delivered activities aimed specifically at contributing to improvements in the physical

and mental health of their target communities in the pilot year. These included exercise-related activities, such as guided walks around specific cultural venues and locations, and more targeted projects aimed at particular groups within the communities affected by physical or mental ill-health. It should also be emphasised that improving mental health and well-being was a secondary target or underlying theme of many activities being delivered in the other Pioneer Areas.

- 5.17 Despite the fact that the activities being delivered under this theme were relatively small-scale in nature, scope and duration, partners felt that they had a positive impact on the health and well-being of the individuals participating in a number of different ways.
- 5.18 Some partners reported that Pioneer Area activities had helped raise awareness of the health benefits of undertaking physical activity. In one area, a guided field visit involving a vigorous walk around a large heritage site raised awareness of and reinforced the health benefits of physical outdoor activity and enabled a group of 10 long-term unemployed men from a disadvantaged inner-city area to experience these benefits at first hand. Wider observational and experimental evidence (see UK Department of Health, 2011<sup>70</sup>) indicates that regular participation in physical activity, such as that provided through this visit, at a greater level and over a prolonged period, would provide additional health gains for the participants. Even for those who are currently inactive, relatively small increases in physical activity (even if it is less than the current guidelines of 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity five times a week), are associated with some protection against many chronic conditions including coronary heart disease stroke, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and depression, as well as bringing many positive benefits for psychological health and wellbeing.
- 5.19 Individual projects also provided qualitative data which suggested that Pioneer Area activities helped improve the mental health and wellbeing of participants. For example, in another Pioneer Area, monitoring data and feedback provided by a group of unemployed adults from a series of drawing and craft workshops led by a Local Authority-funded art gallery, with support

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<sup>70</sup> UK Department of Health (2011) *Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers*. London: UK Department of Health. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-a-report-on-physical-activity-from-the-four-home-countries-chief-medical-officers>

from the Communities First Cluster, indicated improved self-confidence and well-being among participants:

*'I have really enjoyed it and it's been good to get out. It's made me feel more confident and I have made new friends.'* (Pioneer Area project participant)

- 5.20 Another participant praised the workshops for giving him the confidence to express himself in creative ways; he noted that as a result of participating in the project he felt *"inspired to do more art work"*.
- 5.21 Small-scale monitoring and evaluation data was collected in the pre- and post-project phase of the drawing and craft workshops, so as to document any changes in levels of self-confidence and positive thinking among participants. As part of this process, participants were asked to indicate how positive they felt before starting the project. During this initial stage, three of the four participants scored themselves low on a sliding scale from 1 to 10, providing scores of 3, 4 and 6. At the follow-up stage, the scores had all increased to 7, 9 and 10, respectively. In addition, all participants responded positively when asked whether the project had made them feel more positive in their day to day lives. Participants were also asked to indicate how confident they felt before starting the project, and three out of the four participants rated themselves low on a sliding scale with scores of 3, 4 and 6. Following completion of the project, the same participants providing scores of 7, 10 and 10 respectively indicating that they felt their self-confidence had increased as a result of their participation.
- 5.22 It is not possible from the evidence collected to robustly establish whether improvements such as these were attributable to the programme activities as opposed to other factors. However, the cultural partner responsible for coordinating the drawing and craft workshops referred to the impact on two particular individuals, with changes observed across multiple areas of their confidence, personal and social skills. In particular, the partner emphasised that feelings of self-worth amongst both these individuals were noticeably higher as a result of participation in, and continued engagement with the project, which had a significant and positive influence on their overall mental health and wellbeing. The lead cultural partners reflected on the personal experience of one of the individuals on the project:

*'The development in this one individual since the first session has been amazing. Since then, she's been to every single thing that we've done; she came out on all the Make Trips with us and has become a really active participant ... She's become a key part of the group and very proactive. And she's gone on to do the floristry course as well, which has helped her a lot in terms of communication and self-confidence.'* (Cultural partner interview)

- 5.23 Another Pioneer Areas had also prioritised health and wellbeing outcomes as part of its future work programme. Drawing on the initial work that had been delivered in this area, it had identified scope to develop new relationships and partnerships between cultural industry partners and public sector organisations, particularly health sector agencies and providers (i.e. Public Health Wales and Local Health Boards). It was felt by the partner organisations that the lack of engagement between the health sector and cultural organisations was a particular weakness in their area which required further attention.
- 5.24 One aspect in which they were hoping to influence was to improve understanding, particularly among health practitioners working at the local level, of the value of engagement in culture on health and well-being outcomes. The role of culture and the arts in contributing to new forms of 'social prescribing' (that is, the use of participatory community-based arts and cultural activities as a method for promoting mental health<sup>71</sup>) was highlighted as one potential area of activity for the partnership.
- 5.25 Two lead partners, both connected to the Communities First programme, emphasised the important role played by cultural activities (such as those developed under the health and wellbeing theme) in enabling participants to make positive life choices in terms of their health, learning and financial situations, and through this develop 'critical' skills, such as increases in confidence, motivation and self-esteem:

*'For some people that are experiencing hard poverty, just stepping out of the door can be a major achievement. If you measure that on a piece of paper, it doesn't look like much, but in reality it was a major achievement'*

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<sup>71</sup> For further information on the use of 'social prescribing' as a means of improving individual mental health and wellbeing within communities, particularly within the context of cultural and arts activity, see Brandling and House (2009); Royal Society for Public Health (2013); and Stickley and Eades (2013).

*for that particular individual. So engaging in some initial soft activities, which might be of an arts and culture base, might go a very long way to getting people on a path of progression, and from there working with Communities First or other organisations to start to build on their role within the community and being able to support themselves. So sometimes, I think that some of the things that we don't necessarily put much value on in terms of hard outcomes and numbers, are equally, if not more important, than some of the things that we do find easy to measure, and therefore put an emphasis on measuring.'* (Lead partner interview)

*'We've got to work with people to take them on their developmental journey, their engagement journey, their barrier removal ... It'll be a major step forward if the Government really does back itself to explain and justify this emphasis on that bit of the journey, because nobody else does it. And the worry is that we get so economically focussed that we're fighting to get people into work who aren't work ready, and we just create this cycle of people getting a job and falling straight out of it because nobody thought about their literacy issues, nobody thought about their long-term medical health, mental health, their financial situation at home which means that they've lost their house. That's the multi-layered nature of poverty and unless we treat people like humans and do work like this over the long term, we cannot tackle poverty. So, I think we need to be more honest about the type of work that is required and then back the fact that there is a risk - you do have to fund things that are a bit odd, that don't quite fit, but if that's what the person needs to progress, that's how you change their life.'* (Lead partner interview)

- 5.26 Partners interviewed felt that early evidence collected under this theme indicates that participation in cultural, arts and heritage activities has had a positive impact on participants' overall health and wellbeing. However, wider evidence suggests that more consistent and sustained monitoring and reporting would provide a more accurate picture of long-term impact. The RSPH (2013) in its review on arts, health and wellbeing cites research undertaken by Angus (2002)<sup>72</sup> which recommends that evaluation practice within the field should be based on models of health and wellbeing (rather

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<sup>72</sup> Angus, J. (2002) *A review of evaluation in community based arts for health activity in the UK*. London: Health Development Agency.

than medical models), with stated aims and rationale for how these would be achieved. The value of these models in providing a common language to describe the impact and outcomes of cultural activities on health and wellbeing, which has resonance across the cultural and public health sectors, has been highlighted in the academic literature (see Dodd and Jones, 2014).

- 5.27 Tools that have been used and tested in the UK include University College London's Museum Wellbeing Measures toolkit and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS).<sup>73</sup> The former was developed to capture changes in positive and negative feelings by measuring these feelings before and after an activity. Participants are asked to rate how they feel for each emotion on a scale from 1 ('not at all') to 5 ('extremely'). The value of this approach is that it focuses on outcomes and captures how participants feel about themselves before and after an activity, rather than asking them to rate the activity itself. When combined with qualitative methods such as, for example, interviews and participant observation, an explanation as to why (if at all) positive and negative feelings changed could be explored further (ibid).

*Promoting local history and culture*

- 5.28 When discussing the work that they were delivering as part of the pilot programme, several of the cultural partners across the Pioneer Areas noted the challenges they had experienced in seeking to engage disadvantaged communities in cultural activities. For many of the communities in which they worked, culture was not a prominent feature of everyday life. As one lead partner emphasised, this was unsurprising given that many residents were often preoccupied with being able to provide for their families. It was also noted by several of the cultural partners, particularly those from the Communities First Clusters who worked closely with the local communities participating in the programme, that this lack of broader engagement with cultural activities could be attributed to factors. These factors included the nature of social networks, local identities and wider attitudes towards the community, as well as a lack of awareness, confidence and time.
- 5.29 The interviewees provided anecdotal evidence to suggest that, as a result of these factors, individuals from socio-economically disadvantaged communities often face a range of constraints which prevent them from taking

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<sup>73</sup> For further information on the development and use of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale see the University of Warwick Medical School website: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/>

full advantage of the social, cultural and economic opportunities available in their local area and beyond. Specifically, one cultural partner observed that the stigma relating to particular communities within his area acted as a 'badge' that resulted in local residents actively avoiding social situations, such as participating in cultural activities or visiting places or venues outside their local community, in which they would have to reveal to others where they lived. It was emphasised that these feelings of shame work to undermine and mediate individual identities and social relations. They can create or reinforce a mistaken view that art and cultural activities are 'not for them'.

- 5.30 Accordingly, a number of Pioneer Areas had focused a significant part of their work programmes around simple activities designed to offer opportunities for people of all backgrounds to engage with their local history and culture. There is evidence to suggest that these activities (which ranged from projects and events celebrating the richness of local cultures, heritage and histories, to visits to other communities and areas to learn about different cultures or local histories) had influenced participants' interest in their local community history and, in particular, in tracing the influence of various cultures.
- 5.31 For example, three of the Pioneer Areas specifically referred to work that had either been undertaken, or was being delivered, as part of their work programmes to encourage disadvantaged communities to contribute to, and take part in themed cultural, heritage and arts-based activities. The activities were linked to annual festivals and celebrations within their local areas. These included a broad range of musical, drama and dance performances, hands-on art projects, and practical film-making workshops. Anecdotal evidence from the cultural partners suggested that the activities had been successful in raising awareness among local residents, particularly children and young people, of the diverse heritage and culture of their home communities.
- 5.32 As an example, one Pioneer Area had delivered a project that provided opportunities for a group of 12 young people aged between 10 to 17 years from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds in three inner city communities to participate in a series of heritage and film-making workshops, which explored in detail the influence of ancient African cultures on the development of contemporary BME communities within their area. The lead partner emphasised that during the six-month project, participants improved their knowledge and understanding of their area's rich history by visiting a number of heritage sites within the city and the surrounding area. Participants

accessed historical records held in a local museum and archive, and interviewed local residents to gather information from oral histories. The research material gathered was subsequently used by the participants to develop and produce a short film documentary entitled 'Positive Identity - A Journey of Self-Discovery and Positive Awareness' that was screened in a local cinema in October 2015 to coincide with Black History Month. The film is now being used as an educational tool in local schools, and by local community groups and organisations, as a way of addressing some of the myths and misunderstandings about black history.

- 5.33 It was emphasised that framing the Pioneer Area activities around existing local cultural events in this manner provides a way of developing a shared sense of place and identity within the local communities. It allows local residents to influence how these identities are perceived by others from outside the area, thus challenging the stigma associated with certain disadvantaged communities:

*'...what we've been trying to do is to work with artists and find different ways in which people can have their own agency ... So, that's another way in which maybe the Pioneer Area Initiative can help, because it actually provides resources to actually reveal, to make visible to outsiders an idea of a place that people may not have had previously. An idea of the assets too that people have; there are people who are creative, it has a rich history. And if working with the arts and heritage industries works to kind of change the idea of the particular place and the public's imagination, that too will make a lot of difference to the people living there, because that stigma becomes embodied, it really does. And it has effects in terms of how they feel about themselves and their confidence to actually even apply for jobs outside the area because they feel that they're going to be discriminated against.'* (Cultural partner interview)

- 5.34 In addition, a field visit to a large heritage site in one Pioneer Area had helped raise awareness of, and encourage engagement with, local cultural and heritage assets, and demonstrate their relevance and connection to local communities. Qualitative feedback collected by the Communities First team at the end of the project suggests that the individuals who participated in the activity - all members of a local men's group aimed at long-term unemployed individuals - valued the opportunity to learn more about the prehistoric

heritage of their area and explore the Iron Age, Roman and medieval archaeology at the site:

*'I had a great day; it was really interesting to see the area the Time Team had excavated.'*

*'Really enjoyed today's session, learnt loads of new things about the area's history.'*

- 5.35 Similarly, a volunteer at a large national cultural organisation in another area noted how an opportunity to participate in a craft workshop, which contributed to a family day held as part of the Pioneer Area programme, had fostered a growing interest in local history:

*'I wanted to give something back as I have no grandchildren and some free time. I really find the museum interesting, but I wouldn't have thought to volunteer there before I undertook a sewing course at the museum which I learnt about through Communities First ... My volunteering role has even fuelled my interest in the area and I have since taken books out of the library on local history.'*

- 5.36 There is also evidence that the digital training sessions provided through the Digital Heritage Stations launched at various locations as part of the pilot year had been used by residents across the Pioneer Areas. The Digital Heritage Stations were used to share online memories of their communities, their families, nearby villages, towns and cities, local industries and traditions by uploading photographs, sound recordings, documents, videos and stories to the Peoples' Collection Wales website. Feedback provided by participants as part of the formal evaluation of the project suggested that the stations had encouraged wider interest in local history and culture among residents who may not normally have access to, or the skills and knowledge to retrieve or upload, historical information using digital equipment. They also highlighted the value of the resource in bringing together individuals with a mutual interest in undertaking research and investigations into local and regional history:

*'I learnt a lot about history and our culture and some useful things I can use by myself for future reference – it was very interesting and helpful.'*

(Participant B)

*‘I enjoyed the course today learning about the history of Merthyr and other places.’ (Participant G)*

*‘It was a really interesting and in-depth course - very eye-opening and I can’t wait to get on with archiving.’ (Participant C)*

#### *Strengthening community cohesion and engagement*

- 5.37 The right of people, including those living in poverty, to participate in the formulation of public policy decisions is now widely accepted. However, exercising effective participation and engagement in ways that result in tangible, positive changes is a difficult and complex matter (Ledwick, 2005).<sup>74</sup> Proponents of community development view participation and engagement as enabling marginalised individuals and communities to have a voice in the democratic process, and to play an active role in influencing decisions that affect their lives. They view community development approaches as having the potential to effect changes that will tackle poverty, inequalities and social exclusion and address power imbalances in policy making (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000)<sup>75</sup>. The benefits of the community development approach are generally cited to include empowerment and enhanced participation, better programmes and outcomes through the active involvement of communities and a community-specific, flexible focus (Walker et al., 2011).<sup>76</sup>
- 5.38 Much of the activity relating to enhancing community cohesion within the Pioneer Areas was focused around two broad approaches:
- projects and interventions designed specifically to bring people together, and visits to cultural and heritage sites and information sharing events; and
  - engaging individuals directly in the prioritisation of local needs and concerns and the subsequent design and implementation of community-based projects.
- 5.39 There are some examples of how Pioneer Area activities had a positive influence on community cohesiveness by helping develop and enhance social

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<sup>74</sup> Ledwick, M. (2005) *Community Development: A Critical Approach*. London: Routledge.

<sup>75</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2000) *Neighbourhood Regeneration: Resourcing Community Involvement*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

<sup>76</sup> Walker, A., Sinfield, A. and Walker, C. (2011) *Fighting Poverty, Inequalities and Injustices: A manifesto inspired by Peter Townsend*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

networks, both within the communities targeted as part of the programme and across geographical areas.

- 5.40 In one Pioneer Area, partners felt that drawing and craft activities had helped increase social engagement among individuals experiencing difficulties due to limited social networks or social isolation:

*'Another thing that we've started to do is a creative floristry course, in partnership with colleagues in Communities First. It was an idea that came from one individual on one of our initial drawing courses. It was actually through his initial engagement with an early drawing course that the drawing sessions actually started, because he was interested in demonstrating craft activities to the group. So he started to lead some sessions and then as a result of that, and as he built up his confidence, he started to think about how he might use his skills.'* (Cultural partner interview)

- 5.41 Similarly, in another area, a series of visits to cultural and heritage sites and venues, both locally and further afield instigated as a result of the programme, helped a group of long-term unemployed residents develop and sustain new friendships within their local area and create new links with individuals from another community facing similar social challenges (i.e. large council estates with rich heritage on their doorstep). Insights and reflections shared by the project lead during the interviews indicated that the visits had facilitated increased mutual understanding of shared experiences of poverty.

### **Learning, Education and Skills**

- 5.42 Income and material deprivation are in themselves important influences on educational outcomes, particularly for very deprived families who experience long-term poverty and disadvantage (Waldfoegel and Washbrook, 2010).<sup>77</sup> Material deprivation can influence educational outcomes in a number of ways. For example, by reducing the number of educational resources that families can provide for their children, and by adversely affecting the home environment. As a result, children from deprived backgrounds are likely to fall behind in literacy at an early age, and this can have a knock-on effect on their

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<sup>77</sup> Waldfoegel, J. and Washbrook, E. (2010) *Low income and early cognitive development in the UK: A report for the Sutton Trust*. London: Sutton Trust.

education and learning (Atkinson and Mason, 2014).<sup>78</sup> Deprivation is also commonly associated with a range of other indirect factors which can influence children's outcomes. These include poor health; high levels of stress within the family environment; low levels of parental education and parental involvement in their children's education; low levels of cultural and social capital; and low aspirations. Having a low income can also have an adverse effect on parents' well-being, which in turn affects the quality of their parenting. This places an additional strain on the family and can lead to long-term problems with children's educational and emotional development (Gregg and Goodman, 2010).<sup>79</sup> In addition, cultural and social factors are implicated in the association between deprivation and poor educational outcomes. For example, children from lower socioeconomic groups are less likely to have access to social networks which offer inspiration and opportunities (Dodd and Jones, 2014).

5.43 Much of the cultural activity relating to learning and skills development was focused around a number of key themes, including:

- promoting family learning and parental engagement in their children's education;
- supporting children and young people to do well at school and promoting enjoyment of learning;
- supporting lifelong learning and improving adult life skills (improved literacy skills among adults).

5.44 There were a number of ways in which the Pioneer Areas approached these themes. For example providing opportunities for schools located in areas affected by high levels of poverty to engage with culture as part of the formal learning environment, and more informal learning opportunities at community level, tailored to bringing specific groups from the community together to improve skills and engage in new learning opportunities.

*Increased use of cultural resources as tools for formal learning*

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<sup>78</sup> Atkinson, R. and Mason, C. (2014) *Review of literature around engagement with young people from disadvantaged background*. London: Wellcome Trust.

<sup>79</sup> Gregg, P. and Goodman, A. (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies.

- 5.45 Out of the six Pioneer Areas, four reported that they had specifically identified schools as key sites to engage children's wider families and communities and had included 'education and learning' as a key theme of their work programme. As well as activities developed independently within Pioneer Areas, a significant number of venues across the Pioneer Areas participated in the national 'Taking Over Day' co-ordinated by the UK charity Kids in Museums to encourage greater access to and engagement with Museums amongst children and their families. Activities commonly included visits by primary and secondary school pupils to museums, archives and heritage sites where they were given the opportunity to take part in hands-on activity and help run the organisation for the day. In 2015-16, Kids in Museums supported additional activity within the Pioneer Areas.
- 5.46 There is some evidence to indicate that Pioneer Area activity delivered under the learning theme had encouraged an increase in the use of resources held by cultural organisations as tools for formal learning. In one Pioneer Area, a Primary school had worked closely with a local cultural venue to design and deliver a collaborative project to directly support the delivery of the Key Stage 2 curricular in History, with a specific focus on local and Welsh history as part of the curriculum for Wales. The usefulness of historical records, photographs and oral history archives accessed by school children during multiple visits to the cultural venues, particularly in enhancing the learning experience, was noted in the qualitative evidence gathered from the cultural partners in some of the Pioneer Areas. This included an enhanced understanding among many of the pupils of the history of their local community and the factors that had shaped its development facilitated by opportunities to practically apply this enhanced understanding in a non-educational setting. One school described how focusing the project around the local community had helped pupils to contextualise their learning - as a result, the activities undertaken were relevant and meaningful to their everyday lives.
- 5.47 Interviews with several of the Communities First partners involved in the Takeover Day projects also indicated that there was anecdotal evidence to suggest that many of the school pupils had shown improvements across a number of key skills underpinning the curriculum; including language, literacy and numeracy, communication, use of information technology, working with others, improving their own learning and performance and problem solving. For example, one school had reported that the visits had allowed pupils to

broaden their vocabulary, use their language skills in a different setting and develop the confidence to interact with a wider group of people. However, from the evidence available, it is not possible to establish robustly the extent to which improvements in these outcomes can be attributed to the pilot programme as opposed to other factors.

#### *Acquisition of skills*

- 5.48 There is also evidence to indicate that Pioneer Area activities helped a number of adults develop new creative and practical skills. The development of new practical skills in art and craft, woodwork and photography was noted in the qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered from a number of Pioneer Areas. One area had designed and delivered a series of short practical courses in the pilot year designed to teach basic, practical skills in photography, sewing and woodwork. Of the 29 participants who completed the courses, 14 went on to gain a formal entry-level accreditation and a further eight had submitted workbooks for assessment.
- 5.49 In another area, feedback from participants on a drawing and craft project gathered by the lead partner as part of the post-project evaluation process showed increased knowledge of, and experience in a range of art and craft techniques and skill:

*'It's been great to learn about different types of art and techniques – it doesn't always have to be pencil and paper. I think I'll be quite sad that this is the last one, but hats off to the artists – they've been fantastic and let's hope we can remember these experiences and just carry on creating art and hopefully we'll have more opportunities to do that as well.'*

*'I learnt more techniques and developed new skills'*

#### *Creating positive experiences of cultural, arts and heritage venues amongst disadvantaged groups*

- 5.50 There is evidence about the extent to which the programme has created positive experiences of cultural and heritage venues amongst disadvantaged groups across each of the areas. There is considerable qualitative evidence from the interviews with the project leads and the cultural partners that in many areas, the Pioneer Area activities had facilitated access to a range of cultural and heritage venues such as museums, historic sites and arts centres for individuals who would not normally have visited such places. In one area,

a Communities First partner described how a visit to a local heritage site by a group of long-term unemployed men as part of the Pioneer Area programme instigated a follow-on visit by the participants to a large-scale national exhibition – something which the partner felt they would not otherwise have done as a result of financial and transport constraints. The long-term impact of these activities could be tracked to determine to what extent the activities have led to increased engagement with cultural activities and encouraged participants to engage with and participate in similar activities independently. It would also help to demonstrate to what extent the initial ‘assisted’ support is important in helping participants take the critical steps that help them move along the pathway to independence / independent learning.

- 5.51 There is also qualitative evidence that the Pioneer Areas activities helped provide valued ‘first experiences’ for a number of individuals from the target communities. Anecdotal feedback provided to Communities First Clusters by schools that participated in ‘Takeover Day’ activities across the Pioneer Areas, suggested that many of the children and families involved had never previously visited a museum or similar cultural and heritage venues. ‘Takeover Day’ had, therefore, helped introduce these individuals to a new environment, in a positive way. One Communities First partner observed that the continuation of such activities within the local area would help raise awareness among families and communities of the value of engaging with culture, as part of both the learning and home environment, and remove any perceived barriers to cultural activities.
- 5.52 In another area, cultural partners who contributed to, and participated in, a family day held at a large national cultural venue in one area, talked enthusiastically about how the activities provided as part of the day had provided the families with which they worked with a new ‘fun, colourful and inclusive’ experience. More specifically, two partners (one from a Communities First Cluster and another from the Local Authority) observed that some of the families now felt comfortable visiting the venue and exploring the resources available without the presence of the Communities First team. This indicated a wider community understanding and appreciation of the positive social impacts of the arts, culture and heritage within their area and their relevance to them:

*‘The feedback we got from the parents was that all the children really enjoyed the session. Most commented that they had not been to the*

*museum before, however they won't be afraid to walk in on their own now having visited it within a group.'* (Cultural partner interview)

*'The Museum have been very helpful as they've been able to provide access to activities that otherwise wouldn't have been available to many of the clients that we work with. Many of our clients do not visit museums as they have preconceived ideas as to what a museum is and wouldn't feel comfortable visiting them. By coming down on arranged visits, it has enabled them to visit the museum and see what additional activities take place, along with what the museum currently offers.'* (Cultural partner interview)

5.53 The FLS project being implemented by one Pioneer Area was providing Communities First families with access to a wide range of cultural, heritage and arts-based experiences as a way of supporting them to provide a more positive home learning environment for their children. As the project was only in its early stages of implementation at the time the evaluation was being carried out, it is only possible to suggest possible outcomes and impacts at this stage. Despite this, data collected by Bangor University as part of the evaluation of previous activities relating to the FLS process, along with anecdotal evidence provided by the cultural partners involved, highlight the potential value of the approach in improving outcomes for children, especially those from deprived communities; particularly in relation to improving pupil attendance and behaviour; family, school and community engagement; understanding of the importance of family-based learning; and exposure to culture, heritage and the arts.

5.54 These views are supported by evidence from the policy and academic literature (Gutman and Feinstein, 2007<sup>80</sup>; Sylva et al., 2004<sup>81</sup>; Desforges and Abouchar, 2003<sup>82</sup>). These literatures suggest that parental involvement in learning, particularly during the early years, has a greater impact on children's

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<sup>80</sup> Gutman, L. and Feinstein, L. (2007) *Parenting behaviours and children's development from infancy to early childhood: Changes, continuities, and contributions* [Wider Benefits of Learning Research Report No. 22]. London: Institute of Education.

<sup>81</sup> Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Smees, R., Dobson, A., Jeavons, M., Lewis, K., Morahan, M. and Sadler, S. (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project: A longitudinal study funded by the DfEE (1997-2003)*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

<sup>82</sup> Desforges, C. and Abouchar, A. (2003) *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A review of literature*. London: Department of Education and Skills Publications.

wellbeing and achievement up to the age of at least 16 than any other factor, such as family income, parental education or school environment.

- 5.55 The potential value of this project, together with the other activities being implemented under this theme is further supported by research undertaken by Scherger and Savage (2010) to examine the relationship between cultural socialisation, educational attainment and intergenerational social mobility. Using data from the Taking Part Survey, the research shows that part of the effect of parental class on educational attainment was due to the sharing of 'cultural capital'. Moreover, this exposure to cultural capital (through, for example, being taken to museums/art galleries, theatre/dance/classical music performances, sites of historic interest, and libraries during childhood), and the degree to which parents or other adults encouraged children to read books or to be creatively active in different domains of the arts, literature and music, was also seen to have a direct effect on the level of educational attainment. In a similar fashion, the research also suggested that respondents who have experienced a 'higher intensity of cultural socialisation' are more likely to be 'upwardly mobile'.

*Increased emphasis within the cultural and heritage sector on the targeting of disadvantaged groups and increased understanding of their needs*

- 5.56 The interviews with the culture and heritage organisations revealed their desire and ambitions to further engage new hard-to-reach audiences. A number of cultural partners observed that through undertaking the Pioneer Area activities they had a greater understanding that engaging children and young people was an important part of their work, in which they were willing to invest time and resources. A number of cultural partners also observed that they had developed their knowledge about the needs and interests of children and young people. They were able to reflect on the activities undertaken, improve their cultural offer for this group, modify their working practices to find new, more effective ways of encouraging children to use the resources available, and identify further areas of work and potential collaboration. As a result, their organisations were starting to think more strategically about opportunities to encourage and support those children and young people who would most benefit from increased exposure to cultural experiences to visit and participate in their venues.

## **Employment and Income**

### *Introduction*

5.57 It is important to note that evidence on the employment and economic impact of Pioneer Area activities is limited at this stage. The short timeframe since the introduction of activities and projects under the pilot programme, with many only starting in summer 2015, and their focus on establishing a 'progression pathway' (which often requires further steps before securing employment) means that drawing definitive conclusions on impact under this theme is premature - data is either not available or can only be provided in the long term. There is, however, some encouraging emerging evidence from the initial assessment of outcomes under this theme.

### *Themes and activities*

5.58 Much of the activity relating to employment and income was focused on the following themes:

- valuing cultural participation as a way of improving life opportunities and confidence;
- promoting active work experience and employability skills in adults;
- reducing youth unemployment and disengagement;
- promoting digital inclusion.

### *Promoting employability skills*

5.59 Data provided for the evaluation demonstrates that the pilot programme was supporting a wide range of innovative, cultural, heritage and arts-based activities. These activities aimed at improving the employability of individuals from disadvantaged communities (particularly the long-term unemployed) and supporting them along their 'progression pathways' to labour-market (re)engagement and eventual employment.

5.60 Within the projects and activities that have been delivered, there was a focus on capacity building and support; core skills development; providing opportunities for formal education; industry focused up-skilling and re-skilling; direct engagement with employers; and encouraging volunteering as a route into employment.

- 5.61 There was a strong focus on accreditation of skills development, with activities focused on provision in line with defined course levels (i.e. entry level, Level 1: introduction, to Level 3: equivalent to A-level) across a range of providers (including Arts Awards and Agored Cymru).
- 5.62 One Pioneer Area had developed and delivered accredited training courses as part of its work programme, with the aim of increasing and enhancing skills and confidence, whilst moving participants closer to employment, further education and training. The courses engaged over 40 participants, ranging in age from 10 years to 50 years, through structured activities around filmmaking, digital photography, sewing and woodwork. At the time the evaluation was carried out, 27 participants had gained a credit-based Entry Level certificate and a further 5 participants had submitted workbooks to be assessed.
- 5.63 Qualitative evidence drawn from the interviews with the lead partners, along with the outputs from the courses indicated that the wide ranging experiences gained by the participants had a positive impact on their employability. As an example, a film documenting the experiences of a group of adult learners (who participated in a series of film-making workshops delivered by an artist-led charity, based in one of the Pioneer Areas), captured the positive changes reported by participants as a result of the course.
- 5.64 The 14 participants who contributed to the film were in agreement that they had benefited from the course and expressed this in a number of different ways. For a number of participants, the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning with state-of-the art digital filmmaking tools provided a new experience and the opportunity to develop practical skills in areas such as film production, video techniques and writing storyboards and scripts. As a result, they felt more confident in their own abilities, particularly in terms of their capacity to learn:

*'I now feel a lot more confident using a video camera which I've never used in my life before, because of the training that's been delivered. It's been really good for that reason. Using a programme like final cut, which to me was like learning Mandarin, but within four days I know how to do it now – it's just clicked. So, that's amazed me, actually how quickly I've taken to it.'*  
(Participant C)

*'I didn't know I could learn so much in four days – I didn't know I had a brain that could absorb so much!'* (Participant J)

- 5.65 Several participants also felt that they were clearer about what they wanted to do in life as a result of completing the course. Many spoke enthusiastically about further learning or training:

*'I thought it was gonna be pretty boring, but I've gotta be honest I've really enjoyed it. I've got to the point where I can't wait to get back, and the day is just flying by. It's definitely something I've really enjoyed. In the future I'd like to do something like this again, do another course and see where it goes. I really enjoyed the acting part of it and would like to carry on with it.'* (Participant D)

*'We've all really enjoyed and we've all got along, so I'll definitely do it again in the future. So hopefully something pops up again soon.'* (Participant F)

- 5.66 In addition, there are examples relating to the development of 'critical' skills that are considered essential to the development of effective working relationships and team-working with several of the participants, which indicated that the course had enabled them to develop their interpersonal skills. In particular, they valued the opportunity to participate effectively as a member of a team and empathise and build rapport with fellow participants, negotiate, make decisions, manage time efficiently and take responsibility for delivering a collaborative task:

*'We've had a lot of creative minds (working together) as well, so it's like we're all bouncing ideas off each other. It's flowed really well. That requires a lot of team-work, which I think that has been in abundance on this course – we've all really clicked well as a team.'* (Participant C)

*'We're all very different people with different personalities, but we've all come together as a group.'* (Participant G)

*'We've all respected each other's ideas and that's been rewarding when you see the final production. It's really refreshing learning from other people's skills and putting them all together and making a joint venture work.'* (Participant J)

*'We started to look at what each member of the group could focus on – what were their strengths and weaknesses.'* (Participant I)

- 5.67 These positive views were echoed by the cultural partners leading the film-making course as they reflected on the enthusiasm and of the participants:

*'It was such an interesting project as the participants involved came from a variety of backgrounds and from a broad age range and they were all really interested in getting involved. So we had some mixed groups and the dynamics worked incredibly well. Some of them some aren't in comprehensive school, some had just finished school, and some have been out of work for quite a while. But, many had never held a camera or made anything like that before, and it really sparked excitement in everyone involved, and the majority of participants really wanted to come back and do more.'* (Cultural partner interview)

- 5.68 As a result of the success of the programme, the cultural provider have put in place arrangements for delivering a second phase of workshops between January and November 2016. These replicate and build upon the first set of film-making activities. The workshops are being delivered in partnership with a national community education provider and will provide opportunities to gain accreditation at both Entry Level and Level 1, so as to attract new participants and *"encourage previous participants to continue their involvement and progression pathway"* (Cultural Partner interview). The cultural partner leading the workshops noted that seven participants from the first round of workshops had signed up to participate in the higher level course.

- 5.69 This emphasis on supporting individuals along their 'progression pathway' was also clearly evident in new partnerships that were emerging within the area. There was evidence that as a result of the Pioneer Area programme, the cultural partners involved in designing and delivering the accredited workshops had started to build links with major local employers as a way of exploring opportunities for linking accredited training and qualifications with more formal work experience placements and internships. One of the cultural partners noted that skills shortages within the cultural and creative sectors is having a detrimental impact on growth, and highlighted the significant potential offered by courses, such as those developed in the pilot year, in facilitating individuals from local communities to develop highly sought after skills. These would enable them to apply for a wide range of technical and practical roles within the sector:

*'It's not only a case of soft skills or technical skills learnt during the course, but there's also the potential for, you know another course, maybe an internship with Bay Studios and then who knows maybe possibly a job at the end of the day. So it really was a case of taking what the Baroness Andrews report says about how culture can get somebody from a pretty difficult situation, possibly no employment, or no prospect of employment through to some form of education, some learning skills, some creative, cultural, dynamic kind of process and then at the other end they may feel that they're better able to get a job.'* (Cultural partner interview)

- 5.70 In addition, the cultural providers leading the project are looking to strengthen their working relationship by exploring opportunities for creating a formal learning pathway and progression route from an Entry Level certificate in 'Digital Photography', which was delivered in autumn 2015 as part of the Pioneer Area programme, to a Level 3 'Creative Technologies' course validated by the University of Wales (and on to Higher Education).
- 5.71 A key characteristic of many of the most effective projects and activities being delivered under the employment and income theme was the existence of a collaborative approach. This approach involved cultural organisations, education and training providers, community organisations, local authorities, Communities First and other relevant organisations, such as JobCentre Plus and Citizens' Advice Bureaux. The inclusion of cultural and community / voluntary organisations outside the 'mainstream' delivery agencies was found to be a key attribute of the work. Anecdotal evidence from the interviews suggests that there were notable successes arising from the inclusion of such organisations and groups as they often brought a new approach and way of thinking to the table.
- 5.72 The evaluation found that this collaborative model facilitated provision of tailored and responsive activities and projects. Within this, a focus on employability outcomes or 'critical outcomes' was highlighted as crucial; and a move from projects or programmes which may have been developed in the past which focused solely on the acquisition of core skills, without consideration of other 'softer' skills and competences (i.e. team-work and collaboration; communication; commitment; flexibility; time management; responsibility etc.) to an approach which acknowledged that a combination of these might support further development on the pathway to learning and/or employment.

### *Increasing digital inclusion skills within disadvantaged communities*

- 5.73 Some Pioneer Area activities contributed to developing the knowledge and skills of participants in the use of a broad range of digital devices. For example, the provision of local opportunities for free digital training through the PCW Digital Heritage Station in several Pioneer Areas enabled residents from the local community to improve their digital literacy by gaining practical experience in the use of a scanner, laptop and digital recording equipment. This has allowed residents to access information and archive material on local history and heritage and to digitise and upload their own materials, including letters, photographs and oral histories to the PCW website. As a result, important and valuable information on local history and culture can be shared beyond the local community.
- 5.74 In Newport, where the initiative was established first, 39 participants have received formal digital training delivered over 20 sessions, with 14 registering for formal Level 3 Accreditation on Digitising Materials for Museums, Libraries and Archives provided by Agored Cymru. The participants have also contributed 150 hours of volunteer hours. In total, across the Pioneer Areas, 130 people have received digital training with 26 registering for Agored Cymru accreditation. It is likely that more opportunities for accredited learning can be supported in future.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 6.1 This section draws together the concluding comments from the evaluation of the Pioneer Area programme pilot year and makes recommendations for the future development of the programme.
- 6.2 It is important to note that the research provides clear evidence about the organisational impact of the Pioneer Area pilot programme and the potential contribution of the changes to the provision of cultural activities for disadvantaged groups. The evidence concerning the impact of Pioneer Area activities on individuals however is more limited. The short timeframe since the introduction of many activities and projects and the lack of reliable monitoring and evaluation data means that it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the extent to which self-reported improvements in outcomes can be attributed to the pilot programme as opposed to other

factors. Nevertheless, it has been possible to draw on some indicative emerging evidence to assess the effectiveness and likely impact of activities, determine factors that have led to the successful implementation and delivery of the programme, as well as identifying key areas that need development.

## **Programme impact**

### *Impact on organisational ways of working*

- 6.3 The Pioneer Area programme, in terms of its overall approach to working collaboratively to maximise the benefits cultural participation can have for individuals living in Wales' most deprived communities, is well-received and highly regarded by stakeholders involved in its delivery. Evidence gathered from the stakeholder interviews indicates a clear understanding among partners about how its aims and objectives align with the work of the Communities First programme and with the Welsh Government's wider tackling poverty agenda.
- 6.4 There is strong evidence to suggest that, as a result of the partnerships formed under the Pioneer Areas pilot programme, cultural and heritage organisations across the Pioneer Areas have begun to align their strategic priorities around tackling poverty objectives to a greater extent than previously. The involvement of a wide range of cultural partners with a specific remit around tackling poverty, and the ability of partnerships in each area to encourage new partners to increase their engagement with cultural provision, has contributed to the success of the pilot programme. There is evidence that many of these have not worked in strategic partnership with each other, or even been in contact, before. The lead organisations have played a crucial role in this process – convening, facilitating and brokering connections and collaboration between partners; shaping strategy; coordinating the partnerships; and providing guidance and ideas.
- 6.5 As a result, the evidence collected as part of the evaluation suggests that cultural and heritage organisations, Communities First Clusters and local community groups, and a range of other bodies have worked together to a much greater extent, and in a range of new ways, as a result of the Pioneer Area pilot programme. Partners have collaborated to design, fund and deliver joint cultural activities and projects and have acted as a collective voice in promoting the value of using culture as a tool to tackle poverty and disadvantage.

- 6.6 Partners repeatedly emphasised that partnership working takes time and is an organic process. Accordingly, it was generally felt that there is more scope to develop the partnerships, and the ways they work. As the partnerships are in their relative infancy, there is no evidence as yet about the extent to which they are sustainable over the longer-term.

### **Impact on the quantity and quality of cultural provision for disadvantaged groups**

- 6.7 There is early evidence to suggest that the partnerships established under the programme have added value to existing projects and activities as well as supported the development and implementation of new cultural activities. As an example, one Pioneer Area had chosen to focus its work programme during the pilot year around the development of a focussed project involving close partnership between Communities First, a cluster of seven Primary and Secondary schools, and ten cultural partners based in the area. The sessions provided as part of the activity made cultural experiences available to over 320 residents within the Communities First Cluster and the activity aligned directly with CF outcomes.
- 6.8 Overall, the activities being delivered as part of the pilot programme were based around three key themes: community and individual wellbeing; learning, education and skills; and employment and income, all of which relate to Communities First outcomes. There is evidence that the Pioneer Areas were working across a broad range of priorities under each theme, which reflects the fact that the cultural activities being delivered contribute to a wide range of outcomes and impacts.
- 6.9 The evaluation revealed a strong emphasis across the Pioneer Areas on developing structures and activities to guide and support individuals to develop appropriate pathways to independent living, learning and/or employment, and to monitor and facilitate their progression. Within this framework, there has been a focus on the development of work programmes that are designed to combine elements of personal, vocational, educational and foundational skills and knowledge development to enable individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to access pathways to independence, and educational and occupational progression (albeit to different degrees and levels across the Pioneer Areas). Activities have included musical and drama performances; art and craft courses; film-making and media workshops;

guided walks and tailored visits to cultural, heritage and arts venues and sites; training opportunities linked to formal accreditation; work placements; and volunteering opportunities.

- 6.10 According to partners, activities offering a mix of creative opportunities appear to have contributed to an increased level of participant engagement and enjoyment. For example, film-making workshops provided as part of the work programme in two areas held broad appeal for individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures and age groups and enabled each to find something that excited and interested them. The involvement of artistic and cultural professionals with specialist knowledge and experience in the design and delivery of the film-making sessions and craft and drawing workshops also gave the activities additional weight and significance and in many cases acted as an inspiration to participants.
- 6.11 Linked to this, there is qualitative evidence to indicate that some individuals have been exposed to cultural activities that might not otherwise have had access to cultural sites and venues within their areas. However, the short timeframe since the introduction of many activities in the pilot year, along with the lack of robust evidence (both quantitative and qualitative) and effective monitoring approaches at project level, means that it is difficult to obtain reliable numbers to quantify the overall impact of the programme. This is in terms of the numbers of participants engaged and the numbers who successfully complete accredited courses, go on to attend further courses, or gain qualifications or employment. Nevertheless, well over 1,500 participants have engaged in activities brokered by the partnerships and, in areas where more focussed activities have been delivered and closely monitored, the evidence indicates that over 500 participants have engaged in structured programmes, courses and accredited learning. The lack of data also makes it difficult to properly establish a counterfactual - that is, what would have happened without the pilot programme activities. For example, given that some of the activity during the pilot year has focused on maximising existing cultural activities, it may be the case that the emerging outputs and outcomes would have occurred in the absence of the programme.

### **Impact on individuals**

- 6.12 Individual projects provided qualitative data which suggested that participation in cultural, arts and heritage activities via the Pioneer Areas programme has

had a positive impact on individuals. In particular, partners felt that participation had resulted in the development and enhancement of soft skills, such as increased confidence and self-esteem; improved social participation; and higher motivation and engagement, to the extent that many participants are now more willing to participate in other cultural and arts-based activities – either as a group, with family or independently. There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that some individuals have become more socially engaged in their local communities and willing to actively share knowledge and skills with their peers, as well as contribute ideas and opinions on existing and new activities provided through the programme.

- 6.13 The acquisition of new skills - such as language, literacy and numeracy; and practical craft, technical and digital skills - has also been identified as a key outcome of many of the Pioneer Area activities. In some areas there was a strong focus on accreditation of skills development. Across the Pioneer Areas, 130 people have received training with 26 registering for Agored accreditation accreditations in a variety of subjects, ranging from filmmaking and digital photography, to sewing and woodwork and digital skills. The opportunity to learn new skills and showcase learning through celebratory events such as exhibitions, launch events and awards, for example, also had a positive impact on individuals. Cultural partners noted how these opportunities provided individuals with a sense of achievement, which in turn could have a long-term impact on their self-belief, confidence and self-esteem.
- 6.14 The provision of positive and dynamic activities also provided a different and enjoyable experience for many of the participants and acted as an effective lever to engage individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and encourage them to participate in activities outside their usual routines and environments. Across the Pioneer Areas, this positive impact has largely been attributed to the safe and informal environment created by the Communities First teams, with the support of cultural partners. Several examples were highlighted in the evaluation of individuals expressing a desire to continue participation in cultural activities as a result of their involvement in the programme.
- 6.15 On the whole, the programme has inevitably had more of a positive impact on some individuals compared to others. Those participants facing more challenging issues in their day-to-day lives, or suffering from lower self-esteem early on, for example, are less likely to demonstrate positive outcomes and impacts from the activities. The difference in individual starting

points and achievements is therefore an important factor to consider, as is the variation across the Pioneer Areas, in terms of the scale and nature of the activities being implemented, and whether they were based on new or existing ideas or projects.

- 6.16 The ongoing nature of much of the activities means that the long-term impacts on individuals and communities cannot be evidenced at this stage. The programme, in terms of its structures, processes and activities, will require further evaluation to establish its long-term impact over time.

### **Good practice**

- 6.17 It is clear from the discussion with partners that the direct link to Communities First teams, and their ability to access and engage with local communities, has been crucial in facilitating successful participant engagement. The involvement of communities in the identification of needs and priorities has also resulted in an increased sense of ownership of, and commitment to, the activities.

- 6.18 The evaluation provides evidence of the overall success of the Pioneer Area partnership model. Partnerships were generally valued by cultural partners for being very open, democratic and organic in their approach to define shared purpose, clear objectives and processes and to identify how each member could contribute. In many cases, opportunities were made available for partners to meet either before or after partnership meetings to network and share ideas and experiences. This enabled them to begin to find organisations and groups that they could potentially work with on projects in the future.

- 6.19 Lead partners also emphasised that the success of their partnership process to date had been driven by a desire to work together to ensure mutual benefit for all partners, rather than by a specific funding remit. This encouraged a genuinely collaborative and non-competitive partnership through open dialogue.

- 6.20 The evaluation indicated that the ability of cultural organisations and the Communities First programme to bring additional resources to the table, in addition to the direct funding committed to the delivery of the pilot programme, has been crucial to the successful delivery of activities, particularly in the context of recent cuts to core services and budgets. Several areas reported

that they had successfully accessed funding and resources to develop collaborative projects, enabling partners to take forward the needs identified in the partnership. One Pioneer Area also noted that they had begun the process of developing activities and bids involving organisations that had not collaborated before.

- 6.21 There is evidence that the pilot programme is beginning to change perceptions of culture and particular stereotypes and misconceptions of the value of cultural, heritage and arts-based activities at Local Authority level and within Communities First Cluster teams.
- 6.22 The evaluation indicates that having a specific outcomes framework, which relates specifically to broader Communities First outcomes, has helped focus the design and delivery of activities in the pilot year. The pilot programme has demonstrated that this framework for measuring outcomes and impacts works successfully, providing that it is shared and there is the flexibility to make modifications to each element to suit the needs and priorities of individual organisations and partners.

### **Key challenges**

- 6.23 There were a range of challenges and limitations which potentially have limited the ability of the programme to demonstrate impact.
- 6.24 In many of the Pioneer Areas, project design and delivery did not begin until 2-4 months into the pilot programme; therefore many partners felt that the timescale for delivering their work programme and demonstrating outcomes and impacts was too short. Many partners claimed that longer-term planning and delivery of activities would facilitate even greater collaboration and influence locally, as well as providing a clearer picture of outcomes and impacts.
- 6.25 There was some evidence of cultural partners working in cooperation with Communities First cluster teams and local community groups to engage community members themselves in the prioritisation of outcomes for their local areas and the subsequent design of activities. On the whole, however, it was generally felt that the programme had not been able to adopt a fully collaborative approach at this stage due to it being a pilot and therefore the necessity of implementing the programme and delivering activities quickly and over a short time period. Despite this, a number of areas envisaged a

stronger emphasis on the co-design of activities with community members should the programme continue.

- 6.26 The evaluation highlighted the difficulty of obtaining robust and consistent monitoring data, both within the Communities First programme and across the cultural partners participating in the pilot programme. Whilst the Pioneer Area outcomes framework developed for the programme ensured that activities were directly aligned to Communities First outcomes, there appeared to be a great deal of ambiguity and inconsistency in monitoring and evaluation approaches, in terms of understanding and clearly defining the anticipated outcomes and impacts of activities, and how progress against these were subsequently measured and reported. Where quantitative evidence was collected, much of the data lacked statistical robustness due to the small sample sizes, making it difficult to draw any definite conclusions on impact.
- 6.27 The one-off nature of many of the activities delivered as part of the pilot year also posed a challenge, in terms of evidencing outcomes and longer-term impacts. In such cases, the absence of high quality longitudinal data for tracking makes it difficult to say whether many of the outcomes that have been reported, such as increases in confidence, self-esteem, increased social engagement, would last.
- 6.28 The evaluation findings also highlighted that the validity and reliability of data was highly dependent on the skill and capacity of the individuals responsible for monitoring and evaluation at organisational, programme and project level. Many cultural partners, for example, expressed concerns that they did not have the necessary expertise or knowledge to design effective and innovative monitoring processes, which contributed to the inconsistent approach being taken across the Pioneer Areas. Particular concerns were also raised in relation to the collection of evidence relating to improvements in 'soft' outcomes and while a handful of Communities First Clusters reported good practice in relation to the use of case studies / case files (as highlighted in the Communities First Process Evaluation undertaken in 2011) it was clear that this information was not being shared effectively.
- 6.29 The scope of the design of the evaluation did not make it possible to estimate the counterfactual therefore it is difficult to assess to what extent changes can be attributed to the Pioneer Area pilot.

## Recommendations

- 6.30 Evidence across the Pioneer Areas has shown that the Pioneer Area partnership approach can enhance the provision of cultural activities for disadvantaged groups in local areas and there is clearly potential to expand and enhance the model. However, despite these successes, the progress and outcomes of the pilot partnerships would benefit from further review and exploration of effective practices as the programme progresses.
- 6.31 The focus on 'progression pathways' and an integrated, collaborative approach to meeting the individual needs of participants was perceived by partners as being critical and they felt that the good practice identified within the programme in relation to this should be built upon.
- 6.32 Involving participants in the co-design of activities appeared to enhance their enjoyment and sense of ownership in the activities. It is therefore recommended that the lead partners involve participants in design and planning decisions at the start of activities, both in terms of content, but also in terms of practical decisions, such as when and where activities should take place.
- 6.33 Partner organisations were generally prepared to contribute additional in-kind resources to support the development and implementation of activities as part of the Pioneer Area programme, because of its clear value to their organisation and its strategic priorities. Those interviewed noted that it is important that this support is acknowledged, as well as the fact that the programme cannot deepen and broaden impact without additional funding to support activities, particularly within the context of recent cuts in the cultural sector / public sector in general.
- 6.34 Lead partners across the Pioneer Areas emphasised that the programme had involved a greater level co-ordination than anticipated, placing pressure on their capacity to operate each local partnership, as well as fund activity. They welcomed additional central support to operate and manage the Pioneer Area networks, facilitate the recruitment of new partners and offset the burden on cultural bodies and Communities First budgets.
- 6.35 Partners felt that the networking events held as part of the pilot programme should continue as they were vital for sharing good practice and discussing ideas. The structure and scheduling of the events was viewed positively by all lead partners.

- 6.36 Partners across the Pioneer Areas emphasised the strong link between the Fusion programme and the Future Generations Act and it was felt that this needed to be made more explicit in any future programme.
- 6.37 Encouraging a more formal and robust approach to ongoing monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impacts should be a key goal for participating Pioneer Areas and CF clusters in future, requiring consistent and sustained recording and reporting. This is needed to ensure that the full value of the activities and the overall programme can be ascertained, and to achieve comparability in the quality of outcomes recorded across the Pioneer Areas. The evaluation has also shown that partners require training and support to make best use of the monitoring and evaluation framework. This should be incorporated into any future programme.
- 6.38 The evaluation has highlighted some good practice in relation to capturing and measuring soft outcomes at the local level and tracking of individual progress, primarily through the Communities First programme. However, this information is currently not being effectively shared with the Welsh Government and partner organisations and fully valued. Guidance should be provided on how it can be more effectively disseminated within the sector, whether locally, regionally and/or nationally.
- 6.39 The evaluation design adopted was limited by the time-frame and the available evaluation budget. As a result the evaluation was unable to effectively measure the impact or value for money of the pilot programme. It is recommended that, where possible, this be addressed should the programme continue.
- 6.40 Given the complexity of measuring some of the desired longer term outcomes, the potential of using longitudinal methods; for example using data sets from the National Survey for Wales at national level, and maximising existing monitoring systems such as those used for Communities First for local data collection should be explored further.

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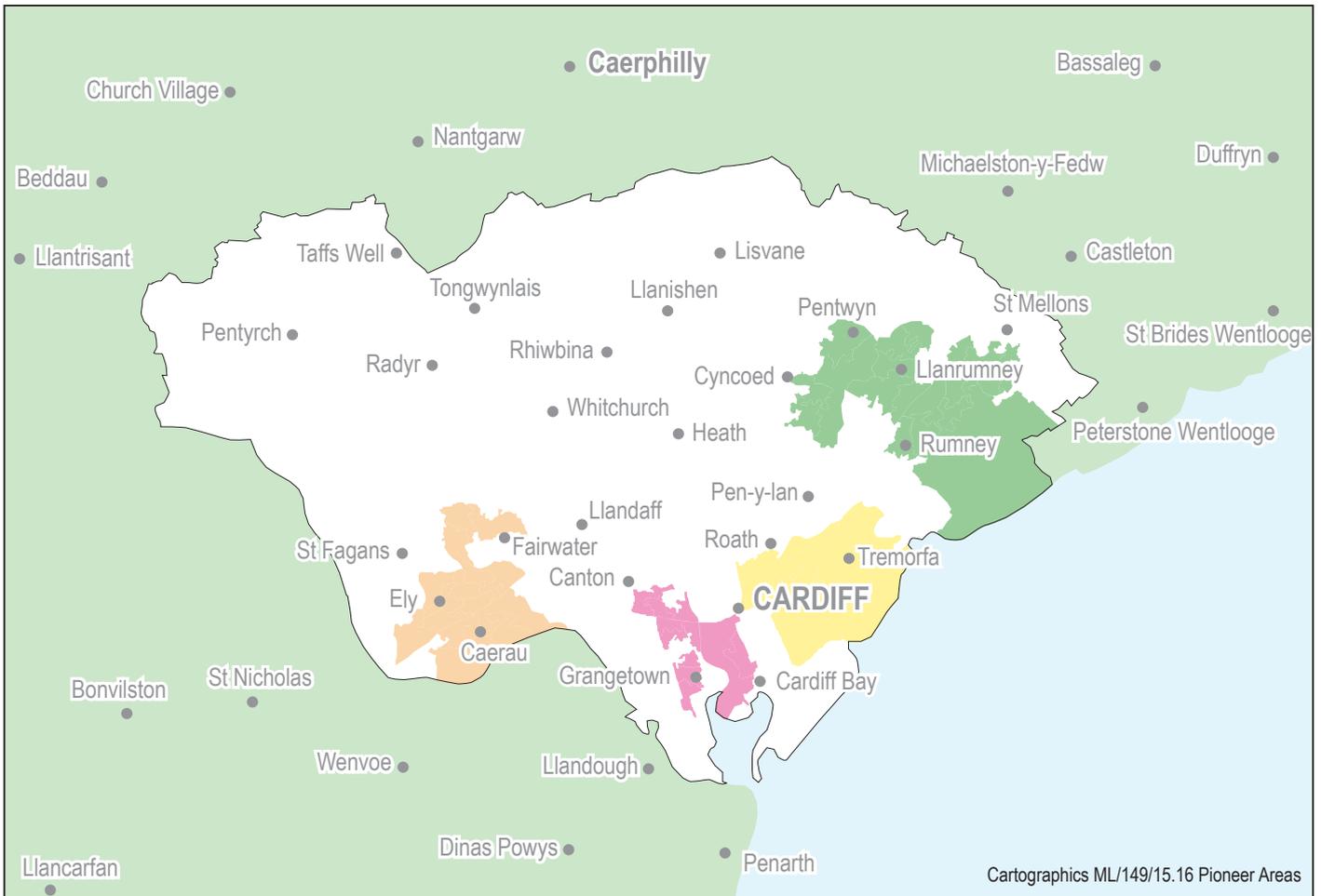
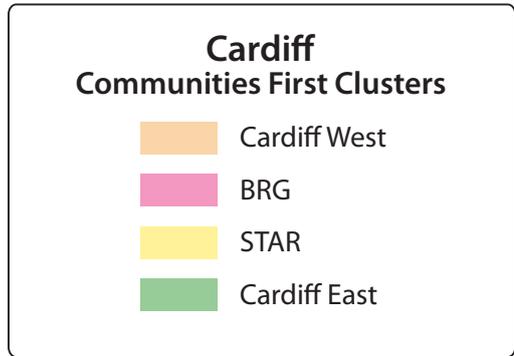
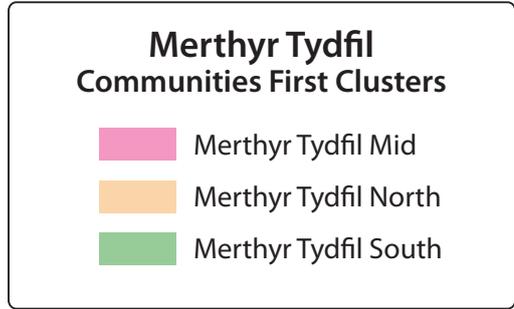
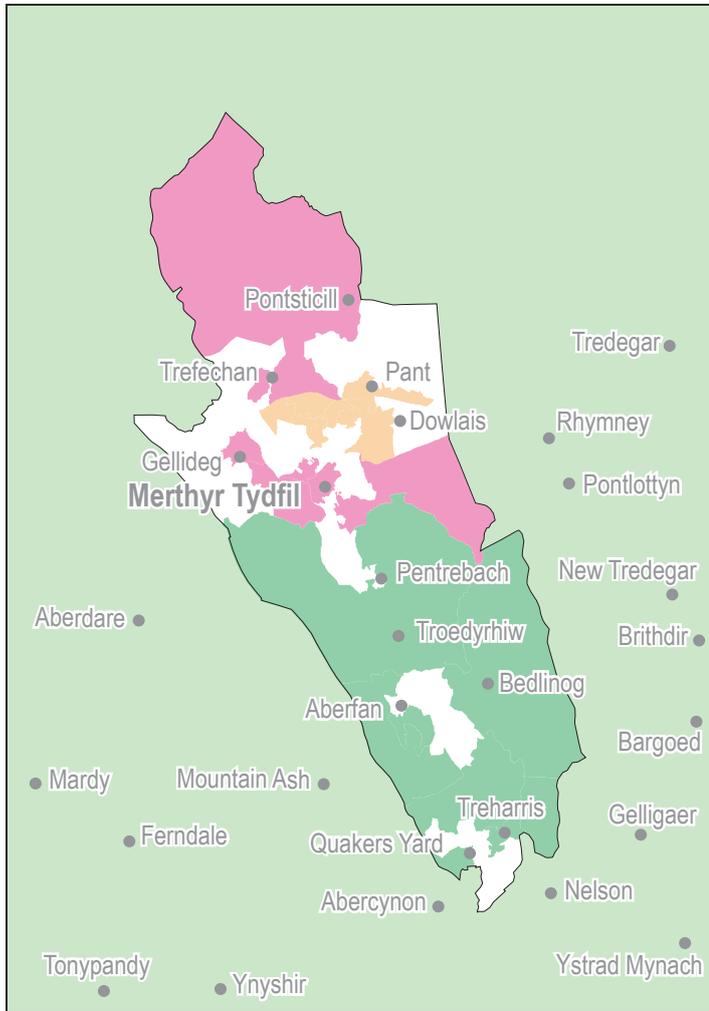
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# Merthyr Tydfil & Cardiff

## Pioneer Areas & Communities First Clusters



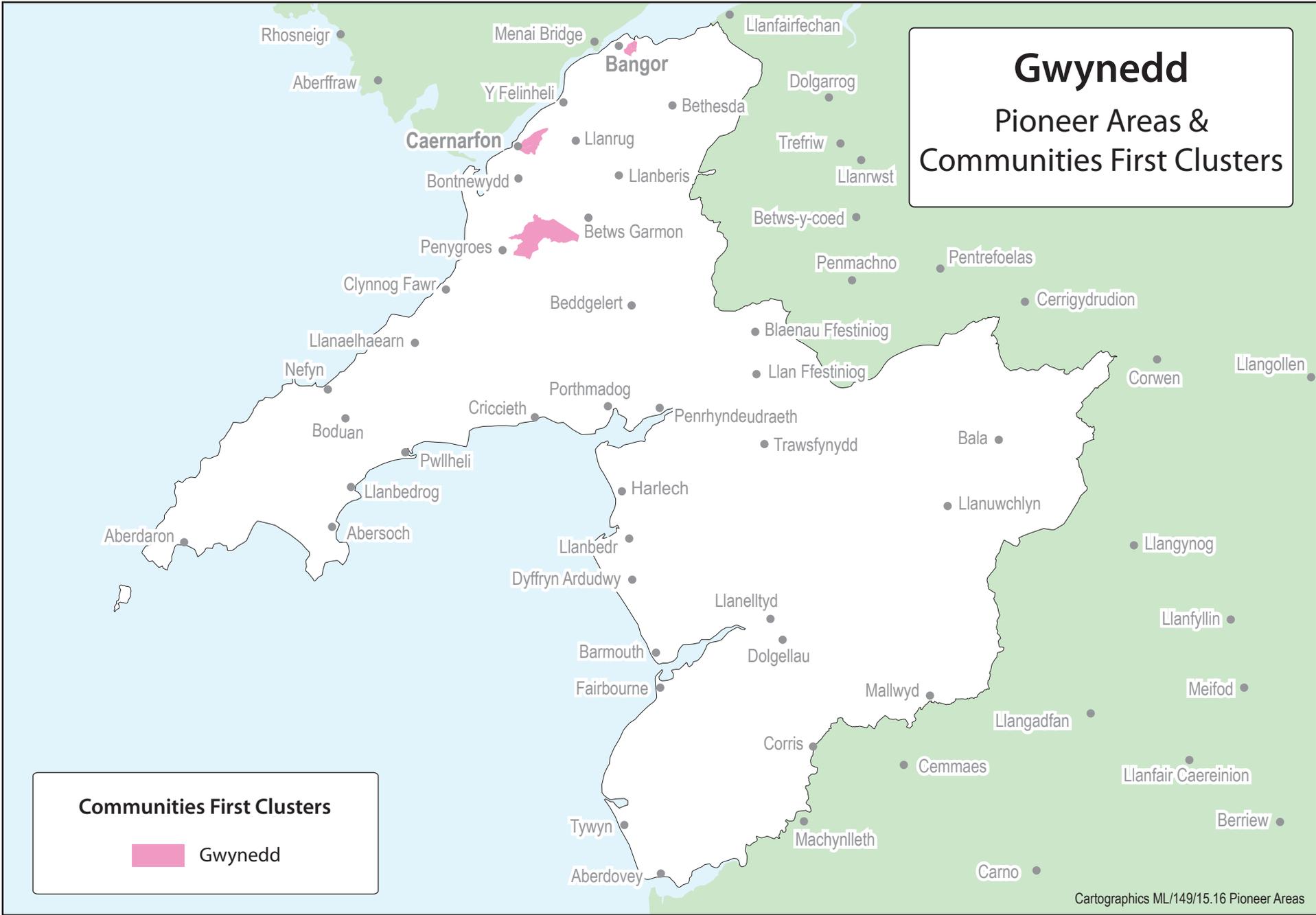
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# Gwynedd

## Pioneer Areas & Communities First Clusters

**Communities First Clusters**

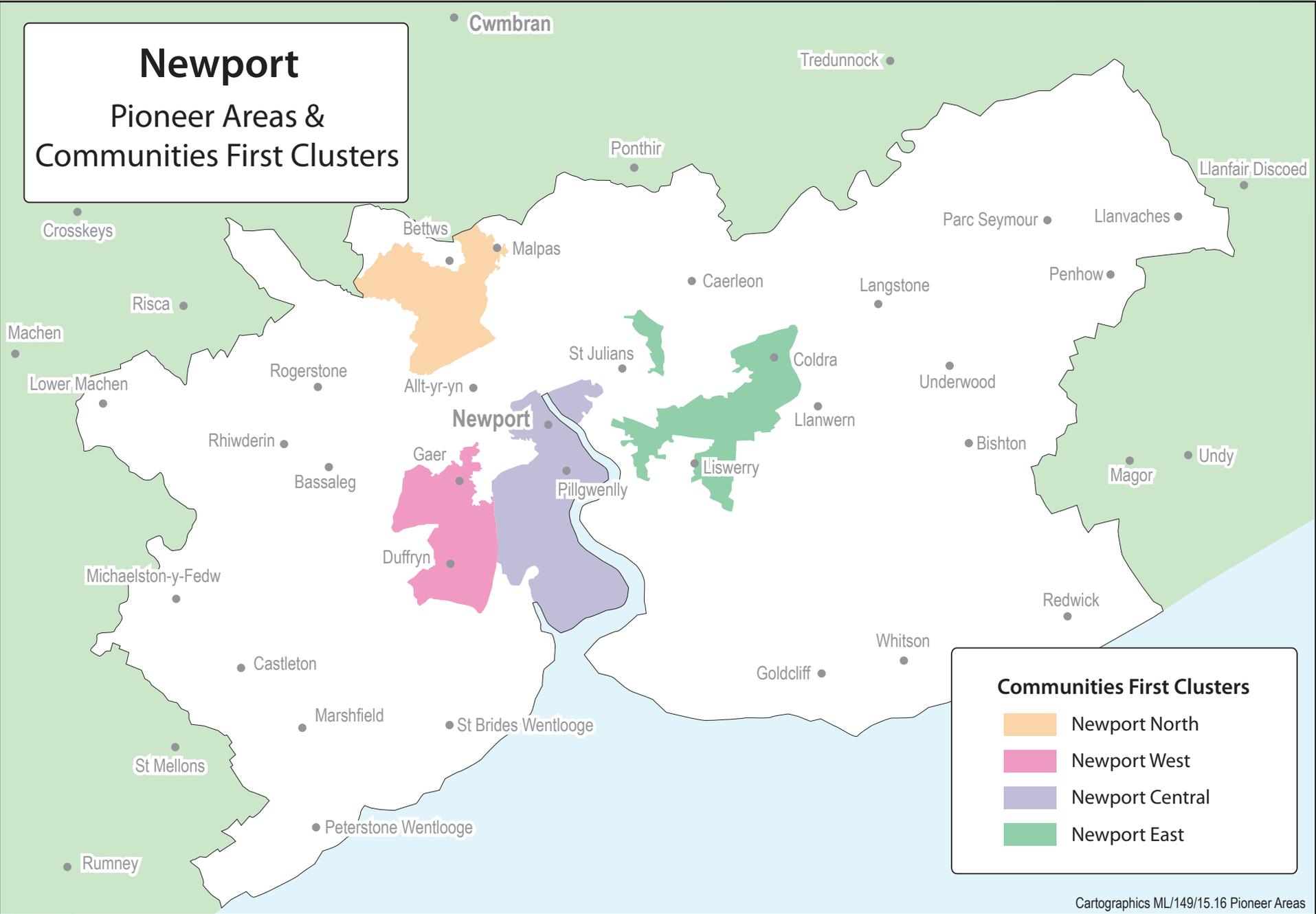
Gwynedd



Cartographics ML/149/15.16 Pioneer Areas

# Newport

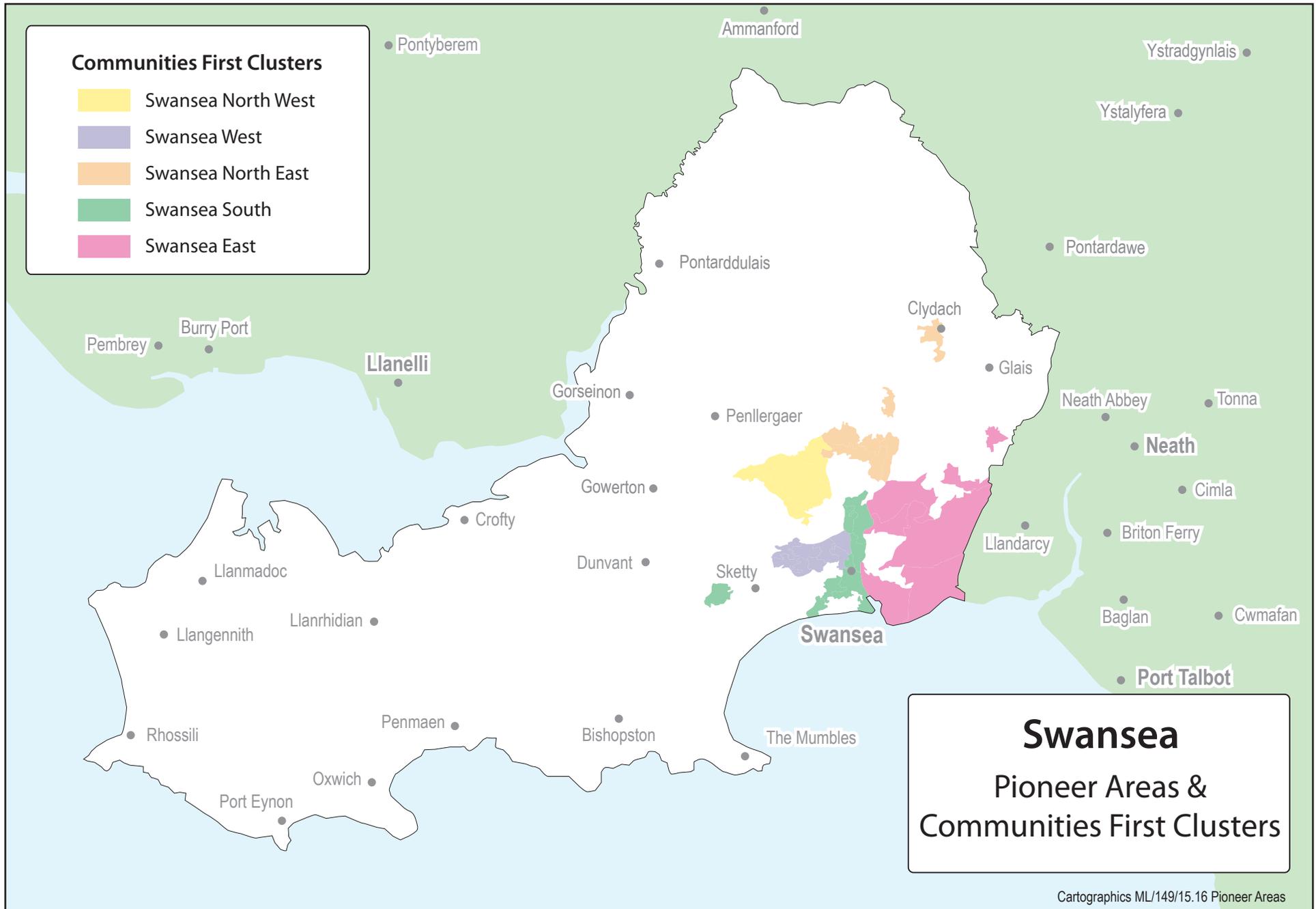
## Pioneer Areas & Communities First Clusters



**Communities First Clusters**

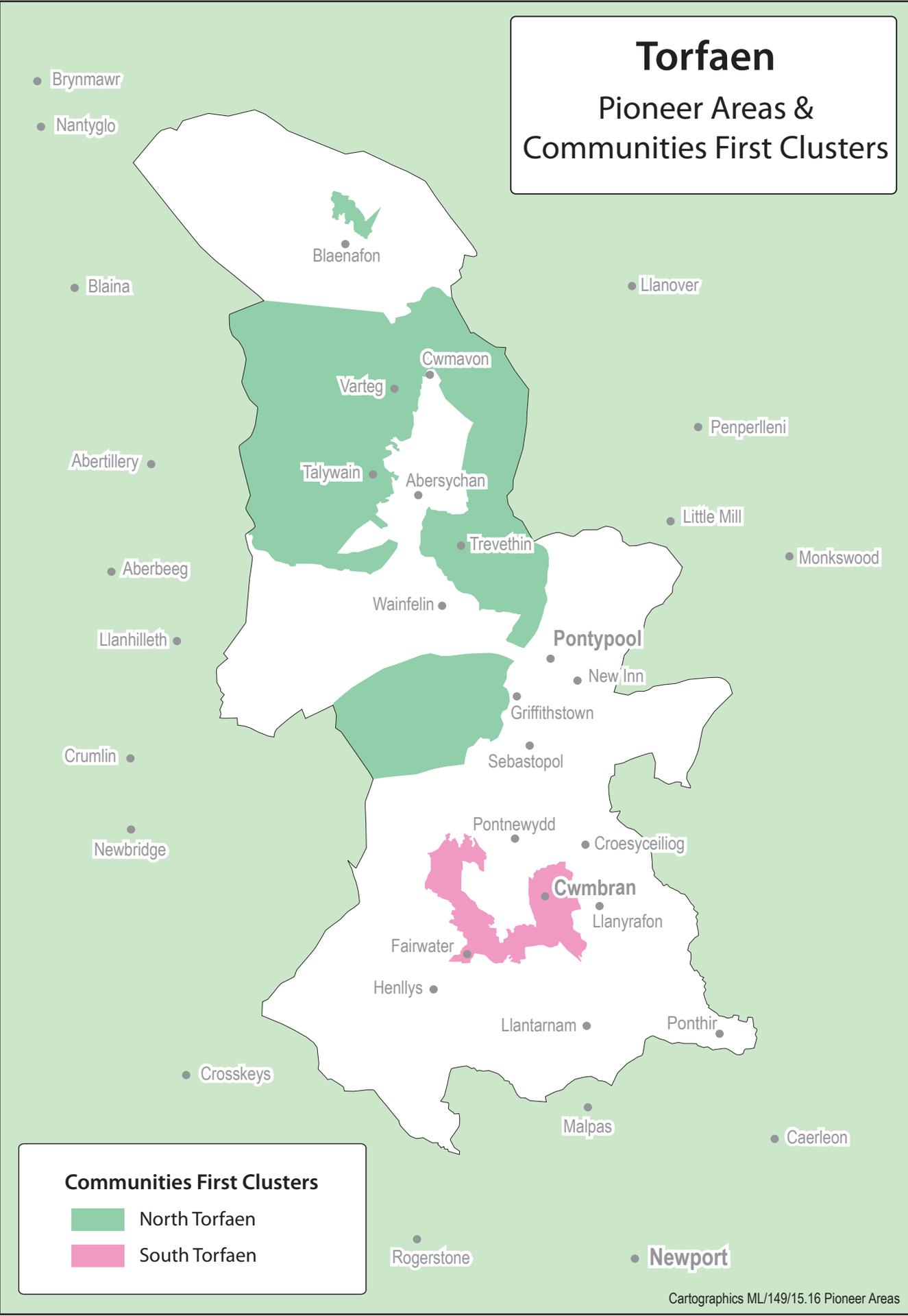
- Newport North
- Newport West
- Newport Central
- Newport East

Cartographics ML/149/15.16 Pioneer Areas



# Torfaen

## Pioneer Areas & Communities First Clusters



**Communities First Clusters**

- North Torfaen
- South Torfaen

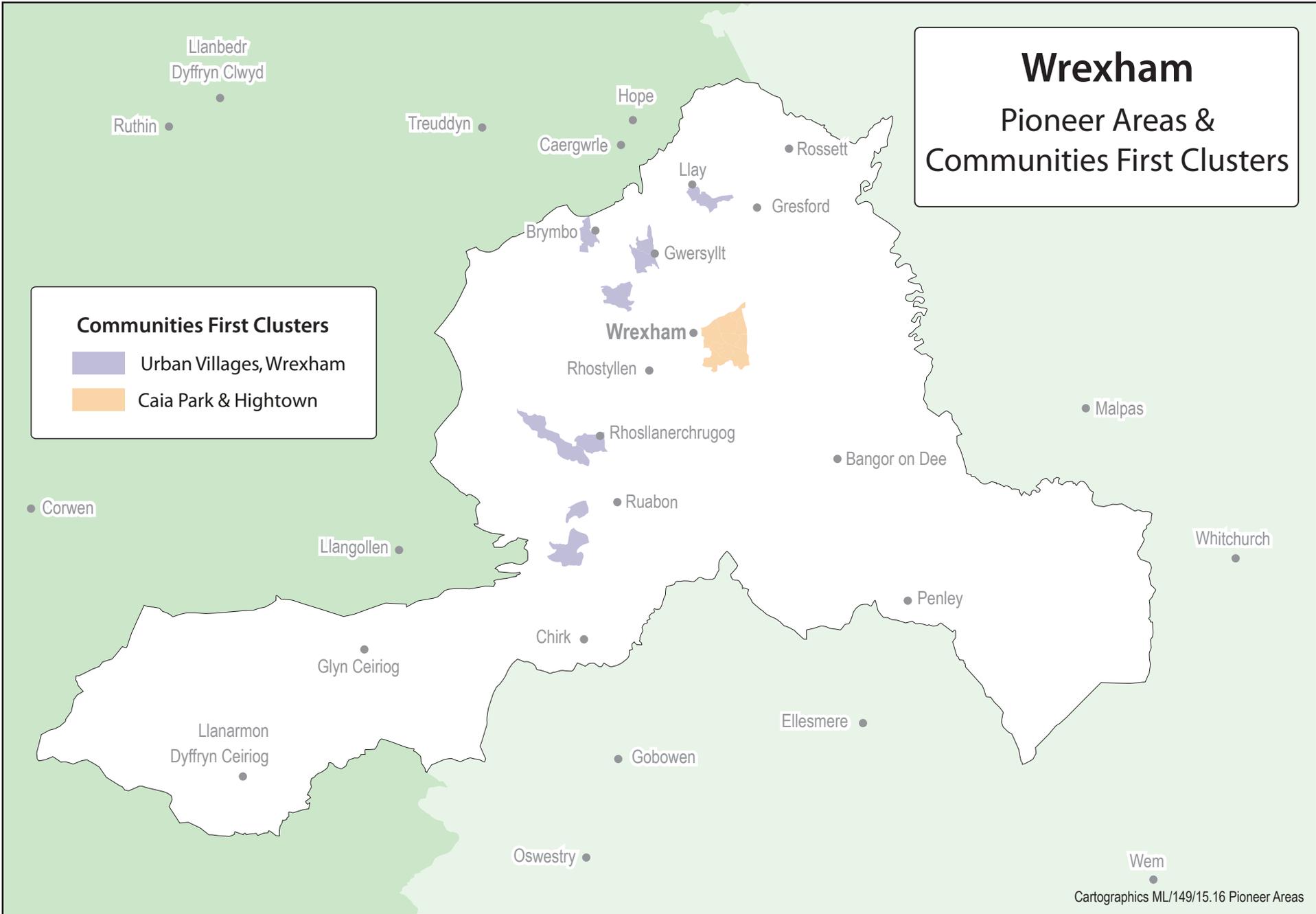
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# Wrexham

## Pioneer Areas & Communities First Clusters

**Communities First Clusters**

- Urban Villages, Wrexham
- Caia Park & Hightown



Cartographics ML/149/15.16 Pioneer Areas

## Annex Two: Outcomes Framework for Pioneer Areas

Culture supporting delivery of CF outcomes – for evaluation by Pioneer Areas supported by national research co-ordinator

Communities First Outcome	Contribution to Communities First Outcome	Links to other frameworks
<p><b>HC2 Promoting Physical Well Being</b>  <b>HC3 Promoting Mental Well Being</b></p>	<p>Promoting well being, emotional health and understanding of healthy lifestyles through cultural activity. Cultural activities used to encourage individuals to improve their own health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families First: Outcome 3</li> <li>• Flying Start: Children (Physical) and Parent (Mental Health)</li> <li>• Bodies should also consider integrating Five Ways to Wellbeing thinking into activities and linking to Arts &amp; Health networks established by ACW</li> </ul>
<p><b>HC6 Supporting people to live in the Community</b></p>	<p>Encouraging communities to work together to enjoy their communities and feel included by encouraging an understanding of a sense of place, identity and local history, and improving social networks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kay Andrews recommendations 4, 5, 22, 23 and 27</li> <li>• Flying Start: Children (Social) and Parent (Perceptions of Local Area and Social Support)</li> <li>• Heritage Lottery Fund: People (Learnt about Heritage and Change attitudes/behaviour)</li> </ul>
<p><b>LC1 Promoting Family Learning in the Early Years</b></p>	<p>Cultural activities promote learning and development from birth up to school age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kay Andrews recommendations 1 and 12</li> <li>• Flying Start: Children (Language and Cognitive)</li> </ul>
<p><b>LC2 Supporting Young People to do</b></p>	<p>Cultural activities are utilised to increase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kay Andrews recommendations 10,</li> </ul>

<b>well at School</b>	children's enjoyment of learning and school, promote an enjoyment of learning and support attainment in areas such as literacy and numeracy	16, 17 and 21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families First: Outcome 2 (see L2)</li> <li>• Flying Start: Children (Language and Cognitive)</li> <li>• Heritage Lottery Fund: People (Learnt about heritage and Had an enjoyable experience)</li> </ul>
<b>LC3 Supporting Families to be engaged in their children's education</b>	Children's learning is supported and enriched through participation in cultural activities and parents are engaged in their children's education through participation in educational cultural activity outside of school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kay Andrews recommendations 1, 12 and 16</li> <li>• Families First: Outcome 2 and Outcome 4</li> <li>• Flying Start: Children (Language) ; Parent (Parent Skills / Confidence)</li> <li>• Heritage Lottery Fund: People (Learnt about Heritage)</li> </ul>
<b>LC4 Lifelong Learning in Communities LC5 Improving Adult Life Skills</b>	Supporting lifelong learning in communities and improving adult life skills through cultural activities and volunteering schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kay Andrews recommendation 10 and 21</li> <li>• Families First: Outcome 1</li> <li>• Flying Start: Parent (Parent Behaviour /Skills/Confidence)</li> <li>• Heritage Lottery Fund: People (Developed skills)</li> </ul>
<b>PC1 Helping People to develop employment skills and find work</b>	Cultural bodies facilitating search for employment, promoting active work experience and developing employability skills in adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kay Andrews recommendation 25</li> <li>• Families First: Outcome 1</li> <li>• Heritage Lottery Fund: People (Developed skills)</li> </ul>
<b>PC2 Reducing Youth Unemployment</b>	Cultural participation used as a tool to help young people engage better with the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kay Andrews recommendation 25</li> <li>• Families First: Outcome 2</li> </ul>

<b>and disengagement</b>	world of work, acquire new skills and provide opportunities for self-development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heritage Lottery Fund: Communities (Local areas/communities will be a better place to live/work/visit)</li> </ul>
<b>PC3 Promoting Digital Inclusion</b>	Cultural providers seek to ensure access to ICT, support acquisition of basic ICT skills and improve people's confidence in using ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kay Andrews recommendation 26</li> <li>Heritage Lottery Fund: People (Develop skills)</li> </ul>

**Stakeholder Engagement and Infrastructure – for evaluation by national research co-ordinator supported by Pioneer Areas**

<b>Communities First Outcome</b>	<b>Contribution to Communities First Outcome</b>	<b>Links to other frameworks</b>
Promoting joined up working between cultural organisations, Communities First clusters and other sectors/agencies, and local communities	Cultural centres build sustainable collaboration with CF clusters and actively seek ways to work with other organisations, such as Local Authorities, housing associations, charities, community groups, schools, FE and HE institutions and others to share resources and knowledge and extend cultural participation within communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kay Andrews recommendations 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 31 and 32</li> </ul>

## Annex Three: Pioneer Area Programme Case Studies

The four projects chosen for case studies are:

1. LOCWS International Film-making Project, Swansea Pioneer Area
2. Family Learning Signature (FLS), Gwynedd Pioneer Area
3. Positive Identity Youth Project, Newport Pioneer Area
4. Oriol Crafters / 'Make Trips' Project, Wrexham Pioneer Area

### 1. LOCWS International Film-making Project, Swansea Pioneer Area

<b>Key partners</b>	Communities First LOCWS International Workers' Educational Association Cymru (WEA Cymru)
<b>Target Groups</b>	School age children Unemployed adults Individuals who are socially isolated
<b>Tackling Poverty Outcomes</b>	PC1: Helping people to develop employment skills and find work PC2: Promoting active work experience and employability skills in adults LC2: Promoting family learning and engagement in their children's education

#### *Background to the project*

- 1.1 This project provides an example of a new activity that has been developed from the work of the Swansea Creative Learning Partnership (CLP) and delivered collaboratively with Communities First, LOCWS International<sup>1</sup> and the Workers'

<sup>1</sup> LOCWS International is an artist-led charity based in the City of Swansea and which commissions international and UK-based artists to create new contemporary artworks for accessible public spaces across the city. For more information, see their website: <http://www.locwsinternational.com/>.

Educational Association Cymru (WEA Cymru)<sup>2</sup> during the pilot year. It aims to support individuals living in the city's most deprived communities to develop individual pathways into formal learning and/or employment through developing and enhancing their inter-personal and employability skills. The project was delivered over 4 days in the autumn 2015, during which participants were given an opportunity to learn about digital filmmaking and to work as part of a small team to create a short film drawing on the diverse heritage and culture of their home communities.

- 1.2 The project was developed in direct response to concerns raised by local employers within the cultural and creative sectors that they were facing difficulties recruiting skilled staff at all levels, whether for experienced workers, graduates or technicians. The potential of the cultural and creative sector in contributing to strengthening economic growth within the area and across Wales was continually emphasised by the cultural partners; however it was noted that skills shortages within the industry were having a detrimental impact on growth. It was identified that industries, from film and digital media, are highly relevant on the creativity of individuals within the local community and therefore need access to a pool of talent with the right skills.
- 1.3 One of the key partners leading the project emphasised the critical role of basic skills, such as literacy, numeracy and employability, particularly in jobs within the creative sectors where there is a strong technical or artistic element. In addition, it was highlighted that there is also a need for strong vocational pathways into the creative sector. In response to these key factors, LOCWS had recently developed a working partnership with the National Waterfront Museum and Bay Studios<sup>3</sup>, to assist with the design and delivery of its outreach programme, and through this to explore potential opportunities for providing specialist training aimed at communities within disadvantaged areas of the city.

### *Project outputs*

- 1.4 The project engaged 25 individuals aged between 10 to 50 years (from three Communities First Clusters) in a series of film-making workshops delivered by a local artist over a four-day period. Through collaboration with the Workers' Educational

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<sup>2</sup> The Workers' Educational Association Cymru (WEA Cymru) provides community education, including community development and on-line learning, in communities and workplace education. It delivers its work through a local branch structure and via partnership working with community and voluntary organisations; representative organisations in the workplace; and other providers, including the voluntary sector, local authorities, further education colleges, and universities. Further information can be found on their website: <http://www.weacymru.org.uk/>.

<sup>3</sup> Bay Studios, based in Swansea, is Europe's biggest indoor film studios, which offers a wide range of employment opportunities in the film and television industry, as well as in a number of different trades

Association (WEA), participants were given an opportunity to gain an Agored Cymru Entry Level credit-based professional accreditation alongside the course.

### *Monitoring and Evaluation processes*

- 1.5 The project outcomes were identified by the project leads, in close collaboration with Communities First staff based in each Cluster, to reflect the specific needs and priorities of the participants and were directly aligned to the Pioneer Area Outcomes Framework. As a result, the clusters did not necessarily report on the same outcomes; for example, one cluster included participants from a younger age category, and the level of the training being offered in each community varied, depending on the particular point in an individual's progression it was being offered.
- 1.6 As part of the monitoring and evaluation process, a documentary film was produced, with input from the participants, to provide an overview of the project and to capture participants' perceptions and experiences of the project and its impact on their lives<sup>4</sup>.

### *Key outcomes and impacts*

- 1.7 Evidence from the evaluation indicates that the activities delivered as part of the project has had a positive impact on participants. Anecdotal evidence from the stakeholders interviews and the monitoring and evaluation data gathered as part of the project, suggest that the project has played an important role in supporting participant progression by allowing individuals to enhance their employability and develop new practical and technical skills. For example, during the project, participants were introduced to rapidly developing digital formats, and were taken through the key processes of making a short film, including pre-production (idea development, planning and research), production (camera, sound and lighting operation) and post-production (artwork design and final editing).
- 1.8 'Soft' outcomes, such as increased confidence and self-esteem among participants are also evident. One of the Communities First representatives involved in the project emphasised that the greatest achievement has been the impact of taking part in a positive and confidence boosting experience, which had '*inspired further learning and aspiration among participants*'. The documentary film produced by project participants also provides evidence of the immediate impact of the project on participants' future learning aspirations – for example, several participants noted their intentions to undertaking further training:

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<sup>4</sup> The documentary film can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZngpGfflFgU>.

*“It’s definitely something I’ve really enjoyed. In the future I’d like to do something like this again, do another course and see where it goes. I really enjoyed the acting part of it and would like to carry on with it.”* (Participant D)

*“I wanted to learn about the software and all about making a film, and I’m now looking for some advanced course in media to learn more about it.”* (Participant E)

*“I’d definitely like to do it again in the future, so hopefully something pops up again soon.”* (Participant F)

- 1.9 Evidence collected from the stakeholder interviews also indicated that the development and implementation of the project has been a valuable learning experience for the cultural partners. Representatives from Locws emphasised the value of linking directly with the Communities First Cluster teams within the area. It was noted that, through this new working relationship, they now have a better awareness and understanding of the needs and priorities of local communities and of approaches to designing and delivering projects with a specific focus on the targeting of individuals in disadvantaged communities. It was noted that LOCWS are working closely with WEA Cymru to explore opportunities to develop and offer new courses and accreditation.
- 1.10 As a result of the success of the programme, the cultural providers are working in partnership to deliver a second phase of workshops between January and November 2016, which replicate and build upon the first set of film-making activities. The workshops are being delivered in partnership with WEA Cymru and will provide opportunities to gain accreditation at both Entry Level and Level 1. The aim of this second phase is:
- to reconnect with participants from the first stage of the project, with a focus on how they would like to progress in terms of their learning;
  - to provide opportunities for previous participants to engage in mentoring and peer-support activities to share knowledge, skills and learning experiences;
  - to engage new participants from the CF Clusters, with a view to increasing the number of participants enrolled on the workshops.
- 1.14 The cultural partner leading the workshops noted that seven participants from the first round of workshops had signed up to participate in the higher level course.
- 1.15 The positive impact of the project on individuals living in the Communities First Clusters, along with the commitment of the cultural partners in building on the work

that has been undertaken in the pilot year, is emphasised by one of the lead partners from the Pioneer Area:

*“The success of this film-making project can itself be seen as evidence that the Swansea Creative Learning Partnership’s approach has been successful. As the partnership continues to develop and partner relationships and understanding grow, so will the mechanisms around measuring success.”*

## 2. Family Learning Signature Project, Gwynedd Pioneer Area

<b>Key partners</b>	Communities First Gwynedd County Council Various local, regional and national cultural, heritage and arts organisations
<b>Target Groups</b>	School age children Families
<b>Tackling Poverty Outcomes</b>	LC1 Promoting family learning in the early years LC2 Supporting young people to do well at school LC3 Supporting families to be engaged in their children’s education

### *Background to the project*

2.1 The Family Learning Signature (FLS) is an engagement and data gathering process that focuses on the capacity of the family to support their child’s learning. A fundamental principle of the process is that the family works together to create its own Signature and through this process engage in an honest discussion about their strengths and weaknesses, and what they can do (either on their own, or with support from others) to improve their capacity to support learning. The data gathered is subsequently used by the school to design and deliver targeted support where it is most needed.

- 2.2 Briefly, the FLS process consists of 36 'Elements', grouped into four 'Conditions' (culture; environment; commitment; and skills), that represent the learning capacity of the family. Participating families are invited to a workshop, during which they are asked to respond to 36 statements and to assess themselves against the 'Elements' that impact on their capacity to support learning.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.3 The FLS was first implemented in Gwynedd in 2004 as part of a 'School to School Cross County Collaboration Project' partnering Primary and Secondary schools from within the Gwynedd Communities First Cluster. The project was led by GwE<sup>6</sup>, with support from the Welsh Government's Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) and the Communities First programme. The project included seven schools: Ysgol Friars, Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle, Ysgol Maesincla, Ysgol yr Hendre, and Ysgol Talysarn, and was led by Ysgol Glancegin in Bangor. Within the lead school, 30 families, which included every pupil from Year 6, produced a personalised signature as part of the process. Over 80% of the signatures were completed during pre-advertised workshops held within the school, and the remainder were undertaken in smaller groups at later dates. Using the data collected as part of the process, the school identified key areas that were highlighted as particularly challenging and then selected a group of families that would benefit from further targeted support to overcome these challenges. It subsequently worked alongside the Communities First Cluster and an external partner - the Beacon Climbing Centre in Caemarfon - to design a tailored session for the families. A representative from the lead school describes the approach taken during the session and reflects on their success:

*'The session started with them having to plan what equipment they were going to use, who was going to do what during the session and which member of that family was playing which role. So they had to create their own session plan. Then they had to communicate and talk to one another whilst they were climbing. The sessions allowed us to test the waters and see if we could offer something which could help families to change their signature - to turn the red into yellow and the yellow into green. The response from the families and the schools about the activity was very positive.'*

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<sup>5</sup> Further information on the FLS process can be found on the BusinessLab website: <http://www.businesslab.co.uk/>.

<sup>6</sup> GwE is the School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales, which works alongside and on behalf of the Local Authorities of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Anglesey to develop excellent schools across the region. Further information can be found on their website: <http://www.gwegogledd.cymru/>.

- 2.4 Evidence gathered from the school clusters to date, supported by research undertaken by Bangor University, suggests that the FLS has had a number of positive impacts within the participating schools.
- 2.5 The process has been shown to build trust, engagement and confidence among families and school pupils, and to enhance the relationship between the school and families and carers. It has also proven successful in engaging hard-to-reach families;
- 2.6 The FLS programme has been proven to enhance collaboration; both within schools, and externally, between schools and partner organisations with whom tailored learning interventions are developed, based on the outputs from each Signature;
- 2.7 The workshops and sessions held within the schools have helped schools and partner organisations to gain access to families in a non-threatening way and encourage active participation within a 'safe' and familiar environment;
- 2.8 Additional evidence from long-term users of the FLS has demonstrated how the Signature has led to improvements in the learning capacity of pupils in receipt of free school meals, in terms of both attendance and attainment, resulting in considerable cost savings by the avoidance of costly acute interventions at a later stage (BusinessLab, 2015<sup>7</sup>)
- 2.9 Following the successful implementation of this first phase, the scope of the project was extended in 2015 to include an additional five schools from across Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, and Flintshire. This cross-authority collaboration has adopted a consortium-based approach that allows participating schools to pool PDG and Communities First funding to cover the cost of licensing the FLS, and any additional training and support to support the process.
- 2.10 As part of the Pioneer Area Pilot Programme, Ysgol Glancegin and the Communities First cluster are working with the Gwynedd-based schools that participated in the first phase of the FLS to deliver a second project that will engage a new group of participants from the Communities First area. The Gwynedd Fusion Network, which comprises representatives from various local, regional and national cultural, heritage and arts organisations and bodies operating within the county, was set up in April 2015 to support the Communities First cluster and members of the Gwynedd Fusion partnership to create, implement and evaluate a series of higher level and externally delivered interventions for families that complete the FLS during the 2015-16 academic year. At the time the evaluation was being carried out, the signatures were

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<sup>7</sup> BusinessLab (2015) *The Family Learning Signature: An Introduction*, Aberdeen: BusinessLab.

in the process of being completed and a series of training and information sharing workshops were held with members of the Fusion Network and participating schools to design a programme of family interventions to be delivered between January and March 2016 as part of the FLS process.

*Timetable of activities (January to March 2016)*

- 2.11 Between January and March 2016, the 10 partners will hold over 30 sessions aimed at families from the participating schools. Most of the sessions will be hosted by the partner organisations and will provide opportunities for the families to visit various cultural, heritage and arts venues and sites within their local area.

*Monitoring and evaluation processes*

- 2.12 All families participating in the FLS process will be asked to complete a monitoring form, both at the beginning and end of the process. The school will also be required to complete a series of questions based on their perceptions of the impact of the activities on each family. Each partner will provide input into the design of the monitoring forms and will incorporate the specific elements that their individual sessions aim to address; for example, opportunities to plan or opportunities to communicate and so on.
- 2.13 The quantitative and qualitative evidence gathered during the course of the FLS process will be collated and analysed in March 2016 and key findings from the project will be presented in a summary report.
- 2.14 The Fusion Network is also looking to design a monitoring and evaluation system to measure the longer-term impact of the FLS project, particularly in relation to repeat visits by the families to the participating cultural, heritage and arts venues and sites, with a view to reporting the results in September 2016.

**3. 'Positive Identity - A Journey of self-discovery and awareness' Project, Newport Pioneer Area**

<b>Key partners</b>	Urban Circle Productions Communities First Newport Central Cluster Newport YMCA University of South Wales Black History Month Wales Newport Museum Black Nine Films
<b>Target Groups</b>	Young people aged 10-17 years from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds
<b>Tackling Poverty Outcomes</b>	PC1 Helping people to develop employment skills and find work PC2 Promoting digital inclusion LC2 Supporting young people to do well at school

*Background to the project*

3.1 The project provided opportunities for a group of young people aged between 10 to 17 years from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds in three inner city communities to participate in a series of heritage and film-making workshops. The workshops explored in detail the influence of ancient African cultures on the development of contemporary BME communities within the area, and their integration into Welsh society. The project was led by Urban Circle, a locally-based youth organisation, in partnership with Communities First; various local and cultural and heritage organisations; Black Nine Films a professional UK-based film production company; and the University of South Wales. As part of the workshops, participants researched the influence of Afro/Caribbean history and culture on their communities using historical records and film documentaries, and interviewed a range of local residents. They were also given an opportunity to learn about digital filmmaking by

taking part in the making of a short film, which celebrated the diverse heritage and culture of their home communities.

### *Project outputs*

- 3.2 The key outputs from the project included the following:
- a series of film-making workshops delivered by Black Nine Films over a one-week period in May 2015;
  - two workshops on Research Methods delivered by staff at the University of South Wales, Caerleon Campus and City Campus in Newport;
  - a heritage workshop delivered by the Open Learning and Heritage Manager at Newport Museum;
  - an outdoor camping trip for project staff and participants.

### *Outcomes and impacts*

- 3.3 The film-making workshops included lectures and interactive sessions covering themes such as the history of film, the power of the media, an introduction to the documentary film, and the importance of black history, as well as practical sessions providing participants with an introduction to the basics of film-making. Within these sessions, participants increased their knowledge of different filming and editing styles; techniques for achieving effective composition; and the importance of audio and archive footage, and gained practical experience in the use of state-of-the art digital camera equipment. On completion of the workshops, staff and volunteers from Urban Circle worked with the participants during weekly sessions to reflect on what they had learnt and to plan, research and prepare the documentary film.
- 3.4 The Research Methods workshops sought to equip participants with an appreciation and understanding of carrying out research and covered elements including research plan design, qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection; and data analysis techniques. Anecdotal evidence provided by the lead partner indicated that the workshops had increased participants knowledge and understanding of the research process, and equipped them with the necessary skills to plan and deliver an in-depth research project. It also provided a valuable first experience of further education for the participants as it was reported that many had never visited the University campuses before.
- 3.5 The heritage workshop held in Newport Museum enabled participants to enhance their awareness and understanding of local history and important heritage sites within their area. Themes explored during the workshop included the history of the Romans;

local population migration patterns; the history of coal mining in the South Wales Valleys; and changes in the local economy.

- 3.6 Anecdotal evidence provided by the cultural partner leading the project indicated that as well as receiving training and hands-on experience of using specialist filmmaking equipment, including a professional digital camera and film-editing software, participants also gained valuable communication, team-working and project management skills, and an increased appreciation and understanding of their heritage.
- 3.7 Through consultation with the youth steering group, participants were given an opportunity to take part in an outdoor camping trip as a break from the intensity of the project activities. During the trip, participants took part in a series of outdoor team building activities aimed at encouraging team bonding and increasing confidence. Anecdotal evidence provided by the project leads indicated that participants valued the experience of being outdoors and to interact in a more casual, fun and social setting, and the activities allowed them to develop valuable transferable skills including problem-solving and independent thinking; communication and listening; and decision-making, leadership and self-management. Through this, it was observed that new energy and ideas were injected into the project.
- 3.8 Over the course of the project a steering group, which included representation from the participants, met on 16 occasions and enabled the young people to influence and contribute to decision making processes relating to the project. As an example the two screenings of the documentary were organised and coordinated by the participants represented on the steering group.
- 3.9 The project was managed and delivered by four members of paid staff (three youth workers and an administrative assistant) who were appointed for a six-month period, with support from two volunteer youth workers.
- 3.10 The short documentary film entitled 'Positive Identity - A Journey of Self-Discovery and Positive Awareness', that was developed as part of the project is being used as an educational tool by the community and the partner organisations to address some of the myths and misunderstandings about black history. The film received its premiere at Cineworld cinema in Newport in October 2015 to coincide with Black History Month. All tickets for the 120-seat premier were sold, and a tour of screenings across Newport and Cardiff is being planned for early 2016.

#### 4. Wrexham Pioneer Area: Oriel Crafters / ‘Make Trips’ Project

<b>Key partners</b>	<p>Oriel Wrexham</p> <p>Communities First</p> <p>Wrexham County Borough Council</p> <p>National Trust (Chirk Castle and Erddig Estate)</p> <p>Denbighshire County Council (Plas Newydd, Llangollen)</p>
<b>Target Groups</b>	<p>Unemployed adults</p> <p>Individuals who are socially isolated</p>
<b>Tackling Poverty Outcomes</b>	<p>PC1 Helping people to develop employment skills and find work</p> <p>PC2 Promoting digital inclusion</p> <p>LC2 Supporting young people to do well at school</p>

##### *Background to the project*

- 4.1 The Oriel Crafters and ‘Make Trips’ Project are examples of activities that have been facilitated and delivered through the work of the Wrexham Pioneer Area partnership. In June 2015, a series of drawing courses, led by Oriel Wrexham (a Local Authority-funded art gallery) in partnership with the Communities First Cluster team, were delivered to seven local residents in the Caia Park community in Wrexham to encourage accessibility to cultural activities, the arts and heritage among local unemployed and socially isolated adults. On completion, the participants expressed a desire to continue to meet as a group and to further explore and develop their interests, and with the support of Oriel Wrexham, an informal, peer-led drawing group - Oriel Crafters was established. The establishment of this group provides a sustainable model within which participants can continue their work; they meet on a weekly basis to collaborate on craft-based activities, to share skills, ideas and knowledge, and participants are responsible for generating projects and for coordinating and leading each session.

4.2 Following on from this work and in response to a request from the Oriel Crafters to broaden the scope of their activities to take advantage of opportunities within the wider cultural and heritage sector in Wrexham, a new programme of drawing courses was introduced by Oriel Wrexham in the autumn 2015 ('Make Trips') aimed at existing members of the Oriel Crafters group and new participants from the Caia Park community. The cultural partner leading the project emphasised that the Communities First Cluster had played a key role in facilitating and encouraging participation through direct links with individuals and groups within the community, email, e-bulletins and newsletters. Maintaining regular contact with interested participants in the weeks leading up to the workshops also ensured participation.

*"CF have supported all the activities that we've done, particularly in terms of recruiting participants because they're there on the ground, they know the community and they've got those links that we haven't got. So it was about us not re-developing the wheel and making these links separately when they already existed, so that's worked really well."* (Cultural partner interview)

4.3 The project followed a similar structure to the initial drawing courses, but participants were given the opportunity to complete four one-day workshops hosted at various cultural and heritage sites across the County Borough. The destinations that were chosen as part of the project included Chirk Castle and the Erddig Estate (both National Trust properties) Plas Newydd in Llangollen and a trip on a canal boat along a five mile stretch of the Llangollen Canal World Heritage site in the Dee Valley, which included a crossing of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

4.4 A key aim of these visits was to allow participants the opportunity to apply and develop their skills in a new cultural setting beyond their usual familiar community surroundings of Caia Park. In fact, many of the participants had not visited the sites before and valued the new experiences that were provided.

*"It's been a delight to go to all these different places, and it's introduced us to new environments ... I think I'll be quite sad that this is the last one. We'll remember these experiences ... and hopefully we'll have more opportunities as well."*  
(Pioneer Area project participant)

4.5 The Oriel Crafters group prepared a bid for funding to cover the transportation costs and received contributions from both Communities First and the Destination Management team at Wrexham Council.

4.6 As part of the Wrexham Pioneer Area work programme, Oriel Wrexham also delivered a four week 'Introduction to Creative Floristry' course, in partnership with

Communities First. The course was offered in response to interest from members of Oriol Crafters and participants from the drawing workshops held as part of the Make Trips project. The course consists of two phases, each arranged over 4 sessions. The first phase was completed in autumn 2015 and the second will be delivered between February and March 2016. It is hoped that participants who register for the second phase of the course will be able to gain a professional accreditation in floristry alongside the course and therefore it will be possible to demonstrate how the course can be of tangible benefit to the individuals in Caia Park.

### *Monitoring and evaluation approaches*

4.7 The monitoring and evaluation processes developed for the project included the following:

- Registration forms were distributed and completed at the start of project to gather background, including age, employment status and postcode;
- Informal feedback was gathered during the workshops to gather information on participants' views and experiences;
- End of project evaluation forms were used to capture information on participant experience and participant progression;
- A filmmaker also accompanied participants on each visit to document the activities undertaken and to gather additional feedback from the participants about their experiences on the workshops.

### *Outcomes and impacts*

4.8 Evidence gathered during the evaluation indicated that the project and its related activities have had a number of positive impacts, including:

- Increased engagement with cultural, arts and heritage venues and sites;
- Active participation and increased social connectedness;
- Improved self-confidence and well-being;
- Improved alignment between health priorities, culture and Communities First.