

# Equality Impact Assessment

**Name of policy, strategy, programme or scheme:**

Arts Council of Wales Operational Plan 2019/20

**New or Existing policy, strategy, programme or scheme:**

This is the updated statement of our activities set out in our new Operational Plan 2019/20.

**Section / Department:**

Council as a whole

**Person undertaking the Assessment:**

Nick Capaldi

**Date of Assessment:**

15 March 2019

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## 1. What is the aim of the policy, strategy project programme or scheme?

Our Operational Plan – agreed each year by Council – describes the activities that we will undertake during the year ahead. The Plan describes our priorities for that year and therefore determines our spending as well as the allocation of staff time and other resources.

This is the first Operational Plan to be prepared since the publication of our new Corporate Plan “For the Benefit of All...”.

## 2. Who is affected by the policy or who is intended to benefit from the proposed policy and how?

Given the all-encompassing nature of the Corporate and Operational Plans, a wide range of individuals and organisations is potentially affected. This includes artists, local authorities, project partners and the public.

It's Council's intention that through the Plan and its spending proposals, we will change the underlying basis of our historic patterns of support.

Our research shows that the presence of people with protected characteristics in the population as a whole is far from being matched in the activities that we are funding.

We also know that there are some systemic barriers that prevent more people from enjoying and taking part in the arts, including the impact of those living in relative poverty.

The arts across Wales are currently reaching a tiny number of people from protected characteristic groups.

The gap is especially striking in the shockingly low number of disabled people and those from BAME backgrounds employed or represented on boards of management. This disparity is a matter of considerable concern to Council who want to see this change materially over the lifetime of this Plan.

Whether attending, taking part or working in the administration of the arts as employee or board member, we need to see a wider cross section of the population having the opportunity to be involved in the publicly funded arts. We report on this in more detail in our published Strategic Equalities Plan.

The success of our Plans depends on tackling Equalities issues from a number of different directions simultaneously. Our Operational Plan presents only a one-year 'slice' of activity. However, over the duration of the Corporate Plan, we intend to:

- Engage, consult, inform, encourage, challenge ourselves and our partners
- Develop a creative workforce that better reflects the diversity of Wales
- Increase the diversity of arts audiences
- Increase the diversity of arts participants
- Invest in the development of more diverse arts practice through commissioning schemes that broaden the diversity of work made in Wales
- Support a further phase of activity through our cARTrefu project
- Work with the Arts Portfolio Wales to address the targets in our Strategic Equality Plan

We have also identified four particular priorities in terms of commissioning, producing and presenting work:

- the creative work of disabled artists
- the creative work of BAME artists
- the consolidation of our work with Older People in social care settings
- the creative work of artists wanting to work through the medium of Welsh

**3. How has the policy been, or will be put into practice, and who is or will be responsible for delivering it?**

Agreeing the Corporate and Operational Plans, prior to its approval by Welsh Government, is one of the key responsibilities of Council.

The Council, as our Board, identifies the key priorities and commitments. These are then implemented by the executive staff.

The Corporate Plan was developed through a series of All Wales Creative Conversations, engaging with over 500 attendees from a variety of backgrounds and locations, across 12 events. This provided the basis for the preparation of our Operational Plan, which involved the input of staff from across our organisation.

Progress is monitored through the work of Council, its Committees and specialist Monitoring Groups.

**4. Are there any general comments relating to each 'protected characteristic' and/or any relevant background information that should be noted in undertaking the assessment?**

The Arts Council of Wales is committed to promoting equality of access to a full range of arts activities for all individuals and communities, regardless of the 'protected characteristics'. We are currently consulting on our Lottery funding, but we expect that there will be a proposal to shift resources to provide additional heft to our corporate priorities.

The Corporate and Operational Plans were informed by a process of research, engagement and consultation, initially through a programme of activity focussed through our All Wales Creative Conversation. These were both physical meeting events and online activity via survey questionnaires. All participants are encouraged to complete equality monitoring questionnaires so that we may gauge the reach of our activity across all protected characteristic groups.

The Council's way of monitoring Equalities matters of Equalities is through its Strategic Equality Action Plan which is reviewed annually. The plan is posted on our website. The current Strategic Equalities Action Plan reflects on our key commitment of creating the best environment for the arts and artists to flourish, and renews our particular drive to reinvigorate work advancing Equalities. It says:

"Working to support greater equalities across the arts is not new to the Arts Council of Wales... But we need to do much more if we are to reach deeper and more widely into communities across Wales.

Our goal is to go further than simply matching the overall national

population statistics. The publicly funded arts should lead by example and be ambitious in its goals.”

Our most recently completed APW survey results show that there is more to do. Progress towards achieving a more equitable spread of activity is slow. This raises important issues about the activities of our APW, and additional research will be needed to better understand exactly what is happening. We know, for example, that there is a huge amount of activity happening under the banner of the Creative Learning programme that is not being accurately picked in our routine monitoring.

Investment in people and projects in the Protected Characteristics groups is also delivered through activities supported by funding allocated from the Arts Council’s Strategic and Lottery budgets. We do not believe that our support for any of the Protected Characteristics groups deteriorates as a result of our overall Budget proposals. However, we do recognise the areas of our strategy that have historically been under-developed and in need of attention. Our financial strategy aims to address this.

The Council's way of determining actions and initiatives and programmes is through its Equality Plan. However, we currently have an insufficient body of evidence in some areas. This impedes our ability to measure progress for those protected characteristics that haven’t previously been included in the data that we gather.

This is especially the case with Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Religious Belief and Sexual Orientation. This is being addressed.

Improved data will enable us to better understand the specific actions that we should be taking. In time it will also help us to assess how effective we have been in enabling those from protected characteristics to take advantage, on an equal basis, of the opportunities we offer.

Our progress in meeting our Equalities obligations is scrutinised by our Equalities Monitoring Group.

5. Could the policy, strategy, project programme or scheme have a differential impact on the following groups:

### Age

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

Council continues to consciously identify work with children and young people as a strategic priority.

There has been a particular emphasis in our strategy to date on young people and particularly through the ambitions of the Creative Learning Through the Arts programme. Work is currently underway to extend the Creative Learning programme for a further period.

Council has also been a prime mover in supporting creative opportunities for older people in such initiatives as the Gwanwyn Festival. We have also partnered with Age Cymru and the Baring Foundation to help ensure developments in access to arts which should have positive benefits for the elderly in social care environments. This will continue for a further phase of investment.

We will continue to track our engagement via our funding and strategic work through our Equalities reporting. In formulating our Corporate Plan invited Age Cymru to participate in our All Wales Creative Conversation.

A key task for 2019/20 will be embedding our new Arts and Health strategy. We know, of course, that such a strategy will not exclusively be focused on older people, but they will certainly be an important constituency.

### Disability

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

Our research reveals very clearly that the disability arts sector is under-represented in the portfolio of arts organisations currently funded, as are disabled artists in the wider work of the Council.

There have been some recent an increase in the actual numbers of disabled employees working within our Portfolio organisations. However, the overall numbers, in comparison with the total workforce overall, remain disappointingly low.

Our Strategic Equality plan 2017-21 addresses this with detailed actions.

Disabled audiences and participants continue to face barriers to fully engaging with the arts. The Hynt Scheme has been a notable success in this area.

Our Plans propose new initiatives to create more opportunities for disabled people to make work and to find employment in the arts.

## Gender Reassignment

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

Council recognised it needed to develop its work in this area and in order to mitigate any differential impact has entered into a formal agreement with Stonewall Cymru around their champions programme.

## Pregnancy and Maternity

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

Past project work has been specifically supported around arts and pregnancy group work. We do not believe that Council's operational proposals discriminate in this area.

We do recognise the need to ensure that the needs of pregnant and nursing mothers. For example, our Equalities Guide addresses considerations to be borne in mind in new build or adaptation projects to make them more accessible and welcoming to pregnant women and nursing mothers.

## Race or Ethnicity (including Gypsies/Travellers)

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

Our research and statistics show that artists and arts organisations from diverse backgrounds are underrepresented in our portfolio of funded organisations and across the arts sector generally.

Reported figures for engagement in our lottery funded projects are very low across the minority groups. Audiences and participants from these groups also face barriers to fully engaging with the arts. *Inspire* pays particular attention to the mainstreaming of the Equalities agenda.

In addition, through Creative Steps and other initiatives detailed in our Strategic Equality Action Plan, specific projects are currently underway to address these barriers.

We will initiate and implement targeted programmes which will increase the number of people from BAME backgrounds participating in arts activities across Wales. Our “Creative Steps” programme has had a positive effect, but we have concluded that we don’t feel that we’re getting as much impact as we could if we adopted a new approach.

We currently run a range of business development initiatives, of which “Resilience” is the most focused and transformational. We believe that the broader range of expertise and technical support available through “Resilience” should be offered to diverse organisations. We would especially target support for disability-led and BAME-led arts organisations, and would aim for a net increase in the number of companies supported through the new approach.

We are in the early stages of developing a partnership with the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community in Wales.

Particular initiatives such as the current collaboration with British Council in the India Wales Programme are linked to engagement and legacy work with communities in Wales.

We will continue to run targeted programmes that will seek to increase the diversity of the arts workforce and Board representation.

As with other protected characteristics this will be the subject of monitoring and policy development in the life of the strategy. We will track our engagement via our funding and strategic work through our Equalities Reporting.

## Religion or belief

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

Religion and belief is recognised as an underdeveloped area from the point of view of the Council's thinking on Equalities issues.

There is no specific impact that we can identify, although we are aware that some religions have rules that prescribe who can take part in the arts, and what art is permissible. Previous concerns around Freedom of Expression have been addressed through a revised Equal Opportunities Monitoring template that allows the individual to express themselves as they wish.

## Sex

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

APW surveys have shown that more women than men are employed within the current portfolio however at Board level, there are still more men than women. Our work with the Portfolio in the context of Resilience, will address the composition of Boards. Additionally our Strategic Equality Plan 2017-21 seeks to increase diversification of Boards.

Historic gender balance in the theatre profession remains an issue.

## Sexual Orientation

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

Council recognises that it needs to develop its working this area and in order to mitigate any differential impact has entered into a formal agreement with Stonewall Cymru around their *Champions* programme.

## Welsh Language

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

Yes

Given the Welsh Government's Well Being Of Future Generations commitments and the targeted growth in Numbers of Welsh Speakers, our Corporate Plan for 2018-23 needs to particularly address how we are fostering a vibrant language culture and supporting the context of growth in welsh speakers.



The introduction of new Welsh Language Standards has offered us an opportunity to reappraise this aspect of our work, but we are clearly not yet doing enough. Work through the Labordy Scheme with S4C and other targeted work is looking at the encouragement of new writing through the medium of the Welsh Language. The availability of high-quality theatre through the medium of Welsh is also an increasing area of concern.

A recent Task Group was convened to meet with sector specialists to consider the best way to proceed. Whilst the diagnosis of the issues is clear the solutions are less apparent. Simply ring-fencing a sum of money for Welsh Language theatre production would clearly have some benefit, but it's unlikely to underpin the kind of longer-term sustainable change that we'd all like to see.

Our instinct, therefore, is that this challenge needs to be addressed on a number of different fronts:

- better commissioning and development of scripts
- improvements in the quality of produced work
- appropriately skilled individuals occupying senior positions in the arts
- better marketing of Welsh Language product

Whilst we should certainly be prepared to increase funding to Welsh Language work, there would be benefit in further consultation with the sector over how best to manage this investment.

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

Is there a differential impact or the potential for differential impact?

No

No areas or approaches in present strategy or our proposed Corporate Plan are seen as inherently prejudicial in impact for this protected characteristic.

## Actions/Tasks Identified through the Screening and Assessment

| Issue                                     | Action / Task   | Lead Officer                                     | Timescale                     | Resource Implications    | Comments |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| The skills and competencies of our staff. | Support our staff and to become better and more confident advocates.                                | Director Engagement and Participation/HR Manager | End of 2019/20 reporting year | Learning and Development |          |
| The diversity of Council and its staff.   | Increase and broaden the range and diversity of people involved with the Arts Council and its work. | Director Engagement and Participation/HR Manager | End of 2019/20 reporting year |                          |          |
| Data and evidence                         | Improve our knowledge of activity across those within 'protected characteristics' groups            | Research Manager                                 | End of 2019/20 reporting year | Research                 |          |
| Profile and public awareness              | Demonstrate through our advocacy and campaigning that Council is an Equalities 'champion'           | Head of Communications                           | End of 2019/20 reporting year | Communications           |          |

**Who will approve / authorise?** Council

**How will these be monitored?** Senior Leadership Team