

Arts Council of Wales: Progress against expected outcomes set out in their Remit Letter for 2013-14

Deliverable/Outcome: Completion of new Arts Strategy

The renewal of ACW's Arts Strategy – including extensive public consultation – has now been completed. Its new strategy, *Inspire: Creativity and the Arts*, is different both in tone and style. ACW has attempted to produce a document that will engage a wider readership as the Remit Letter identified the importance of reaching more broadly a fuller range of communities across Wales.

The strategy is currently being translated and will be published on its website soon. It will also be available in 'easy read' and digital formats to improve accessibility.

Deliverable/Outcome: A report on the progress made by Revenue Funded Organisations in increasing their self-generated income, and in achieving greater efficiencies

ACW makes a number of demands of its revenue funded organisations (RFOs). However, it believes that funding reductions – both in ACW's own budgets and those of its local authority partners – is now having an impact. In terms of the headline figures for attendance and participation, the figures are as follows – based on the most recent year for which ACW has accurate and complete data, 2012-13:

RFO attendance and participation		
	2011/12	2012/13
Attendance	4,233,230	4,219,400
Participation	1,023,070	1,033,894

There has been a slight decrease in levels of attendance, although participation has increased.

Comparing 2012-13 with the previous year, ACW has noted the following:

- in terms of attendance there has been a 10% decrease in the number of events since 2011/12 from 18,397 to 16,513. However, this is partly due to the decrease in film screenings which can be attributed to change in the way the Film Cymru Wales is now recording its data
- in line with the decrease in activity there has been an overall decrease in attendances to events but this is less than 1% (0.3%), from 4,233,230 to

4,219,400. The decline is due to falling attendance at exhibitions and film screenings (down 8% and 10% respectively). Attendance at performing arts events has increased.

- overall participation in the arts is showing a decrease in the number of sessions run, down 9.3%, but there was an increase in participation in these sessions of 1.1%
- participatory sessions run for children and young people is the only area in which there has been a decrease in attendance - of 4.6%, from 641,932 attendances to 612,093 attendances, while attendances to open access participatory sessions and targeted sessions have increased by 7.6% and 40.6% respectively.
- arts events presented through the medium of Welsh have increased overall (up 11.9% year on year). While there was a drop in the number of Welsh language film screenings there was an increase of 43 Welsh language performances by touring companies in 2012-13 (an increase of 11%). The audience for these performances did not show any increase – attendance fell from just over 44,500 in 2011-12 to 33,400 in 2012-13 (a fall of nearly 25%).
- arts venues presented 90 more Welsh language events in 2012-13 compared to 2011-12 attracting an audience in excess of 60,000 which was an increase of 31.5% year on year, but Welsh language participatory activity targeted at children & young people has decreased both in terms of the number of sessions and levels of participation
- during the 2012-13 year there were 4,851 people professionally employed within revenue funded organisations, a drop on the previous year of just under 230 people

ACW hasn't yet finalised the full year RFO Survey for 2013/14. However, figures are available for the first six months in that year. When comparing April to September 2013 with the same period in 2012, attendances have decreased by 16% compared to the same reporting period in the previous year. Participation increased by 12%.

Whilst ACW welcomes the increase in participatory activity, such activity is usually free (although it obviously has a cost to the organisation), the decrease in attendances will have an impact on overall income.

Over recent years ACW has emphasised the need for RFOs to diversify their income base and to become less reliant on Arts Council funding. The table below indicates that dependency has actually increased slightly over the past three years.

Financial Year	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Arts Council Revenue funding as a % of overall turnover	25%	26%	27%

ACW suspect this is a reflection on the difficult economic climate, reductions in local authority funding and the challenge of commercial sponsorship/fundraising.

Deliverable/Outcome: Maximise attendances & increasing and broadening engagement and participation

Equalities, Access and Community Engagement

ACW provides regular updates on the two National Assembly Committee inquiries which have looked at arts matters: the accessibility of arts and cultural activities; and, participation in the arts. ACW is also contributing to the current discussion on implementation of the Culture and Poverty report.

Engagement and participation are now firmly embedded within its work as Council priorities. This work is underpinned by strategies for Equalities and the Welsh Language with specific action plans in each of these areas. ACW has also developed plans around Family Arts and a number of initiatives will be rolled out during the current financial year.

Deliverable/Outcome: A Compact and action plan with the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills, which addresses the recommendations arising from the 'review

Arts in Education

ACW has been pleased by the Government's response to the recommendations contained in the Arts and Education Review. It looks forward to working closely with Government to implement the Review recommendations.

Deliverable/Outcome: An update report on progress in implementing the Child Poverty strategy

This work is currently in progress and an update is awaited.

Deliverable/Outcome: Partnership and Collaboration with Local Government:

During 2013-14 local authorities made significant reductions in their spending plans. This has had a number of consequences, including:

- cuts in funding to key organisations, a number of them jointly funded with the Arts Council

- the potential closure of local authority managed venues or services
- attempts to contract out services or to locate them within an external trust
- the curtailment of arts development grants
- the downgrading or abandonment of local authority posts with responsibility for the arts.

ACW continues to work closely with local authority colleagues and it is trying to encourage, wherever possible, joint approaches to future funding issues. An example of this would be its joint approach, with Flintshire County Council, to look at the future funding needs of Clwyd Theatr Cymru.

Deliverable/Outcome: Projects to develop cultural relations with WG 'priority countries' and with the British Council

Welsh culture on the world stage/Major Events

Through its international division, Wales Arts International, ACW maintain a busy programme of activity both with the British Council, and in the Welsh Government's priority countries.

Three major international projects have dominated ACW's attention during the year: preparation for WOMEX 2013, Wales' presence at the Venice Biennale (featuring Bedwyr Williams) and the Dylan Thomas 100 Festival (which includes an international dimension).

WOMEX 13 achieved a number of key outcomes:

- it brought 2,153 delegates and more than 300 artists from 98 countries to the Welsh capital
- it resulted in well over 30 hours of regional, national and international broadcast coverage from BBC, S4C and the European Broadcasting Union
- presented over 30 top Welsh musicians to delegates from around the world
- contributed £2.9m to the local economy
- delivered media coverage of £800,000 in equivalent commercial value

And Bedwyr Williams at the Venice Biennale:

- attracted nearly 23,000 international visitors
- achieved over 100 mentions in the UK and international media (the average value equivalent of the coverage is estimated to be in excess of £530,000)
- a typical Google search on '*Wales Venice Biennale 2013*' now yields over 100,000 returns
- featured artist, Bedwyr Williams, secured significant opportunities to create new work for Glasgow International opening April 2014, and with galleries in Ireland, Germany and France as a result of his presence in Venice

Deliverable/Outcome: Successful preparation and launch of projects to promote Dylan Thomas 100

This project is currently ongoing.