



Arts Council of Wales

## Strategic Equality Plan

Six Month Report 2019 - 2020



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru  
Arts Council of Wales



Noddir gan  
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*“This report outlines progress made against our strategic equality objectives during the first half of 2019/20. In the first half of this year we have been more successful in directly addressing equalities issues through our strategic Lottery funding than with our funding to the Arts Portfolio Wales. Delivering against the equality priorities of our corporate plan For The Benefit of All is a priority for us. It therefore follows that all applicant organisations should consider carefully how their work, their workforce and their board represent and deliver for all the diverse communities of twenty-first century Wales. “*

Andrew Miller  
Chair, Strategic Equalities Monitoring Group

## Introduction

The Public Sector Equality Duty sets out specific duties for the public sector in Wales to support and help progress on equalities work. Publication of our Corporate Plan: For the Benefit of All, represents a new determination on Council's part to achieve significant improvements in our approach to equalities. The corporate plan sets out our ambitions to increase the number of people enjoying and taking part in the arts, targeting those people from communities and backgrounds that the arts in Wales currently fail to fully represent.

This update report provides a summary of progress during the first six months of 2019-2020.

## Our Equality Plan objectives

In developing our plan in 2017 we identified five areas requiring specific focus.

These were:

1. To actively engage, consult, inform and challenge ourselves and our partners.
2. Develop a workforce that better reflects the diversity of Wales
3. Improve representation in the governance of arts organisations throughout Wales
4. Increase the diversity of arts audiences
5. Increase the diversity of arts participation

We believe passionately that the arts are for everyone and we continue to be concerned that people from diverse communities and artists with protected characteristics are not fully represented and playing an equal role in the arts and culture of Wales. This is also reflected in our own organisation, and a key part of our plan continues to be to work to make Arts Council of Wales an organisation that people from a **wide** range of different backgrounds and experiences want to work with and for.

The five objectives cover all protected characteristics. However, particular emphasis has been given in the current plan to increasing engagement amongst people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and disabled people. These were the **demographics** highlighted from our research and evidence gathering as requiring particular and urgent attention.

## What did we say we needed to focus on in 2019/20?

In our 2018/19 annual monitoring report we identified 6 key areas that we needed to focus on in 2019-20. These were as follows:

- **We said** we would continue to raise the profile of our equalities work and will look for opportunities in the next Arts Council of Wales conference – currently scheduled for April 2020 – to promote and encourage the equality agenda through discussion, workshops and training. We have shared news stories and case studies through our many outlets including website and social media. The date of our conference has now been moved to September 18<sup>th</sup> 2020. The focus will be “*For the Benefit of All*” and making equalities central to the development of the arts in Wales. Work is now underway on the planning for the conference.
- **We said** we would publish our guidance for Blind and Visually Impaired Audiences in late 2019 and continue to monitor the potential for new publications. Publication of the guidance was delayed and this is now set to join our suite of documents in March 2020.
- **We said** that a key focus of our work in 2019/20 will be to work to diversify the Arts Council’s workforce and the workforce across the arts sector. To achieve this we will continue our partnership with other public bodies in reviewing and revising our equality objectives from 2020 onwards. We will aim to establish internal apprenticeship programmes and through our newly established Creative Pathways group, identify opportunities for new partnerships to develop sector apprenticeships and placements, both at entry level and leadership.

Following advice received from Stonewall Cymru, we have reviewed and revised our application forms and job adverts to make these more appealing to the LGBTQ community. We have met with representatives from Cardiff and Vale College and Sgil Cymru to discuss developing and offering a Communications Apprenticeship and a Finance Apprenticeship. Sgil Cymru has been identified as a training partner for the Communication Apprenticeship. Once a job description has been finalised we will work with Sgil Cymru on a recruitment campaign. We have also progressed our discussions with colleagues in other Public Bodies about a shared finance apprentice.

- **We said** we would launch our new Lottery Programmes based on the feedback we have received from the sector and other stakeholders, making the application process easier to access and ensuring that our decision-making aligns closely with our equality objectives.

Our lottery data for the first 6 months shows us that 91 organisations submitting applications also completed equality monitoring forms. Of these 91, 63 applications were successful in being funded.

Of the 91 applications, 3 were received from disability led bodies, 2 of which were successful and 5 received from BAME led organisations. Of these 5, all resulted in awards. There was 1 application from an LGBTQ led organisation which was unsuccessful.

The data also shows us that 52 individual applicants completed equality monitoring forms and 29 of those who did so were successful in being awarded funding. 72.1% of those who completed forms were women, 5 (9%) were received from disabled artists. The number completed by people from a BAME background was too small for us to record. The completion of monitoring forms is voluntary for individuals and the data we have does not necessarily give us a full picture of individual applicants. Nevertheless, it is a concern that we are still recording such low numbers.

We have begun work on reviewing our Creative Steps programme and will be developing a Creative Pathways initiative to support the development of artists from diverse backgrounds.

- **We said** that we would determine how best to support individuals/organisations across the Protected Characteristic groups as part of the new programmes. We intended to do this through a review of the impact of Creative Steps and Unlimited, and the continued progress of “Ramps on the Moon” and Hynt.

We have begun our work on developing a Strategic Equality Programme to drive this work forward. This will include a review of Creative Steps for organisations and our relationship with Unlimited, as well as a new approach to supporting individual artists through our Creative Pathways programme.

We are continuing to work with a group of venues on the development of a Wales-based “Ramps on the Moon” programme to integrate disabled and non disabled theatre artists. We are also in discussion with our partner Creu Cymru about future support for Hynt whilst also engaging in discussions with Arts Council colleagues across the UK about the potential for a UK-wide access card scheme.

- **We said** we would sign up to a formal agreement with other Public Bodies around shared equality objectives for 2020 onwards and revise our Strategic Equality Plan to reflect this.

During the first six months we continued working with the 10 partner public bodies on developing the equality objectives. We commissioned Diverse Cymru to undertake a consultation on our behalf and lead a series of 4 stakeholder events across Wales. The shared strategic equality plan will be launched on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

## What challenges have we continued to face in the first six months?

- We said we would increase the number of people with protected characteristics employed by our APW's and represented on their Boards of Management. We do not collect this data for our 6 month reporting but all indicators suggest that organisations are still not making sufficiently rapid progress. OurArts Portfolio Wales organisations are required to submit strategic equality action plans as a condition of funding. All have met this condition, and the general quality of the plans has improved, but we are not seeing evidence of the impact of the actions set out in those plans. Our forthcoming Investment Review will provide a clear opportunity for us to 'sense check' progress across the sector, with equalities being a key feature of the proposals we anticipate being submitted to us.
- We have recognised that moving forward we need to strengthen how we monitor and review APW action plans. We will look to build this into our Funding Agreement conversations in the future.
- We have been progressing conversations with BECTU around their Theatre Diversity Action Plan and will be asking those organisations that have signed up to this to provide us with updates on progress. We are exploring how we can work with BECTU to develop resources to support organisations with this work.
- We are also working closely with Creative & Cultural Skills Cymru towards shared objectives designed to address this specific challenge.
- Diversifying our own workforce continues to be a key challenge. Our 6 month HR data shows us that in terms of ethnicity in particular we are making no progress. Ethnicity amongst current employees is recorded as 85.6% white and 1.1% no information, whilst our applicant data reflects a worse picture with 94.9% white and only 2.6% recorded as Other. In contrast, 8.9% of employees have recorded a disability and 15.4% of applicants. We have described above some of the steps we are implementing to address these barriers to achieving adequate representation in our workforce, but there is clearly more that needs to be done. The public body shared equality objectives will play a key role in helping us bring about change in this area.

## What have been our key successes in the first six months?

Highlights from our first six months include:

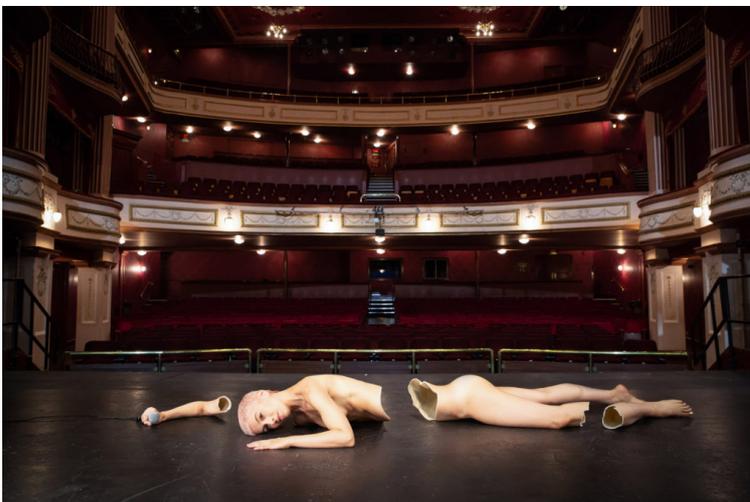
- We have continued to support 6 organisations on their Creative Steps journeys. Our Creative Steps organisations include Fio, Taking Flight Theatre Company, Butetown Arts and Culture Association and Sound Progression



*Peeling* by Kaite O'Reilly, Taking Flight Theatre

## UNLIMITED...

- 4 Wales based artists were successful in being awarded Unlimited commissions. These include Suzie Larke, Jonny Cotsen, Stephanie Beck and Stammermouth. We also developed our partnership with Unlimited further through a lottery funding award to deliver *Unlimited Present* in venues across Wales. These events will provide a platform to showcase work by disabled artists as well as bringing together disabled artists, audiences and cultural sectors partners to discuss and debate local and national issues around producing and presenting work by disabled artists.



*Unseen*, Suzie Larke, Unlimited

- Our Hynt access card scheme for disabled audiences has continued to be a major success with over 18,000 people in Wales now being Hynt card holders. Over 1,500 cards were issued between August and November 2019 and 41 venues in Wales are now signed up to the scheme. The scheme is also being looked at as a potential model for UK wide rollout by our partner arts councils and the BFI.



- Through our partnership with the Arts Marketing Association (AMA) we supported 3 bursary places for Wales based marketing officers to attend the AMA Inclusivity & Audiences Day. We also funded 4 AMA Membership Bursaries for disabled or BAME individuals, or those working for a diversity-led or BAME-led organisation
- Our Night Out community touring scheme has continued to programme shows that specifically target Black and Minority Ethnic communities. These communities are becoming regular promoters of Night Out events. The scheme also offers opportunities for disabled artists and artists from BAME backgrounds to present their work. These have included Jonny Cotsen, Gods and Kings, Samina Chawdhury and Circus Raj.



*Gods & Kings*, Robert Bowman, written and directed by Paul Whittaker

- The data received from our Arts Portfolio organisations shows us that there has been an increase in the number of exhibitions and film screenings that target disabled people and people from BAME backgrounds. There is also a significant increase in exhibitions that target the LGBTQ community, compared to the first six months of 2018.

- In relation to performances, the data shows us there has been an increase in the number of events targeted at disabled audiences by our presenting venues but a decrease in the number of performances created by our touring companies that target disabled people. The opposite trend has appeared in relation to targeting people from BAME backgrounds, with an increase by our touring companies and a decrease amongst our presenting venues.
- Participation figures from our portfolio show a significant increase in activity targeting disabled people and a very slight decrease in activity targeting people from BAME backgrounds. Again, there is a significant increase in sessions that target the LGBTQ community.

## Strategic Equality Monitoring Group

The monitoring of the Arts Council of Wales' responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty is something that Council has taken very seriously. It has set the bar high and is keen - not only to meet our obligations fully - but to champion the principles underpinning the legislation.

The day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that we are making progress with this work has been delegated to a SEP (strategic equality plan) Monitoring Group with a Council member as Chair. The chair in 2019/20 is Andrew Miller. Working alongside him on the group is another Council member Devinda de Silva, the Director of Arts Engagement, colleagues from across other directorates and external advisors, Ele Hicks and Guto Gwilym. A further independent member will be appointed in Spring 2020.

The Monitoring Group reports directly to Council on the performance of those activities within the plan, and the PSED requires the Council to publish an annual progress report.

## Meeting our Legislative Responsibilities

In 2019/20 we have continued to monitor our progress. Day to day tasks required to meet our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty stem from monitoring group meetings, of which one took place in the first six months period.

Our plan continues to address the general duty in relation to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In relation to the specific duties for Wales, we have:

- continued to monitor and report on pay differences with specific reference to gender pay gaps
- collated and monitored employment data, including applications for posts within the Arts Council. However, we have recognised that we need to include monitoring of training and professional development amongst our staff.
- continued to produce detailed equality impact assessments for all policies, programmes and projects.
- included equalities expectations in our procurement policy and processes but have not yet developed a process for monitoring progress against these expectations.

## Evidence of the “5 Ways of Working”

### The integration of our work with the work of other public bodies

- We have joined a network of public bodies working together to develop shared equality objectives for the next phase of the PSED action planning. This network includes bodies such as Natural Resources Wales, Sports Wales, Cardiff and Vale Health Board, amongst others. Work has progressed in the first six months of the year on developing a shared set of equality objectives.
- We have received, and taken note of, feedback from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission’s review of how well public bodies are doing in Wales in relation to the specific duties.

### Increasing the number of collaborations and partnerships we are involved in

- We recognise strong collaborations and partnerships are critical to most of our work going forward. This also emerged as a theme in our consultation sessions around the new corporate plan and the lottery fund. The arts sector is keen to see itself as part of creative and dynamic partnerships in communities and neighbourhoods in the future.
- We are working closely with other Arts Councils across the UK learning from their work and sharing our own.
- We are working with key equality bodies to help drive our work forward. These include Stonewall Cymru, Diverse Cymru, Older People’s Commissioners Office, Race Council Cymru.
- We have partnered with numerous trusts and foundations to develop collaborations such as the Baring Foundation and the cARTrefu project to take the creative arts into care homes.

## Listening to our staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries

- Our Equality Monitoring Group involves staff from across the organisation and we involved staff in the development of our corporate plan, operational plan and lottery consultation – all of which have our equalities agenda at the heart.
- Consulting with stakeholders, partners and organisations and individuals we have funded – as well as trying to speak to those we don't – was very much part of the development of the new corporate plan and lottery strategy. We were guided by experts in the field as to how to do this as well as possible. Whilst we have achieved an improvement, we recognise that there is still much more that can be done to broaden the range of participants at these events and to reach out to those who aren't so familiar with us or our work.
- We recognise that we need to improve and transform how we involve stakeholders and beneficiaries more deeply in the design and creation of our policies and programmes.

## Preventing Harm

- Our equalities objectives have been designed to address the prevention agenda.

## Thinking Long Term

- We have recognised this year that we need to plan in the longer term if our objectives are to be realised. One-year funding for projects and programmes do not provide the security required to effect real change.