

Arts Council of Wales response to the Youth Arts Development Sessions Recommendations Report

Background

In November 2020, National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW) and Youth Arts Network Cymru (YANC) wrote to the Arts Council of Wales, outlining fundamental concerns for the future of the Youth Arts sector in Wales; predominantly surrounding the devastating consequences of Covid-19 on young people in Wales and the Youth Arts sector. The letter highlighted the historic lack of resource for Youth Arts, the impact of the pandemic on young people's wellbeing and future aspirations for careers in the arts, and the lack of voice that young people have had so far in the discourse during the pandemic.

In March 2021, in response to these shared concerns, Arts Council of Wales invited NYAW and YANC to undertake a series of three online consultation sessions with young people, youth arts organisations, and practitioners. The findings and recommendations from these consultation sessions were presented to the Arts Council of Wales in September 2021.

Responding to the report

We welcome the findings within the report and want to acknowledge the work undertaken by NYAW and YANC in collaborating with young people to explore the issues and arrive at a comprehensive range of important findings and recommendations.

In response we will commit to continuing to work in partnership with young people and the youth arts sector to find ways of addressing the issues raised and in doing so improve the opportunities and experiences of young people and their engagement with the arts. We also acknowledge that the responsibility doesn't lie on the young people to deliver this as noted in the report, and the Arts Council of Wales are committed to implementing on this report findings moving forward.

We fully support the publication of the report and have invited young people to engage in creatively responding to the key findings of the report, and subsequently commissioned Off Ya Trolley who were part of these conversations to create an Audio Story. We have published this work alongside our response.

In addition, we are committed to the following actions:

Taking forward and supporting work on establishing a suitable model or models for a young people's arts network, ensuring that young people and the youth arts sector are at the heart of the design and set up.

Invest in the development of a funding programme to support young people to access the potential to become the creative leaders of tomorrow.

Establishing a link between the young people's network and our Council.

Recruiting Young Associates to work with us to:

- Design and develop a Lottery funded scheme aimed at supporting a range of youth arts projects and activity that young people will be able to apply to as well as arts organisations
- Help us ensure our processes are accessible and friendly
- Act as decision makers involved in our assessment processes

The Arts Council of Wales wishes to thank National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW) and Youth Arts Network Cymru (YANC) for co-facilitating with young people, youth arts organisations and practitioners to compile this report and set of recommendations. We also wish to thank the facilitators, youth facilitators, young people and individual members of organisations across Wales who attended the three consultation sessions to express their voices.