

A Cultural Manifesto for Recovery

Recovery from pressures that are unparalleled in peacetime will be the central task of the Senedd and the Welsh Government following the election. The creative sector has a vital role to play in that recovery, just as it had a part to play in recovery from the even greater devastation of the last world war.

It was in the immediate aftermath of that war, and in a period of great austerity, that the Arts Council of Great Britain was formed in 1946, with the Edinburgh Festival and the Llangollen International Eisteddfod following a year later.

The Covid pandemic has taken a grievous toll that is measured not only in death and bereavement but also in physical and mental trauma that has wounded individuals, communities and entire sectors of society. Black and non-black people of colour and disabled people have been acutely affected due to pre-existing inequalities in health, employment, education and housing.

Those effects have been very severe upon the education and social life of children and young people, in a way that will have a long-term impact on their future development and life opportunities, including, in particular, undermining progress towards the goal of a million Welsh-speakers.

If the cultural sector is to make its vital contribution to the recovery of individuals and communities, we must first address the recovery of its own damaged ecology - damage to both artists and organisations.

The continued delivery of the sector's core artistic purposes will be a vital contributor to recovery

- by bringing people together once again for shared experiences, at live performances and events
- by creating work that will comfort, delight, excite and challenge
- by presenting fresh and relevant perspectives to a society anxiously searching for new bearings.

Reciprocal pledges

We call on the **Welsh Government** to acknowledge the central role the creative sector, in all its manifestations, should play in the recovery process. To that end we ask it to do everything in its power to ensure the health and sustainability of the sector, simultaneously ensuring the close involvement of the sector in an integrated approach to planning and strategy across all portfolios.

In return, the **creative sector** pledges to collaborate, both within the sector and with other bodies, on targeted initiatives to ensure effective and long-lasting interventions that will assist in addressing issues of equal representation, collaboration and healing as well as the realisation of the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Cymraeg 2050.

A new Welsh Government pledge

We wish to see the following pledge made by a new Welsh Government of whichever party or coalition of parties:

If elected we will –

1. **Secure the health and sustainability of the creative sector** as it will play a key role in the post-pandemic recovery and healing of our nation. The sector will do this
 - by fulfilling its core artistic purposes and offering entertainment and opportunities for collective social gathering and shared experiences
 - by prioritising the health and well-being of our people and future generations, by combatting isolation and mental health problems, enriching the lives of children within and beyond formal education settings, enhancing skills, energising communities and enhancing Wales's profile beyond its borders.
 - by helping people in a diverse and often divided society to understand each other
 - and by responding energetically and creatively to the urgent agendas of our society.

2. **Strengthen the cultural dimension throughout Welsh Government** as this will fulfil more effectively and efficiently the government's own societal and economic ambitions
 - by making culture and creativity the responsibility of a **full Cabinet Member**
 - by creating a strong **central policy unit** in Welsh Government that would benefit not only health, education, arts and culture, the creative industries and the Welsh language, but all its departments via a cross-cutting approach to policy development and evaluation
 - by ensuring **Creative Wales** in its constitution, organisation and remit reflects the reality that the arts and creative industries are part of one ecology
 - by ensuring that all departments of government **support, fund and advocate** a strong cultural component to their work.

3. **Require all local authorities to act as conveners of arts and culture within their boundaries** through
 - the establishment of a **local cultural consortium** in each authority, giving common form to local cultural networks
 - enabling **access to the arts** and addressing in each locality issues relating to diversity and representation, the Welsh language, health and well-being.

4. **Ensure the close involvement of the creative sector in the preparation and implementation of the new curriculum, including**

- monitoring the impact of Covid on the **development of the language skills of children and young people, in both Welsh and English**, creating funds to address the different remedial steps that may be needed in relation to each language, and placing cultural and social activities at the heart of the remedy.
- **enlisting music as a central part of the recovery programme**, ensuring that musical participation of all kinds is permanently embedded in the provision available to all our young people.

5. **Revive community bonds, tourism and international connections**

- by supporting the restoration of **festivals and live events** of all sizes and locations
- by campaigning to restore, via a protocol to the UK-EU treaty, **visa-free freedom of movement within the EU** for artists and arts organisations from Wales and the UK, as well as access to Creative Europe programmes.

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