

# **Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts in Wales**

## **Inquiry into Participation in the Arts in Wales**

Response from Youth Inclusion Programme (Conwy & Denbighshire Youth Justice Service)

### **1. What organisation do you represent?**

Youth Inclusion Programme (Conwy & Denbighshire Youth Justice Service)

### **2. Which groups of people participate in your organisation's arts activities?**

Young people at risk of offending and anti social behaviour. Young people disengaging from education. Young people aged between 13 – 17yrs.

### **3. Do you think that budget changes have affected participation in the arts, either positively or negatively?**

I feel that any budget restrictions and changes will directly affect the service user – in our organisations instance this would be young people who have multiplicity of issues and problematic behaviours. The arts have responded very positively to this group and supported financially whilst enabling flexibility of the organisation to arrange activities to meet the needs on a local level. If budget cuts are envisaged it will be a wasted opportunity to try and influence the generation 13 – 17yrs in a positive and therapeutic way.

### **4. Do you think that certain groups of people have been affected more than others?**

If budget cuts are increased it will certainly affect young people. Our young people are identified as being most in poverty and are unlikely to go and enjoy art on their own due to financial restrictions on their families income.

### **5. Are there gaps in provision for people to participate in arts activities, either demographically or geographically?**

We would like to work with young people across the County but we are restricted by area due to SPLASH and the recognized demographic area of deprivation. However that does not mean that other young people across our County are not hidden by poverty. Whether that be financial or poverty of aspiration. The arts can help in providing equality to all young people providing the funding is there.

### **6. Are there enough funding sources available other than the Arts Council for Wales? Are alternative funding sources accessible?**

Funding is becoming an issue and it is up to the organisations to become ever more resourceful and identify funding sources that look favourably upon the arts as opposed to other funding streams that identify employment or education as being a priority.

**7. What role does the voluntary arts sector play in promoting participation in the arts in Wales and how can this be supported?**

I do not think that the voluntary arts sector is particularly good at promoting participation of the arts in Wales. More conferences that gather interested parties/ organisations should be arranged. Ideas can then be shared in an informal and formal way at these events an example was a conference arranged by the Arts Council for Wales in 2011 – this was highly successful. I also think it would be a good idea to display artwork so that young people can gain recognition for what they have achieved an example of this was the Cymorth 'At Home' exhibition in 2011. YIP young people had two pieces of work chosen and this was displayed at the prestigious Millennium centre in Cardiff. The Arts Council for Wales had funded the art programme and this was a superb venue to display it. the young people were very proud to see their work on display. We took three young people from North to South Wales to see their work displayed and this was then put into the local newspaper. More events of this type need to be financially supported. More positive links with the press and art need to be explored and links with reduction in crime and engagement. Art is a positive way of showing this.

**8. Is the strategic relationship between the Welsh Government and the bodies that distribute arts funding effective in increasing participation?**

I am not sure strategically how this is measured. I am only aware of the Arts Council for Wales as being a funding source.

**9. All public bodies in Wales will have published a strategic equality plan by April 2012. Do you think that these new public sector equality duties will help to increase participation in the arts among under-represented groups in Wales?**

It depends on what it says in the equality plan. With ever increasing budget cuts and pressures upon mainstream services – other than Local Authorities carrying out their own statutory duties they may be mindful of what you are suggesting but not able financially to do anything about it. Our YIP organisation 'sits' amongst Social Services in Denbighshire. As such we are effective at delivering the programmes and arranging the local artists to support the programmes. We receive the referrals in from Social Services, YJS, Health , CAMHS and education. As such this system works well at present. However there has been an increase in our referral rate due to our success in engaging young people. We have a

professionalism and are able to work effectively in a multi agency environment whilst being able to have the skills to communicate with our young people. We would actively encourage and advocate that funding is increased to support the increase in our referrals. We also would like to increase our geographic area to encourage wider participation.