

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Culture, Welsh Language & Communications Committee entitled Turn Up the Volume: An Inquiry into the Live Music Industry.

The Welsh Government welcomes the findings of the report and offers the following response to the 31 recommendations contained within.

Recommendation 1

The Welsh Government and local authorities need to support live music in a way that improves geographical access across Wales. Music binds communities together, from small villages to nations. Opportunities to make and listen to music should be available across the country.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales will continue to work with Local Authorities across Wales to support live music.

One of our main areas of support to date has been supporting grassroots music venues, who are at the heart of access to live music in Wales. During the last 12 months, we have supported 22 venues through our Grass Roots Music Venues Fund. In addition the Cultural Recovery Fund (CRF) provided support of £3.3m for 38 live music venues.

Creative Wales has good geographical spread of engagement and representation on its Music Stakeholder Group.

We are also already working pan Wales with a number of initiatives and have provided funding of £60,000 for the Beacons project to encourage that and the Tan Cymru report to better understand diverse needs for non-white artists. Venues and studio support has been pan Wales and artist support (Momentum, Spotify) has a spread of artists in line with population densities.

The Momentum Music Fund is another example of funding that's available to support the development of Welsh musicians. The Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales have collaborated with PRS Foundation, PPL and Spotify to offer grants to talented Welsh artists or bands seeking to break through to the next level.

We intend to develop a music development fund to assist projects seeking to promote a sustainable future for the sector.

Financial implications: None. There are no additional financial implications as the development of the fund will be met from existing Creative Wales agreed budgets.

Recommendation 2

The Welsh Government needs to ensure that specific Welsh data is available on the size of the music industry and its various sub-sectors. This data should underpin the development of a music strategy.

Response: Accept

By the end of 2021/22 Creative Wales will have developed a three year action plan for supporting the Commercial Music Sector in Wales. To do this, further mapping of the industry and more detailed research will be undertaken.

The focus of the Creative Wales team over the next 12 months has to be to support the industry to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside this, data gathering and research will be undertaken to further understand what measures need to be put in place to develop and grow a sustainable industry in Wales.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 3

The Welsh Government should publish the results of its venue mapping exercise and conduct a mapping exercise of venues and other music facilities (such as rehearsal and public performance spaces) on a regular basis. This should be updated to respond to new developments.

Response: Reject

The venue mapping exercise was limited in scope and undertaken to inform initial policy development and it would add no value to publish the work. Further mapping will be undertaken as part of the development of the action plan and will be published and updated on a regular basis. This will be broader than venues and include rehearsal spaces and recording studios.

Financial implications: None.

Recommendation 4

Public funders should tailor the support they provide to the industry to encourage people to provide some Welsh language music at predominantly English language gigs. Creative Wales should work to bring different language and genre communities together to encourage collaboration.

Response: Accept

We recognise the value of the Welsh language in music. We'll continue to support Welsh language artists and ensure they're properly represented through specific funding initiatives like Momentum and exposure via the Creative Wales Spotify playlist. The Welsh Government also funds the annual Dydd Miwsig Cymru (Welsh language music day) which attracts audiences of all linguistic backgrounds.

In addition, we've given funding to PYST and the new AM platform. Both of these have been instrumental in the promotion and support of Welsh language artists and audiences.

We agree that public funders have a responsibility to promote and increase the use of our language. And whilst respecting editorial and curatorial independence of those we fund, we'll encourage all relevant organisations and groups to include Welsh language music in their provision.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 5

Creative Wales should work with large music venues to consider how they can use ticket sales to raise income for initiatives to widen access to music. One way to do this would be through providing customers with the option of rounding up ticket prices to the nearest pound when purchasing tickets, with the surplus provided to appropriate charities.

Response: Reject

This is a commercial matter for individual venues.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 6

The Welsh Government, in collaboration with the industry and other stakeholders, should develop a music strategy. This should include a clear approach and brand for presenting music from Wales outside of Wales.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales will be developing a pan-Wales "Action plan" rather than "Strategy" for the Commercial Music Industry in Wales. It will reflect the need for both short term actions required to assist the sector to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and longer term plans for developing the sector for a sustainable future, in a global market.

The COVID-19 pandemic has prevented earlier development of this plan, but the Music Stakeholder Group has already been formed with the intention of providing advice, ideas and highlight priority issues for the Music sector as a whole. This stakeholder group has been invaluable in helping the Welsh Government to understand how the pandemic is affecting businesses and how we can better support the industry to recover and grow.

We will develop an approach to supporting the brand internationally via the action plan.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 7

The Welsh Government needs to ensure that there is enhanced support and advice available for the music industry, whether this be through Creative Wales or the establishment of a new body. This support needs to be available across Wales and at a grassroots level, where intervention is most needed.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales was set up specifically to drive growth across the creative industries, build on existing success, develop new talent and skills and to position Wales as one of the best places for creative businesses to thrive. Music is one of the key priority sectors for Creative Wales and we will continue to support the sector to grow. We are currently considering how best we can directly enhance support available for the industry and this will be one of our key business plan priorities for 2021/22. We will continue to engage with the industry to ensure any gaps in support are identified quickly and, where possible, identify solutions.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 8

The Creative Wales advisory board should include industry experts and young people so that it can effectively support the sector and consider the needs of young artists and audiences.

Response: Accept

The Creative Wales Non-Executive Advisory Board has been recently established with members appointed for a three year term. We recognise that there is no music industry representative on the board and this is partly down to the applications received, however, Catryn Ramasut, the Chair, does have significant industry knowledge. The board does have the option to bring in additional industry support to discuss certain issues, as and when required however through our Music Stakeholder Group and growing stakeholder network we are confident that we are having enough conversations with a diverse range of people to ensure we are meeting the needs of the sector.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 9

The Welsh Government should establish a capital fund to facilitate the purchase of grassroots music venues with a high cultural and social value. This could be used by local authorities or interest groups to help them purchase venues under threat. The Welsh Government should also consider alternative solutions which would have a similar effect, such as renting premises and sub-letting them to venue operators.

Response: Reject

Creative Wales' priority is to support the commercial music industry in Wales and support will be focussed on those projects that will drive economic growth. However, we don't have the capital budget for this type of activity and feel it's best to work with local authorities to ensure venues are protected. Welsh Government does not want to be in ownership of venues.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 10

Many buildings – including arts centres – outside of urban areas receive public funding, either from local authorities or agencies such as the Arts Council. Funding-providers should

consider attaching conditions to this funding so that, where possible, these spaces are opened up as rehearsal spaces for musicians.

Response: Reject

Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government. Arts Council of Wales support and monitor venues in the Arts Portfolio Wales. They will continue to ensure that they're fulfilling a progressive and enabling role as a creative hub for their community, of which providing rehearsal space could be part.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 11

Support and mentoring for young people in the live music industry – like that previously available through the Forté Project and Young Promoters' Network in south Wales – should be available for the whole of Wales and should include professions such as managers, promoters and agents. The Arts Council of Wales should strongly consider funding such a nationwide organisation during its investment review.

Response: Accept

We are committed to developing pathways for music talent and want to make it easier for talented people to develop long-term careers in the music industry.

Our targeted support for the music sector in Wales will build on activity to date. These include Momentum, FORTE, PYST and the sponsorship of the Welsh Music Prize and festival events aligned to our priorities.

We will adopt a holistic focus, with interventions geared around the whole of the Welsh music ecosystem, including venues, artists, promoters and distributors.

We will work closely with our stakeholders and partners to identify the key actions required to best support the sector. The Arts Council of Wales will respond separately.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 12

The Horizons programme should be expanded so that artists receive more career development advice and support to help them take their careers to the next level.

Response: Reject

Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government. Horizons is an artist partnership between BBC and Arts Council Wales and its focus should be on widening access for those artists in Wales through all BBC Wales / BBC Radio Cymru channels and associated event opportunities.

Creative Wales is however open to investigating future opportunities to support the programme as has recently been the case with the Independent Venues Music week project.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 13

Music should be taught in schools in a way that recognises the full value of contemporary music. The Welsh Government should ensure that a wide range of genres, including contemporary popular music and music from other cultures and traditions is taught under the new Curriculum for Wales.

Response: Accept

Welsh Government recognises the importance of ensuring that learners have access to all musical genres, so they can learn and be inspired by the music they are interested in. One of the fundamental aspects of the new Curriculum for Wales is that it is non-prescriptive and allows schools the flexibility to tailor provision for their learners and to local needs and circumstances. In this context, the new curriculum can support the teaching of forms of music that may be regarded as less 'traditional', including the genres identified in this recommendation

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 14

Music boards should be established across Wales to provide an interface between local authorities and the music industry. These should play an active role in local authorities' development of policies that impact upon the music industry, including planning, licensing, business rates, personal safety and transport.

Response: Reject

Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government. It would not be considered practical to expect all local authorities to establish Music Boards. Each community in Wales is different and there might be other more practical solutions that local authorities can implement to support their music industry. However, Creative Wales will work with and involve (the established) Cardiff Music Board in sharing best practice examples, with any local authority that wishes to establish a music board.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 15

The Welsh Government should work with the Music Venues Trust to review the effectiveness of the agent of change planning principle. If substantial evidence is found of existing music venues being adversely effected by new developments then it should strengthen policies to protect existing venues, including considering the use of noise easements, as recommended by UK Music and the Music Venues Trust.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales will continue to work closely with the Music Venues Trust and planning and regeneration colleagues to investigate this issue further.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 16

Local authorities' development plans should identify spaces where cultural activity can take place in new developments in the same way that they consider access to public transport and other amenities.

Response: Reject

Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government. This is a matter for local authorities and each area will have different requirements. However Creative Wales will continue to meet regularly with the Welsh Local Government Association and remains keen to assist innovative projects where possible.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 17

Licensing authorities should:

- work with small venues to agree proportionate licensing conditions, to the extent that is possible within the existing legal framework
- work with venues to make it easier for them to hold all-ages shows;
- work with trusted venues to give them greater input into determining appropriate security requirements, to the extent that is possible within the existing legal framework. Venue operators are the experts, and their views on what security requirements are needed to create a safe environment should be given greater weight by licensing authorities.

Response: Accept

Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government. Creative Wales can't enforce these recommendations however we can encourage venues and licensing authorities to work more closely together.

Creative Wales is keen to support access to live music gigs for as diverse an audience as is possible, as we recognise the massive positive impact cultural activity has on individuals well-being.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 18

Licensing authorities and the police should work with the industry – through music boards if these are established – to improve their knowledge of the music industry so as to avoid the risk of racial profiling in licensing decisions.

Response: Accept

Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government. We are fully supportive of any discussions which seek to increase diversity and promote awareness of inclusion throughout the Creative sector. We will work with the Music Stakeholder Group and all relevant partners with a view to influencing fairer licensing decisions.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 19

Police and Crime Commissioners should investigate the licensing conditions attached to live music events to assess to what extent, if any, these are influenced by unconscious racial bias. If any bias is found, the police should put steps in place to prevent it.

Response: Reject

Not a recommendation for the Welsh Government. We are fully supportive of any discussions or actions that seek to increase diversity and promote awareness of inclusion. We will liaise with relevant partners to assist further discussions with a view to eradicating any potential biases.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 20

Live music venues should continue to receive business rates relief to help their recovery from the pandemic. Any long term successor to the High Street and Retail Rates Relief scheme should be clear that live music venues are eligible businesses.

Response: Accept

We are aware of the extended impact that COVID-19 is having on the music industry in Wales. We are currently considering how best we can support this sector beyond March 2021.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 21

The Welsh Government should regularly collect data – and share this with the Committee - on how many venues receive rates relief so that it can assess whether this policy is effective in helping the live music sector.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales will extend its research capabilities to provide as detailed information as possible about the commercial music industry including how many venues receive rates relief. We recognise the benefits of access to the most detailed and wide ranging information as possible in order to guide the development of the action plans and to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the those plans.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 22

Any additional funding received by the Welsh Government following a UK Government's decision to reduce business rates for music venues in England should be used to provide

equivalent rates relief for venues in Wales. Venues in Wales should not face higher business rates bills than those in England.

Response: Accept in Principle

Welsh Government is supportive of this as a fundamental principle. However, if the UK Government bring in a new business rates relief scheme in the future, similar to 2020-21, then we will receive Barnett consequential funding. We will liaise with Welsh Government colleagues to assist in ensuring the needs of the music venues in Wales are fully considered.

Financial implications: None.

Recommendation 23

The Welsh Government should provide a clear roadmap for restarting live activity. It should look imaginatively at options such as socially-distanced and outdoor gigs, which, although perhaps not economically beneficial, would provide much-needed cultural activity. This plan should include other cultural events, such as theatre and dance, as well as live music.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales recognise this as a key priority in our Business Plan for 2021/22. Whilst the recently introduced alert levels provide some clarity on restrictions and guidance we are conscious that the sustainability of live venues are potentially compromised by the extent of the restrictions even at the lower tier levels. We will continue to work with relevant Welsh Government colleagues and Public Health Officials to ensure that the requirements of the music industry are fully represented when decisions are made.

During COVID-19 we have continued to find ways to promote and provide exposure for Welsh artists. The introduction of the Creative Wales Spotify monthly listing having proved to be very successful in that regards. Over 300 tracks have been compiled with a wide diversity of genres, geographical split and a strong Welsh language presence.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 24

The Welsh Government should explore whether the industry needs support both to create more digital activity, and to provide a central hub of Welsh digital cultural content.

Response: Accept

The Cultural Recovery Fund revealed the music industry needs support in a number of basic business areas – digital activity can be added to that. The Music team are however already working with Marketing and Communications colleagues to map out 2021 events and asset gathering opportunities for content creation.

Creative Wales has been instrumental in providing support for Pyst's AM online platform which has been highly successful in promoting the Cultural Sector globally throughout the pandemic.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 25

The Welsh Government should work with the insurance industry and the UK Government to ensure that suitable insurance is available to enable large event organisers to manage the risks of arranging events in 2021.

Response: Accept

We are in regular discussions with UK Government around a variety of issues affecting the sector and they have confirmed that this is one of many issues under consideration. However, whilst it is recognised this is a significant issue, there are other wider barriers which are currently affecting the likelihood of any events taking place this year. Should we be in a position for events to go ahead, we will continue to liaise with UK government to provide clear guidance for the industry with detailed mitigation measures.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 26

When the Welsh Government relaxes the current hospitality restrictions, it should either not re-introduce the 10pm curfew, or provide evidence for its effectiveness at reducing virus transmission.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales appreciates this issue is a major barrier to enabling live venues to open on a sustainable basis. However the advice of SAGE is the overwhelming factor in determining the restrictions required at any time. We are committed however, to ensuring that the needs of the music industry are represented on any decisions made regarding the Creative Sector in Wales.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 27

Where live music venues have lost income as a result of the Welsh Government's current hospitality restrictions, they should be eligible for the funding the Welsh Government has introduced to accompany these restrictions.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales, through the Cultural Recovery Fund, has already administered the dispersal of more than £3.3m to music businesses across the whole of Wales which addresses these concerns up until the end of March 2021.

We understand the position for venues (and other parts of the creative/cultural economy) will remain very difficult after March. It is looking likely that in the short to medium term, even if venues can open, capacity will be significantly reduced. We are currently considering options for how we might support the sector beyond March 2021 and work closely with colleagues in DCMS to assess the potential impact and need for additional funding.

Financial implications: In allocating any new funding our approach will continue to be guided by engagement with the sector, evidence and affordability within the budget allocation, and potential additional funding from UK Government in 2021-22.

Recommendation 28

The Welsh Government needs to, at the earliest opportunity, set out what funding will be available for the live music sector after March 2021.

Response: Accept

As above. We recognise the sector is facing a long term negative affect, consequently Creative Wales is considering longer term support options from the start of the new financial year.

Financial implications: In allocating any new funding our approach will continue to be guided by engagement with the sector, evidence and affordability within the budget allocation, and potential additional funding from UK Government in 2021-22.

Recommendation 29

The UK Government needs to make available further funding to the devolved administrations to support the culture sector beyond March 2021, in recognition of the continued lack of cultural activity.

Response: Accept

Creative Wales will continue to hold regular discussions with DCMS colleagues in order to promote the need for flexible assistance for the Cultural Sector in Wales to survive.

Financial implications: In allocating any new funding our approach will continue to be guided by engagement with the sector, evidence and affordability within the budget allocation, and potential additional funding from UK Government in 2021-22.

Recommendation 30

The UK Government needs to either extend its current forms of employment support beyond March 2021, or provide clarity about successor schemes.

Response: Accept

The enhancement of the Job Support Scheme announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 9 October was welcome news to businesses and employees affected by local restrictions. We have been urging UK Government Ministers to review the Job Support Scheme to ensure it is operating effectively and as many workers as possible benefit. We look forward to contributing to the review of the scheme.

We continue to raise the need for support for employees in meetings with UK Government, recognising that the Welsh Government does not have the necessary resources to replicate the scale of this type of intervention.

The Welsh Government's Business Wales service actively promotes Covid-19 business support advice, information and schemes via the Business Wales website <https://businesswales.gov.wales/coronavirus-advice/> and associated social media channels, as well as via the Business Wales Helpline and Business Wales advisory staff. This has included signposting to UK Government schemes such as the Job Retention Scheme.

Dedicated advice is available for individuals and businesses, including business planning, reviews and remodelling and support to access financial support to support sustainability and developing new business models. In addition, a series of live webinars have been developed to address challenges around accessing finance, managing cash flow, digital capability and diversification, managing change to employment.

However, along with DCMS colleagues Creative Wales recognises that bigger issues have emerged more recently relating to mobility of trade with the EU. Regular discussions are being held with DCMS to keep abreast of those developments.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 31

The UK Government urgently needs to provide support for freelancers who have fallen through the cracks of the Self-employment Income Support Scheme.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government recognised the needs of the freelance community which is why we launched the freelance fund as an element of the overall Cultural Recovery Fund. The total number of freelancers supported via the initial three phases was 3,548 totalling £8.9m. We will be undertaking a review of the investment, but it is clear that this has had an impact in all parts of Wales as each local authority has supported a number of freelancers. Welsh Government support for the freelance community has also been viewed positively around the UK, particularly as this funding was not offered in England.

The fund has well received, and the case for investment remains as the creative and cultural sectors remain closed. Conversations with the freelance community are progressing positively and development of the freelancer pledge is taking shape. There is a significant opportunity for the fund to lead to a new relationships between the public sector and creative and cultural freelancers, which is being seen as an exemplar by the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner.

We are currently exploring options to support the freelance community again, with the ambition to do so before the end of March 2021.

Financial implications: None

Lord Elis-Thomas MS
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism