

## Consultation Response Form

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**Are you responding as an individual, or on behalf of an organisation?** (select only one option)

- Individual
- On behalf of an organisation
- Other, please specify
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**The Welsh Government would like to understand whether this consultation has reached a broad range of communities across Wales, including those who may have different cultural interests or different needs in terms of accessing cultural activities. The next questions on demographic information are optional - individual responses will not be published, but the data gathered may be published as part of a statistical analysis.**

**Which of the following best describes your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Other, specify if you wish \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**Please tell us about your age group**

Under 16

16 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 64

65+  **Do you identify as belonging to any of the following groups or**

**communities?** (Tick all that apply)

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

LGBTQ+

Disabled (including long term physical or mental health conditions)

Low income households

Unemployed

Living in poverty

**How would you best describe your geographical location?**

North Wales

Mid Wales

South East Wales

South West Wales

Outside of Wales (UK)

Outside of Wales (Outside UK)

**Would you describe your home area as:**

Rural

Urban

Other

**What is your interest in the Priorities for Culture?**

Working in the Arts Sector in Wales

Working in the Heritage Sector in Wales

Working in the Museum Sector in Wales

Working in the Libraries Sector in Wales

Working in the Archives Sector in Wales

Working in the Culture Sector in Wales

Volunteering in the culture sector in Wales

(please state which sector: \_\_\_\_\_)

Working in the culture sector but outside of Wales

Volunteering in the culture sector but outside of Wales

(please state which sector: \_\_\_\_\_)

Venues

Freelancer worker in the culture sector

(please state which sector: \_\_\_\_\_)

Non-professional interest in the culture sector outside of Wales

Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction**

The Welsh NHS Confederation welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government’s Consultation on the draft Priorities for Culture in Wales 2024 to 2030.

The Welsh NHS Confederation represents the seven Local Health Boards, three NHS Trusts (Velindre University NHS Trust, Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust (WASUNT), and Public Health Wales NHS Trust), and two Special Health Authorities (Digital Health and Care Wales and Health Education and Improvement

Wales). The twelve organisations make up our membership. We also host NHS Wales Employers.

## **Priority 1: Culture brings us together**

Q1. To what extent do you agree this priority should feature in our Priorities for Culture? Please give a rating from 1-5, with 1 being "Completely disagree" and 5 being "Completely agree"

5

### **Ambition 1: Culture is inclusive, accessible and diverse.**

Q2. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

### **Ambition 2: Cultural democracy and cultural rights are central to culture in Wales.**

Q3. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

### **Ambition 3: Culture takes an inclusive and balanced approach to interpreting, commemorating and presenting our past.**

Q4. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

### **Ambition 4: Culture is integral to place-making and community well-being.**

Q5. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

### **Ambition 5: Culture reflects the needs and aspirations of children and young people, and inspires the next generation of cultural participants and leaders.**

Q6. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

### **Ambition 6: Culture strengthens the connection between generations.**

Q7. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes

No

No view

Q8. Are there any ambitions missing which could further support this priority?

Our members have some suggestions for ambitions that could further support this priority.

The strategy encourages the culture sector to work with health and social care services to explore ways culture can be used to improve well-being. However, members suggest this strategy could have a greater focus on how we develop partnerships between the NHS and cultural organisations to deliver holistic care, support mental health, and reduce loneliness. Since the strategy sets out culture relating the arts, museums, libraries, archives, and historic environment sector; given the health service has a large estate and many NHS organisations have an Arts in the Health strategy, linking this cultural approach more closely with NHS organisations assets would be beneficial. The NHS has a large estate, much of which is historic, and we should celebrate (and support the maintenance and restoration) how these environments and the experience of staff and service users shape the health and well-being of all.

Members agree in culture being accessible, inclusive, and diverse: the NHS workforce is made up of many nationalities, religions, and backgrounds from across the world. It is important to celebrate diversity and the strength that comes from different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences, and the NHS is dedicated to ensuring that every member of staff feels valued, respected, and safe when they come to work. Therefore, members are surprised that healthcare is not included within the definition of culture. Our members emphasise there is real value in expanding this definition of culture to include reference to healthcare environments to enable communities to celebrate the NHS/ health boards, their connection to work and connection to health which may ultimately improve the public perception of the NHS and inspire the potential future workforce.

Q9. Please use this box to add any further comments you may have regarding

Priority 1: Culture brings us together.

Members agree with the above Priority 1 and have no further comments.

If you have answered “no” to any question in this section, please explain why here.

Members have no further comments.

## **Priority 2: A Nation of Culture**

Q10. To what extent do you agree this priority should feature in our Priorities for Culture? Please give a rating from 1-5, with 1 being “Completely disagree” and 5 being “Completely agree”

5

**Ambition 7: Culture supports and promotes the Welsh language and reflects Wales as a bilingual and multilingual nation.**

Q11. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes

No

No view

**Ambition 8: Cultural well-being is deeply embedded into policy making across Wales.**

Q12. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

**Ambition 9: Cultural engagement supports individual and community well-being.**

Q13. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

**Ambition 10: Culture and heritage bodies will work more collaboratively to maximise the full potential of both their specialist teams and their collections, and will work with other sectors to explore and leverage the power of culture.**

Q14. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

**Ambition 11: Culture supports tourism; tourism supports culture. Culture has a high profile in how our nation is marketed to visitors.**

Q15. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

**Ambition 12: Culture is integrated into how Wales establishes and develops international relationships.**

Q16. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

**Ambition 13: The profile of culture in Wales is raised, by celebrating and promoting culture at a local, national and international level.**

Q17. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

Q18. Are there any ambitions missing which could further support this priority?

Members have some suggested some ambitions that could further support this priority.

The document emphasises the connection between cultural engagement and well-being, noting that participation in cultural activities can have positive impacts on both individual and community health. This aligns with NHS initiatives aimed at improving mental and physical health through social prescribing and community-based health programs. However, members have suggested the link to this could be much greater within the ambitions.

Furthermore, members have stated that it is encouraging to see acknowledgment that arts, culture, and creativity support individual and community well-being (ambition 4 and ambition 9). However, this could be further strengthened by aligning the Priorities for Culture in Wales with the Welsh Government's forthcoming Mental Health and Well-being Strategy (2024-2034), which recognises the importance of culture for population well-being. Also, members have emphasised the importance of specifically mentioning the influencing health policy and supporting delivery of the Mental Health and Well-being Strategy could be added to the culture priorities and ambitions to support a joined-up system response.

Moreover, ambition 10 could be strengthened by specifically mentioning working with NHS. Wales has a strong foundation to build on to expand and develop an arts and health offer across Wales. The Arts and Health Co-ordinators working in health board and Velindre University NHS Trust and the [National Social Prescribing Framework](#) present opportunities to scale-up and improve sustainability and consistency across Wales. Ensuring arts organisations relate to local social prescribing services, networks and infrastructure is key. Development of an arts on referral programme across Wales could provide one route for implementing ambitions and improving engagement with under-represented groups.



Q19. Please use this box to add any further comments you may have regarding Priority 2: A Nation of Culture, If you have answered “no” to any question in this section, please explain why here.

Members have further comments regarding Priority 2: A Nation of Culture.

Members suggest there should be a focus on the evidence base of how culture will improve patient/staff well-being. The strategy does not refer to social prescribing where patients are referred to non-clinical services, such as cultural activities; more explicit reference to this would enable greater emphasis for the NHS on culture as defined by this document. There is relevance to ambition 16, with the social value and pride of the NHS passed through generations through stories and narrative, health should be considered within this priority especially given the NHS is the largest employer in many regions and so many of NHS staff are / will be service users. Art in healthcare has the power to transform healthcare environments, creating calming, uplifting spaces that can positively impact the well-being of patients, staff, and visitors. The right art and environments can help reduce stress, lift happiness, and provide often much-needed distractions in an often-sterile healthcare environment.

Members have highlighted entrenched inequalities in terms of engagement with the arts, museums, archives, libraries, and historic environment sectors. The Wales Centre for Public Policy Evidence Briefing Paper on Cultural Well-being ([Cultural Well-being, WCPP](#)) includes explicit recommendations for Public Services Boards about understanding and addressing known inequalities in participation and provision. Whilst the draft priorities and ambitions suggest an inclusive approach, this could be improved by a greater emphasis on understanding the barriers and enablers to engagement and addressing inequity in provision. The document could be strengthened by reference to the importance of addressing inequalities in engagement with heritage and culture as a route to contributing towards reducing health inequalities.

### **Priority 3: Culture is resilient and sustainable**

Q20. To what extent do you agree this priority should feature in our Priorities for Culture? Please give a rating from 1-5, with 1 being "Completely disagree" and 5 being "Completely agree"

5
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**Ambition 14: Our collections and historic assets are cared for, and used to support learning, creativity, place-making and cultural well-being.**

Q21. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes       No       No view

**Ambition 15: Organisations responsible for the protection and care of our cultural collections and historic assets have strategic approaches to recognising significance and collecting.**

Q22. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes       No       No view

**Ambition 16: Our intangible cultural heritage is an intrinsic part of our national story – it is recorded, supported to thrive, and shared with others for the benefit of future generations.**

Q23. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes       No       No view

**Ambition 17: Culture is supported and enhanced by good digital practice.**

Q24. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes       No       No view

**Ambition 18: Culture has a collaborative and long-term approach to research and gathering evidence.**

Q25. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes       No       No view

**Ambition 19: The culture sector in Wales is a great place to work and volunteer, with a professional and skilled workforce.**

Q26. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

**Ambition 20: The culture sector demonstrates leadership and collaboration in its approaches to sustainable development, building resilience, and tackling all aspects of the climate and nature emergencies.**

Q27. Should we include this ambition as part of our Priorities?

Yes                       No                       No view

Q28. Are there any ambitions missing which could further support this priority?

No, members do not think there are any ambitions missing which could further support this priority.

Q29. Please use this box to add any further comments you have regarding Priority 3: Culture is resilient and sustainable. If you have answered “no” to any question in this section, please explain why here.

Members have no further comments.

## Questions relating to the Welsh Language

Q30. What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the proposed Priorities for Culture on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.

- Do you think there are opportunities to promote any positive effects?
- Do you think there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

Please enter your response here:

Members agree there are opportunities to promote positive effects of the Welsh language including: participation at the Urdd and National Eisteddfodau, encouraging staff to learn Welsh and achieve a minimum of courtesy level in accordance with the actions within the More Than Just Words Five Year Plan 2022-2027 and provision of digital services in Welsh provide opportunities for Welsh speakers to access services through the medium of Welsh.

Members have stated there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects. In relation to Welsh language, it's promising that there is a statement at the start suggesting that the Welsh language should be a golden thread running through all the different targets and ambitions, rather than being a standalone one. However, it is confusing that it is a separate ambition (number 7) within priority 2. The link between culture and physical/mental health is very important as described in ambitions 8 and 10.

As mentioned in previous answers, the NHS has a considerable estate and local Arts in Health Strategies. Engaging in activities ranging from painting and colouring to singing and writing can profoundly impact well-being, yet despite the ambitions aiming to improve individual and community well-being, it is unclear how this national strategy will enable local activity for the benefit of the population and therefore greater detail is required from the Government.

The document initially suggests that the Welsh language is a consideration in each of the areas of priority rather than being a specific standalone target. We believe this to be a positive step and aligns with the aim to make the Welsh language embedded in all priorities within the NHS. However, members were concerned that there was a comment later in the individual priorities pertaining to the Welsh language. There are strong mechanisms for sharing information with Welsh language communities. Health Boards utilise these on a regular basis. These include the Mentrau Iaith, Welsh education establishments, Welsh chapels as well as health boards own data on who has requested or accessed services through the medium of Welsh.

The adverse effects come when capacity does not meet demand. Some NHS organisations struggle to recruit confident staff into roles. The further promotion and subsidising of Welsh learning opportunities remains essential. There also needs to be a concerted effort to raise the confidence of those who have Welsh language skills but still do not feel confident in using them in their day-to-day life.

Q31. In your opinion, could the Priorities for Culture be formulated or changed so as to:

- have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English; or
- mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

Please enter your response here:

Members have suggested that the Priorities for Culture could be formulated or changed to have positive effects.

The Welsh language should be a golden thread through all priorities rather than stand a standalone priority. This will ensure that the responsibility for delivery through the medium in Welsh is the responsibility of everyone rather than sitting as a specific target to be managed by one group. There needs to be work with the younger generations to improve their confidence in Welsh language abilities so that they feel confident and that these skills are recognised as valuable to them and put young people in a better place career wise. Strengthening the support between finishing education in Welsh medium school and starting careers is also essential to avoid the loss in confidence we often see.

To mitigate negative effects, careful considerations would need to be given to the resource support of this approach where organisations within health are already operating within very tight financial constraints.

Furthermore, the Welsh Language Standards legislation should be extended to all culture provision/organisations to ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably to the English language.

To mitigate negative effects, funding should be provided to translation services such as Helo Blod and there should be improved access to memory software to standardise and improve accuracy of Welsh translation.

Ultimately, increasing the training, mentoring and support for Welsh language cultural programmes would also increase the number of people who could experience the Welsh language in more interesting and captivating ways, which in turn could inspire more people to learn/speak/sing Welsh.

Q32. We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Please enter your response here:

Members have highlighted related issues which have not been specifically addressed in this consultation.

Community well-being is something greater than the sum of individual well-being, it relates to collective life in a community. Communities define themselves and are not only geographical. People, place and power are key domains that influence community well-being. Whilst the priorities include the cultural sectors paid and volunteer workforce, they could be strengthened by considering the important role that wider settings and settings-based approaches have in promoting culture and influencing health and well-being. This includes workplaces, education, and community settings. Such settings can create opportunities for cultural engagement. They can play a unique role in addressing inequalities by creating inclusive, culture and well-being-promoting environments, normalising conversations about culture and the benefits it can provide for our health and well-being.

Furthermore, there may be potential to streamline the number of ambitions, reducing duplication between priorities to improve focus for delivery. Measuring progress against the priorities and ambitions will be important. We suggest that ambitions could be re-framed as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-phased) to enable measuring outcomes. There are several relevant key National Indicators (NI) for Wales, such as community well-being indicators (23-28), participation with arts, culture or heritage activities (NI 35), individual mental well-being (NI 29) which achievement of the culture priorities and ambitions will contribute towards.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here

### **Further Comments:**

Wales is one of the leading countries in the world for arts, health and well-being work. The Welsh NHS Confederation has a MOU with the Arts Council of Wales, there is a Senedd Cross Party Group on Arts and Health, and there is extensive evidence around the impact that arts and culture can have on community health and well-being on [WAHWN website](#).

Since September 2017 the Welsh NHS Confederation has had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Arts Council of Wales. The aim of the first MOU 2017-2020 was to raise awareness of the benefits that the arts can have on people's health and well-being and to embed arts and health initiatives across the NHS in Wales. The second MOU 2020-2023 was about continuing with the overall aim of the MOU, but recognising the impact the pandemic was having on staff and the population, with a clear focus on the mental health and well-being of NHS staff and artists. The third MOU was signed December 2023 and the recent [Evaluation of the Arts and Health Co-ordinator](#) programme highlighted the importance of partnership working between the arts and health and recognised the significant difference

Arts and Health Co-ordinators have had on patient, staff and community well-being and on improving health outcomes.

As the body representing NHS leaders in Wales, we continue to be committed to raising awareness of the significant benefits the arts and being creative can have on peoples physical and mental health and well-being and look forward to working with the Arts Council of Wales, WAHWN, Arts and Health Coordinators, artists, and key partners in the future.