Fusion
Creating opportunities through culture
Delivery in 2018-19

#CyfunoFusion
http://gov.wales/fusion
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Names and personal details in the featured case studies have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.
**Introduction**

The powerful role culture, heritage and the arts play in transforming life chances of individuals is being strengthened by the Fusion: Creating Opportunities through Culture programme.

Fusion is an innovative, low-cost intervention that aligns and focusses resources, services and programmes from a wide range of sectors and organisations, enabling them to directly support people across Wales.

It concentrates on helping those communities experiencing economic disadvantage. These communities traditionally face barriers in accessing culture and heritage, and the benefits they can bring.

The Welsh Government has led Fusion since 2015, in partnership with the cultural and heritage sector. Following the successful pilot phase, we launched a 2-year Fusion Challenge Grants programme in 2017 to embed the programme.

Eight partnerships are delivering strategic programmes using culture to support employability, empowerment, early years and family learning, and health and wellbeing – for those most in need.

We are also taking forward several initiatives including volunteering, training placements and youth engagement to support the wider objectives of the Fusion programme.

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**Conwy – David’s story**

David is a young man in his twenties who has been acting as the main carer for a relative and subsequently was unemployed due to his family commitments. He contacted Conwy’s ‘Support for Carers’ for advice and was referred to the ‘Let’s Get Working’ advisor in Conwy Council, who works closely with Conwy’s Fusion Officer.

David was looking for opportunities connected to his passion for history and wanted to develop his CV to improve his employment prospects and confidence. He started volunteering at Conwy Archives on a weekly basis and after 6 months, a vacancy arose for Archive relief staff. He successfully met the criteria and is now a member of a small pool of relief staff, presently working 6½ hours a month.

David did not expect this outcome when he signed up to volunteer but says that he now feels more empowered and confident to not only take ownership of his working life but also to be able to carry on fulfilling his long existing commitment as a carer. The Fusion officer has signed him up to GwirVol Volunteer Accreditation as he has volunteered for over 100 hours to date. He has seized new opportunities including volunteering at a Fusion event at Pentre Mawr park, helping deliver a WW1 themed children’s activity. He is keen to pursue further training and qualifications in 2018 as part of Conwy’s Fusion programme.
Context

• The Fusion programme embodies the **Well-being of Future Generations Act**\(^1\) with a particular relevance to supporting a **Prosperous Wales, a Wales of Cohesive Communities and a Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language**.

• The Fusion programme enables the cultural sector to contribute to several objectives in **Taking Wales Forward** 2016-2021\(^2\) and Prosperity for All\(^3\), including volunteering, employability, supporting young people and boosting digital skills.

• **Light Springs through the Dark**\(^4\) outlines the Welsh Government’s vision for culture in Wales. It articulates how culture, through Fusion, can empower people and develop confidence, skills, and employability.

Progress to date

Led by MALD, co-ordinated action has been taken to develop and embed Fusion. A strategic Cultural Inclusion Board (CIB) oversees the programme and seeks to drive forward change across Welsh Government departments, sponsored bodies, and cultural and community organisations across Wales.

Since 2015, MALD has supported Fusion partnerships, coalitions of cultural and community bodies which provide cultural activity that help tackle poverty. Our evaluation shows local, structured partnerships, within a national programme, are the most effective way to deliver genuine collaboration and better outcomes.

Between 2015 and 2017, over 5,000 people took part in Fusion activities, involving more than 150 partners. We worked with local authorities, heritage sites, theatres, schools, museums, archives and libraries among others to help over 100 people gain a qualification, created over 300 volunteering opportunities and supported more than 1,500 pupils to do better at school.

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What we are doing in 2017-2019

Following the successful pilot phase, in 2017 MALD launched a Fusion Challenge Grants programme. Eight Lead Bodies are delivering 2-year strategic programmes using culture, heritage and the arts to support employability, empowerment, the early years, and health and wellbeing – for those living in the most deprived communities.

Each works with a range of cultural partners, as well as other organisations including volunteering bodies, housing associations, health services, schools, community agencies, employability programmes including Communities for Work and the Flying Start programme for the early years.

Lead bodies have all appointed local Fusion co-ordinators to enable more effective programmes and partnerships to be created and to link organisations together better.

Partnerships deliver and report on activities and projects that meet the seven Fusion performance indicators (Annex 2). Levels of participation in Year 1 were extremely encouraging. Lead bodies reported the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fusion Indicator</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1 Supporting the Early Years and Family Learning</td>
<td>4979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2 Gaining a qualification</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3 Regular volunteering as route to work</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4 Completing a work experience placement</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5 Improved digital skills</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>F6 Improved attitude to formal learning</td>
<td>2689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F7 Better able to manage mental well being and physical health</td>
<td>2941</td>
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</tbody>
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Newport – Sarah’s story

Sarah is a school pupil who has been described by the teacher as someone with challenging behaviour, confidence issues and low literacy levels. Her primary school sits within an area of high deprivation in Newport, with a high percentage of pupils receiving free school meals.

The Newport Fusion Co-ordinator worked with the school and Operasonic, a South Wales-based company that enables young people to participate in opera, as part of the Global Science Opera. An introductory session took place within the normal school day. Sarah seemed uninterested but was encouraged by the teacher to attend after school sessions. The teacher and facilitator commented on the slow but clear shift in Sarah’s levels of participation.

She began to ask questions, enjoyed a live-stream opera performance and even carried out independent research at home. Sarah actively took part in an after school, non-compulsory project resulting in a performance.

Sarah’s confidence levels have increased; she was more responsive within lessons throughout the duration of the project and carried out research independently at home without being prompted. This had never happened before. Recently she visited Newport Museum and Art Gallery as part of a school workshop; Sarah was one of the first people to volunteer to read out her work.
MALD will continue to support the partnerships in a variety of ways, responding to need. That support will include:

• Regular networking and training sessions, resources, newsletters and advice.
• Support to lever in external funding.
• Training programmes in areas such as Arts Award.
• Advice and training on effective evaluation.
• Developing a showcase for the Fusion programme on People’s Collection Wales.
• Promotion of and advocacy for the Fusion programme in Wales and beyond.

In addition to the Challenge Grants programme, we will also continue our commitment to key priorities requiring action at a national level.

We will:

• Implement a programme of 33 high quality, 12-month training placements targeted at communities and individuals experiencing disadvantage, working with the HLF and Creative & Cultural Skills.
• Develop powerful cultural engagement programmes for young people, to increase empowerment and skills, working with partners including Kids in Museums and the Young Promoters scheme.
• Help deliver a step change in cultural volunteering by supporting cultural bodies to increase opportunities and widen access to volunteering programmes, in partnership with WCVA.
• Work with other Welsh Government departments to ensure the cultural sector plays a greater role in supporting our priorities around employability, health, education and cohesive communities.

Torfaen – Gareth’s story

Gareth from Torfaen was referred to Llantarnam Grange by ‘Bridges into Work’ Torfaen in August 2017. He had been out of work for a number of years and needed support to upgrade his skills, confidence and CV to improve his chances of finding work. With support from Bridges into Work and Fusion, Gareth completed a level 2 qualification in First Aid and began volunteering two days a week at Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre in August 2017 doing general maintenance and gardening.

Gareth rapidly grew in confidence under the structured Volunteer scheme at Llantarnam Grange, set up as part of Torfaen’s Fusion programme. He gradually increased the level of tasks he was able to undertake and used his own initiative, even helping with exhibition changeovers. He completed larger tasks such as repainting the foyer and the entire café with help from staff.

A colleague at Llantarnam Grange said “Gareth is proving to be invaluable. His enthusiasm and commitment is fantastic and he has grown in confidence since he has been here”.

Gareth said “I’m enjoying my time here. My confidence has grown back to where it used to be and I hope to go on further and further”.

Gareth has now been offered a contract to work regular part-time hours at Llantarnam Grange.
### Annex 1: Fusion Challenge Grant Programmes in 2017-19

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fusion Area / Lead Body</th>
<th>Activity and Outcomes</th>
<th>Fusion Co-ordinator Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torfaen &amp; Caerphilly</td>
<td>Torfaen and Caerphilly local authorities are working together on the Fusion programme, using culture and heritage to support people in Communities First and other areas. The project is seeking to change the way people think and feel about arts, culture and heritage, making them relevant and accessible to everyone. It is working with a wide range of partners including culture, education, health, employment and skills bodies. It is focussing on tackling barriers to employment through volunteering and work placements, supporting educational attainment, the early years, and health and wellbeing.</td>
<td>Phone: (01633) 648809</td>
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</table>
| Cardiff                 | Cardiff Story Museum, operated by the City & County of Cardiff, is leading a wide range of national and local cultural and heritage partners. It is working closely with a number of programmes including Flying Start to develop a rich programme of activity, delivering accredited learning opportunities, skills development, apprenticeships, volunteering and work experience, and fun and meaningful activities for children, families, young people and the elderly. These opportunities are targeted towards individuals that live in Cardiff’s Southern Arc and current Communities First clusters. | Phone: (02920) 871024        
#CardiffFusion
#CyfunoCaerdydd
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<td><strong>Swansea</strong> &lt;br&gt;City &amp; County of Swansea</td>
<td>Building on the success of the Swansea Creative Learning Partnership, the City &amp; County of Swansea is driving forward innovative and diverse partnership work across the city. A coalition of cultural and heritage providers are building excellent community links with existing programmes and networks, and creating new activity. The aim of the project is to provide exciting opportunities through culture to engage and support people as part of their progression and improved wellbeing, education and employability. Working in partnership, the project will ensure increased volunteering opportunities, creative skills and accredited learning.</td>
<td>Phone: (01792) 637 685</td>
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<td><strong>Conwy</strong>  &lt;br&gt;Conwy County Borough Council</td>
<td>Conwy County Borough Council is strengthening cultural partnerships, working with a number of local and national bodies to ensure that residents from a number of disadvantaged areas within the County have access to cultural provision. There is a strong focus on supporting children and families, as well as employability and employment through volunteering, accredited learning, and improving skills. Activities include storytelling, art workshops, museum visits, archive projects, events, volunteering opportunities, and photography and drama opportunities.</td>
<td>Phone: (01492) 574628</td>
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<td><strong>Neath Port Talbot</strong> &lt;br&gt;Tai Tarian</td>
<td>Tai Tarian is supporting volunteering opportunities, employability, financial literacy and numeracy programmes and arts and culture opportunities in Port Talbot and beyond. One of its most important programmes is with Ysgol Bae Baglan school where it is using film, media and culture as a way of boosting engagement and attainment. Tai Tarian is working closely with partners including the actor Michael Sheen, National Theatre Wales, and Ffilm Cymru.</td>
<td>Phone: (01639) 505922</td>
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<td>Fusion Area / Lead Body</td>
<td>Activity and Outcomes</td>
<td>Fusion Co-ordinator Contact</td>
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<td><strong>Gwynedd</strong></td>
<td>Cyngor Gwynedd is delivering a programme of activity working with partners including Storiel, the National Library of Wales, Gwynedd’s library service, Pontio, Cadw, the National Slate Museum and others. It is focussing on supporting young people and families through the Family Learning Signature programme, developing new approaches to increasing volunteering, and supporting literacy and the early years. Cyngor Gwynedd is concentrating its work mainly on the current Communities First cluster in Bangor, Caernarfon and Talysarn, as well as other communities.</td>
<td>Phone: (01286) 679215</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Carmarthenshire</strong></td>
<td>Carmarthenshire County Council and its partners are delivering a wide range of cultural projects and activities. It is working alongside Welsh Government Tackling Poverty programmes and key employability programmes such as Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus. We are focussing our work on the Llanelli area and areas that are experiencing economic disadvantage. The main aim of the programme is to create opportunities that will support individuals to access employment. Working in partnership, culture and heritage bodies are prioritising volunteering opportunities, work placements, training, wellbeing, and encouraging individuals to become involved in local culture.</td>
<td>Phone: (01554) 742662 Ext 5462</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fusion Area / Lead Body</td>
<td>Activity and Outcomes</td>
<td>Fusion Co-ordinator Contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newport</td>
<td>The City of Newport is focussing on reducing barriers to accessing culture, working with a wide variety of cultural partners including Newport Museum, Cadw, Amgueddfa Cymru, It’s My Shout, People’s Collection Wales and the Chartist Trust. It is working closely with the Communities First, Flying Start, and Communities for Work programmes as well as social landlords. It is focussing on creating opportunities for young people to take part in culture and heritage to support their learning, creating work placements and volunteer opportunities to increase employability, promoting digital inclusion, and supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing.</td>
<td>Phone: 01633 656656</td>
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## Annex 2: The Seven Fusion Indicators

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Activity and Outcomes</th>
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| **F1:** Supporting the Early Years and Family Learning | Structured cultural activities promote learning and development from birth through school age.  
For Early Years: Cultural bodies develop and deliver structured Language and Play (LAP) or Number and Play (NAP) provision, or other structured language and communication sessions. These can take place in a Flying Start or equivalent programme, or cultural setting.  
For Family Learning: Cultural bodies develop and deliver activities to support family learning. These have been specifically designed to enable adults and children to learn together or enable parents/carers to learn how to support their children’s learning, focussed on improving:  
• the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents  
• ability to help their children’s acquisition of literacy, language and numeracy. |
| **F2:** Gaining a qualification | The client attains a recognised qualification within a cultural organisation or through a cultural project which is primarily intended to develop the client’s employability. This includes:  
• CQFW qualifications  
• Agored Units  
• NOCN. |
| **F3:** Regular volunteering as route to work | The client undertakes volunteering within a cultural setting which is primarily intended to develop employability, such as:  
• at least one hour of volunteering per week for a period of at least 4 weeks  
• another pattern of volunteering where client completes at least 4 hours in a single month  
• volunteering includes time-banking. The client should time-bank at least one hour per week for a period of at least 4 weeks. |
<p>| <strong>F4:</strong> Completing a work experience placement | The client completes a work experience placement in a cultural organisation, lasting at least 16 hours per week for 2 weeks. |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Activity and Outcomes</th>
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| **F5:** Improved digital skills | The client has been supported to develop their digital skills by:  
  • completing a recognised, accredited IT or software course such as ECDL, or other accredited digital skills e.g. through Agored or OCN  
  • participating in a cultural project of which the primary focus is to improve digital skills. |
| **F6:** Improved attitude to formal learning | The client demonstrates a measurable improvement in their attitude to formal learning, and potentially attainment, through engagement with culture. Evidence should be provided by the school or agency rather than being self-reported. |
| **F7:** Better able to manage their mental well being and physical health | Clients report having better management strategies for their mental well being and/or receives support to help them improve their physical health, through taking part in cultural and heritage activities of which the primary focus is to improve their health and wellbeing.  
  **Example activities/evidence:**  
  • The client has participated in an activity at least twice a week for 4 weeks with the primary purpose of helping them to feel more positive about their mental well being.  
  • The client undertakes increased physical activity as a result of the intervention provided. |