



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Museums, Arts, Archives and Libraries Division (MAALD)

Fusion Challenge Grants 2020-21

Information for Applicants

1. Introduction

Following the successful three years of the Fusion Challenge Grants 2017-20, MAALD is continuing Fusion by extending the **programme for a year with the option for another**. Applications of up to £25k per annum, up to one year plus one, are now invited from lead bodies to deliver strategic cultural projects linked to employability, empowerment, early years and family learning, and health and wellbeing.

The background to the Fusion Programme and the Challenge Grant scheme is contained at Annex 2.

Fusion is aligned to wider Welsh Government policy and embodies the **Wellbeing of Future Generations Act**. Participation in Fusion enables public organisations to work towards the goals of the Act. The Fusion programme enables the cultural sector to contribute to objectives in **Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021** and for both to contribute to the national strategy **Prosperity for All**. **Light Springs through the Dark** 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.

The Fusion programme remains focussed on **utilising culture to tackle the effects of deprivation**. In the pilot phase, Pioneer Areas worked exclusively within former Communities First areas. In 2020-21, applicants may determine which communities they work with but must demonstrate how they have identified and targeted priority audiences within their local authority area/s, for example through utilising the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD).

Applicants must complete an Activity Plan and a Grant Application form. Performance must be focussed on the delivery of a set of **Fusion indicators (Annex 1)** which will be the main way of monitoring the impact of the Programme.

2. Who can apply for funding?

Applications are invited from organisations providing cultural, heritage or arts services.

Applicants **should be local authorities, or cultural bodies operated by, or with, strong links to local authorities** (such as through a formal partnership or funding arrangement).

In some areas, other community agencies, particularly registered social landlords / housing associations, could be considered as a lead body. They must be able to demonstrate how they will be able to develop a strong partnership with local cultural bodies, for example through previous delivery.

Applications from outside a local authority must include a letter of support from the relevant local authority/ies for their area.

3. How much will we fund?

Applications of up to £25k per annum, per year with a potential additional year, are welcomed. This is a competitive grant programme and demand for funding is expected to be high. Should demand from projects that meet the criteria exceed the funding available, we may need to discuss projects further with applicants.

We will particularly welcome applications that demonstrate a willingness to attract external funding for projects. Applicants are expected to provide at least 10% of total costs as additional match-funding towards their project. A higher percentage of match-funding from the applicant will be positively taken into consideration as part of the assessment process. **We particularly welcome proposals covering more than one local authority area.**

Financial claims for 2020-21 should be submitted by **15 February 2021**. Funding for activity in 2021-22, where part of two-year proposals, will be subject to satisfactory performance in 2020-21 and availability of future budgets.

4. What will we fund?

Lead bodies will need to develop proposals that reflect the guidance and criteria set out in this document. Proposals will need to be focussed on delivery of activities that meet the Fusion performance indicators. Applicants must also articulate how they will:

- co-ordinate priorities and programmes of activity
- convene / drive forward local networks
- liaise with local partners and other organisation
- identify training and other needs
- implement consistent monitoring and evaluation procedures
- secure external funding
- promote Fusion and your success

There is an expectation that grants will address the need to create capacity, for example **contributing towards the costs of local co-ordinator roles**. Costs to support local activity, for example training for partners, are also appropriate. We do not envisage directly funding cultural projects by local partners; there is an expectation that partners will contribute their resources to local programmes.

Activity should include:

- working closely with early years programmes such as Flying Start
- working closely with employability support programmes e.g. Communities for Work and Lift, and volunteering agencies, to identify and support individuals with structured opportunities
- young people's empowerment and participation programmes such as Takeover Day, Young Promoters and others
- digital training and accreditation through People's Collection Wales

Applicants will need to provide a timetable for the year. This may be indicative but should include the following stages: discussions with partners and within the lead body, recruitment of co-ordinator roles, formal establishment of a Fusion partnership, agreement of outcomes and activities, delivery of activities, and ongoing evaluation. We recognise that applicants that have previously participated in the Fusion Challenge Grant scheme will have made progress against these stages.

Eligible costs could cover staff costs, equipment, and in some cases a small budget for project costs such as accreditation and training. However, some costs are ineligible:

- renewal or purchase of basic office furniture and equipment
- general running costs of partners
- purchase or leasing of property, premises or vehicles
- employment of staff to undertake work and activity that is part of the normal management of the service of partners running the project

We will expect each **lead body** to provide a breakdown of expenditure and details of organisations that have been funded prior to a claim being paid. We may request supporting evidence. Funding will be provided by the Welsh Government to the lead body which will then make arrangements to pay partners or suppliers as relevant.

Any underspends should be highlighted at the first available opportunity, potential uses of any underspends should be discussed with Welsh Government officials.

5. Criteria

All projects must meet the following criteria:

- activity to deliver the Fusion Indicators at Annex 1. As a minimum, applications must include activities to meet Indicators F1, F2, F3 and F7.
- evidence of how applicants have used the latest WIMD to target services at those most in need
- a strong partnership of cultural providers (local authority, third sector, and national bodies) and community agencies (including volunteering agencies and housing associations) and other bodies.
- co-ordination of networking, events, training, evaluation and reporting on behalf of the partnership by the lead partner
- evidence of consultation with users and non-users
- provide value for money

6. The timetable

The timetable for 2020-21 is as follows:

- the closing date for applications to this programme is **14 February 2020**
- applications will be assessed during **February 2020**
- further discussion could take place with applicants if necessary
- applicants will be informed of the outcome by the **end of March 2020** and announcements made in **early April**
- lead bodies should submit financial forecast spend by **16 October 2020**

- financial claims should be received by MAALD by **15 February 2021**. Where costs cover salaries, applicants may claim in advance for the period **15 February 2021 to 31 March 2021**
- grant-funded work for 2020-21 should be completed by **31 March 2021**.

7. Completing the Application Form and Activity Plan

- Submissions should be signed by the relevant Head of the organisation or department
- Applicants must ensure costs quoted are competitive and comply with the organisation's recruitment and procurement procedures and financial guidelines. At least one competitive estimate should be provided
- An Activity Plan must be completed as part of the application, to include performance indicators and targets, which will then be outlined in the Decision Form for the grantee's agreement
- Extra supporting information may be sent if appropriate and clearly marked 'Fusion Challenge Grants, name of applicant and dated
- Submissions will be returned, with a consequent delay, if all relevant information is not provided
- Applications should indicate how equality and Welsh language needs have been taken into account (with reference to appropriate organisational policies where relevant). All promotional material and exhibitions should be produced in Welsh and English.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Best Practice

Lead bodies will be responsible for collecting monitoring and evaluation data and reporting on participation and performance, and will need to develop robust systems. Lead bodies will be expected to report regularly to the Welsh Government.

Each lead body will need to commit to participate in Fusion workshops or network meetings (2 - 3 per year). These workshops will provide an opportunity to share best practice and experiences with other areas, other partners and the Fusion team. Further guidance on effective techniques and tools for monitoring and evaluation will be developed with partners as part of the Programme.

9. Communication

The applicant must credit the Welsh Government in any communication activity for project activity supported by Welsh Government funding, directly or indirectly. This should refer to the Fusion programme. More information about this will be included in the decision letter. The applicant should inform us in which language they would like us to communicate with them.

10. Advice and Assessment

If the applicant requires any further information or assistance they should contact: Gary Williams, Welsh Government, on gary.williams2@gov.wales or 0300 062 5548 or cyfuno@gov.wales.

Applications **should arrive no later than 12:00 14 February 2020** and be sent to:
Cyfuno-fusion@gov.wales and/or Fusion Programme, MAALD, Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UR.

All submissions will be read in detail and assessed against the requirements and criteria outlined in Sections 4 and 5 and the process will give due regard to the:

- completeness of the application
- compliance with relevant standards
- established track record of successful project management

MAALD will withhold confirmation of offers of financial support for projects under this Programme in those cases where the applicant has still to formally report on previous Fusion project or projects.

Annex 1: Fusion Performance Measurement Framework

Performance Measure	Definition	Examples of Cultural Activity supporting outcome
F1 Supporting the Early Years and Family Learning	Participants attend structured cultural activities promoting learning and development from birth through school age. Delivered with a range of community and other partners, including childcare providers, programmes such as Families First and Flying Start, and schools. Outcomes are developed to benefit both child and parents/carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schemes to encourage parents and carers to be more willing to read / undertake cultural activity with children • Using cultural activity as part of the Family Learning Signature tool • Dedicated family learning sessions at cultural venues • Cultural organisations delivering family learning activities in community settings
F2 Gaining a qualification	The client attains a recognised qualification which is primarily intended to develop the client's employability. This includes CQFW qualifications and related awards e.g. Agored Units, NOCN.	Through participation organised by cultural body, client receives a recognised accreditation / qualification. Can include Arts Award Bronze, Silver and Gold levels and units such as Agored, OCN and others.
F3 Regular volunteering as route to work	The client undertakes volunteering within a cultural setting or as part of a cultural or heritage body on a regular basis. This is ideally but not only, as a route to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural body provides volunteering opportunity for clients, and works with employability support programmes, community agencies and other partners to identify and support suitable participants. • Cultural bodies reward volunteering for example through time-banking initiatives and also recognise time-banking credits as payment.
F4 Completing a work experience placement	The client completes a work experience placement within a cultural setting and/or as part of a cultural or heritage body for a specified time. Client to have attended at least 75% of the time.	Cultural body should work with employability support programmes or other referral programmes to identify participants and provide placements.
F5 Improved digital skills	Client has been supported to develop their digital skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accredited, recognised ICT training (mainly through public libraries) • Participation in accredited or structured digital heritage programmes (e.g. People's Collection Wales) • Participating in a cultural project of which the primary focus is to improve digital skills

F6 Improved attitude to formal learning	<p>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.</p>	<p>Cultural bodies work with schools and community agencies and other bodies (e.g. referral units) to offer structured activities designed to support young people to improve motivation, confidence and skills and result in an improved attitude to learning. Improved academic performance may in some cases also be evidenced and reported.</p>
F7 Better able to manage their mental well being and physical health	<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP referral / prescription schemes using cultural activity • Volunteer programmes at cultural institutions • Reminiscence / care home work using cultural activity • Practical cultural participation such as arts and crafts as a therapeutic activity – as evidenced in Mind Body Spirit • Participation in physical arts and performance activity with clear health benefits (e.g. dance, singing) • Cultural activities that contribute to the 'Five ways to wellbeing' (New Economics Foundation).
F8 Community Cohesion	<p>Clients report feeling a greater sense of belonging to and integration within wider society.</p> <p>Minority groups and clients report that they found activities at cultural and heritage venues relevant to themselves and their communities.</p>	<p>Cultural projects where the primary aim is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and celebrate cultural diversity, working to break down feelings of fear and mistrust between people from different racial, religious or cultural backgrounds. • Break down barriers to participation by people from different cultural, racial, religious and disabled backgrounds. • Provide support for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and settled communities during the integration process.

Annex 2: Strategic Context and Background

1. The Fusion programme is referred to as ***Fusion: Creating Opportunities through Culture / Cyfuno: Creu Cyfleoedd trwy Ddiwylliant***.
2. The term 'Pioneer Area' has been phased out, and replaced with 'Fusion Partnership', as this model of working has been established.
3. MAALD has led on the Fusion programme since 2015, building on the recommendations of the Andrews report *Culture and Poverty*. The pilot phase in 2015-17 saw the establishment of an innovative delivery model – the Pioneer Area approach - underpinned by a grant and support programme. We published a comprehensive Government Social Research (GSR) [evaluation report](#) in March 2016. This demonstrated that cultural bodies are developing more coherent and collaborative approaches to tackling poverty. It has also helped to show:
 - what activity is most effective in supporting people in our most deprived communities
 - what local and national support is needed to enable this
 - where best to target funding and other support such as training
4. In 2017 the Welsh Government launched the Fusion Challenge Grant Programme. Eight lead bodies initialled delivered a 2 years strategic programme using culture, heritage and the arts to support employability, empowerment, early years and well being for those in deprived communities. The bodies all appointed local Fusion co-ordinators to create quality programmes and partnerships linking organisations together more effectively. The programme was [reviewed](#) in 2019 and extended for one year to 2020.
5. The cultural sector is well-placed to deliver against several Welsh Government priorities. Our evaluation shows the sector already makes a strong contribution to:
 - **employability and skills**, particularly through accredited skills and courses, VARTE (Volunteering as a Route to Employment) and training placements, and powerful participatory programmes that support confidence and empowerment
 - **health and wellbeing**, through supporting both physical and mental health
 - **supporting the early years**, particularly through literacy and family learning programmes.
6. The Fusion programme supports:
 - the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**. This creates a single set of national indicators. It also establishes statutory Public Service Boards (PSBs) which will replace the voluntary Local Service Boards in each local authority area. PSBs could have greater responsibility for poverty prevention according to local priorities at a strategic level
 - [Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021](#) sets out the Welsh Government's programme to drive improvement in the Welsh economy and public services, delivering a Wales which is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected. The cultural sector is well placed to contribute to several objectives in *Taking Wales Forward*, including creating more volunteering opportunities and supporting people into employment.
7. The evidence from the pilot phase demonstrates that networks of community and cultural representatives can enable more consistent, joined-up cultural provision at local level that

supports those most in need. **We will continue to support and expand this model of local partnership working.**

8. A key issue identified by stakeholders is the time it takes to develop and embed partnership working at a local level. The Challenge Fund will be promoted as a two year grant to encourage high-quality, innovative bids to come forward, subject to review of the first year and further budgetary discussions.
9. The review in 2019 acknowledged the value of the coordinator as a connector between the community and the cultural and heritage bodies. We expect to see strong emphasis on role of the coordinator in the application.
10. Co-ordination of Fusion partnerships works most effectively when it:
 - is based within local authorities or within an 'anchor' cultural body with a strong link to the relevant local authority
 - builds a partnership of cultural providers and other agencies
 - facilitates and directs a focussed, structured approach to supporting local priorities, which allows organisations to contribute services, assets and capacity to a wider programme
 - promotes networking, events, training, evaluation and reporting
 - ensures a consistent approach to performance measurement and evaluation.
11. We will continue to work with existing programmes and partner organisations, including the Communities for Work and LIFT programmes supporting employment and the Flying Start programme for early.
12. Research work to support the overall evaluation of the programme will be carried out by the Research Coordinator, based within Amgueddfa Cymru supported by the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS).