

1. Other forms of financial support

· Investment

We can cite two examples of investment programmes that have been strategically developed: firstly, an **interest-free loan scheme for artists** from Arts Council of Wales which made small sums of money (up to £5,000?) available to artists with repayment terms of 36 months. A ring-fenced sum was made available on a first-come-first-served basis, pending a simple application and statement of intent. The scheme enabled artists to undertake projects, production and research that they could otherwise not afford, and with much less work than a funding application. This scheme ceased in 2012.

A second example is the **Collectorplan Scheme** (again, administered by ACW) which offers interest-free loans for purchasing works of art from a participating venue. We have less detail on this scheme but it is effective to our knowledge.

We'd be interested to see the development of an equivalent investment programme(s) for cultural organisations, with an equivalent strategic approach. For example, an interest-free loan to enable the purchase of a building for cultural use that could be paid back over a 25-year period. We would like to see this backed by corporate investment among other sources, as a means for businesses in Wales to deliver their corporate social responsibility and develop relationships with the cultural sector.

It is also useful to understand the word 'Investment' as infrastructure rather than financial. In many artforms the production of work is supported as part of its presentation (eg WMC dance studios, orchestra rehearsal spaces, Sherman theatre scenery production, WNO's costume department). There is a whole ecology of arts support that needs investment in its infrastructure. We make this point because

from our experience of the Visual Arts in Wales we recognise support for many Visual arts organisations is weighted heavily on 'presentation' and lacks any strategic / infrastructural support for production.

- **Rent reduction and rates relief**

1. G39 successfully negotiated a significant reduction in the asking price / market value of its current premises. We simply made an offer which was accepted. We think this may be for a couple of reasons – firstly, the premises had been vacant for a number of years prior to our tenancy, and also we requested a 10-year lease (ie guaranteed income for that period).

2. That said, our rent bill is significant. We would prefer to be able to invest this sum in the organisation by having a different approach to premises (eg owned premises / non-building-based). Rented premises does not allow for long-term development and future planning.

3. From our experience with Cardiff Council, the process for securing discretionary rates relief as a not-for-profit organisation is quite opaque and lacking in clarity regarding the application process and assessment criteria.

4. The Empty Shops Network is an interesting initiative for approaching this from a different position: a commercial or retail space is offered temporarily to a non-commercial pop-up cultural project. NB This solution alone is not sufficient to deliver a cultural strategy because it doesn't allow for long-term planning, legacy or audience relationship building.

- **Availability of business advice (e.g. how arts organisations should be legally constituted)**

This was previously offered through the Cultural Enterprise Service – an advice and training service for creative businesses and individuals that was successfully pioneered in Wales and has since been duplicated elsewhere (including Scotland). Regrettably CES lost its funding in early 2000s, and no initiative (or combination of initiatives) has adequately addressed that need.

2. Current initiatives and ways forward

- Support from the Arts Council and others to help reduce dependence on public subsidy

The Resilience Programme is, in our experience, an effective way of delivering this. There is certainly room for more programmes of this nature, and from a diverse range of delivery partners, eg Arts & Business Cymru. However the Resilience programme has an agenda – while it is useful in targeting those areas that may be structurally weak for organisations (board/ management/ Fundraising/ legal) it also comes with the overarching ethos that it is making organisations

- Sharing fundraisers

Lots of roles that could potentially be shared across organisations, or centralised access: marketing, H. Wales Millennium Centre has a ‘shared services’ agreement with some of its tenants which offers bolt-on services in addition to their tenant agreement (eg the Tessitura consortium providing ticketing facilities; soft services; catering; infrastructure / software)

- Creative Wales

The Creative Wales is uniquely Welsh. It offers growth and development to a rigorously challenged and sifted pool of artists to develop what they do. Without it many of the projects that are happening now, in schools, in hospitals and in arts education and galleries would not be possible. Many of the artists that have gone on to represent Wales internationally have been supported by Creative Wales awards. The trickle down effect of what people achieve through Creative Wales is to be applauded. The award is transparent and democratic and should be seen with many of its equivalents in other areas of activity, such as the Sport Wales Elite Cymru or Talent Cymru – another grant that supports achievers with the knowledge that it raises ambition and expertise across the sector.