



Llenyddiaeth Cymru, Canolfan Glyn Jones,
Canolfan Mileniwm Cymru, Plas Bute, Caerdydd, CF10 5AL
Literature Wales, Glyn Jones Centre,
Wales Millennium Centre, Bute Place, Cardiff, CF10 5AL
Ffôn | Phone: 029 2047 2266

Gwefan | Website: www.llenyddiaethcymru.org | www.literaturewales.org
Twitter: [@LlenCymru](https://twitter.com/LlenCymru) | [@LitWales](https://twitter.com/LitWales)

Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Pierhead Street
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

RE: The role of arts and culture in addressing poverty and social exclusion

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in response to the following points of reference:

- How effective have the efforts of Welsh Government sponsored bodies (namely the Arts Council, National Museum, National Library and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales) and local government been in using culture to tackle poverty?

Literature Wales is the national company for literature, funded by the Arts Council of Wales.

Participation is one of three activity pillars within our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. With an increased focus on target clients, outcomes and impact, we deliver and support activity which uses creative reading and writing to empower, improve and brighten the lives of some of our most marginalised individuals and communities. Aligned with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015), we are committed to deploying culture as a sustainable development principle, helping to reduce persistent societal problems including poverty, loneliness and isolation.

Our participation work prioritises communities where we can make the biggest difference to people's lives – focusing on participants from BAME backgrounds, on low income and those with disabilities and illnesses (physical and mental). These groups are most likely to face multiple barriers to social mobility, educational success, long-term employment and good mental and physical health. We are targeting these clients specifically because they are currently under-represented as arts participants and audiences (Arts in Wales Survey, 2015), despite the power of arts engagement –

and we argue particularly literary engagement – to generate personal outcomes which have the potential for long-term socio-economic impact (e.g. improved written and spoken communication skills, increased confidence in self-expression and sociability).

Recent examples of the kinds of work we deliver include:



Under Liberty Skies and Ozzie the Osprey

“We’ve really noticed a difference in the pupils and parents from the start of the project to today - their confidence has really grown”

Paul Whapham, Head of Community - Ospreys Region

In November 2018, Literature Wales and Ospreys in the Community worked with Sea View Primary and Townhill Community School on two projects. Pupils and parents attended weekly creative workshops with writer **Mike Church** and film-maker **Natasha James** at the Liberty Stadium, exploring the ground and meeting Ospreys players to help get their imaginations flowing. Sea View Primary created the story of “Ozzie the Osprey” on the team mascot, whilst Townhill Community School created a poem and film about Ospreys match days called ‘Under Liberty Skies’.

Both projects were revealed on 30 November 2018 at a ceremony attended by VIPs including rugby player **Bradley Davies**. The film was shown on the in-bowl mega screens prior to the Ospreys vs Zebre kick off.

This project triggered a marked increase in confidence amongst parents and pupils, increasing their sense of self-worth, their confidence in self-expression, and their ability and willingness to engage in new opportunities. We will continue to monitor the participants to gauge longer term impact.



Sharing Rhymes and Stories

The first poems I knew were nursery rhymes, and before I could read them for myself, I had come to love just the words of them, the words alone - Dylan Thomas

This quote by Dylan Thomas inspired an intergenerational project with residents and staff of Trafalgar Park and Abermill Care homes and young children from Startrite and Footsteps Nurseries, Caerphilly. The project is part of Literature Wales' [Lit Reach](#) programme, arranged in partnership with Caerphilly Arts Development team.

Over six weeks from September – November 2018, writer and spoken word artist **Rufus Mufasa** led a series of creative sessions which encouraged the young children and residents to share their favourite nursery rhymes and stories. This helped to create connections through words and rhymes, promoting positive intergenerational relationships and decreased loneliness of the care home residents, contributing towards the increased health and wellbeing of both groups.

Lit Reach is funded by Arts Council of Wales, with financial contributions from eight Local Authorities – Conwy, Gwynedd, Denbighshire, Caerphilly, Newport, Vale of Glamorgan, Neath Port Talbot and Torfaen, as well as Snowdonia National Park Authority. Image © Camera Sioned / Literature Wales



Cofi* Army Poetry

“...The experience of working on this project and being interviewed and shown on television has left an unforgettable mark on the boys... Not only have they developed team working skills, they have also developed a sense of pride in being part of something more - their community...” Sam Humphreys - TRAC Officer

Over summer 2018, poets and football fans **Ifor ap Glyn** and **Rhys Iorwerth** led creative writing workshops with a group of Year 8 pupils from Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen. The pupils were part of the TRAC 11-24 Gwynedd scheme, which supports young people who are in danger of disengaging from education. The project is part of Literature Wales' Lit Reach programme, in partnership with TRAC Gwynedd and Cics Cymru - a Football Association of Wales scheme to encourage young people to take part in more sports.


The young people composed short poems on themes such as club pride, heroes and celebrations. Eleven poems – one by both poets and all nine participants – were installed across the Oval, the home of Caernarfon Town FC in September, marked by an opening ceremony.

This project generated a sense of pride and achievement amongst young people who are not often praised. It contributed to increased confidence in self-expression, strengthening their sense of identity and self-worth. We will continue to monitor them to gauge longer term impact.

* Cofi = a person from Caernarfon. Lit Reach is funded by Arts Council of Wales, with financial contributions from eight Local Authorities – Conwy, Gwynedd, Denbighshire, Caerphilly, Newport, Vale of Glamorgan, Neath Port Talbot and Torfaen, as well as Snowdonia National Park Authority.

I would be delighted to discuss our work and our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan further if required and look forward to hearing the conclusions of your research in due course.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lleucu Siencyn', written in a cursive style.

Lleucu Siencyn
Chief Executive: Literature Wales