

## **1. How effective has the Welsh Government been in improving participation in and access to culture for people in poverty?**

1.1 Kids in Museums works across England and Wales to make museums more welcoming to children, families and young people, particularly for those who have least access. Our programmes are designed to offer museums simple, cost effective ideas to help overcome some of the barriers that these groups face to visiting.

1.2 Kids in Museums has been running programmes in Wales since 2012. Over the past six years, the support of the Welsh Government has been invaluable in helping us to increase the reach of our work and embed it in museums across Wales.

1.3 Welsh Government investment has enabled us to increase our capacity to work in Wales, employing an additional staff member in North Wales. This role was created as a result of feedback that museums in that area wanted more support, has given us a platform and networks to share our projects and helped us build partnerships with other organisations to increase the impact of our work.

1.4 With Welsh Government support we have been able to achieve the following to help more people from disadvantaged backgrounds access museums:

- 48 museums, archives and heritage organisations have signed the Kids in Museums Manifesto which helps museums to be more welcoming to families, children and young people, especially those who have never visited.
- 30 families involved in judging our Family Friendly Museum Award – being an award judge is free to access for all.
- Nearly 5,000 children and young people involved in Takeover Day – all these children and young people have been able to participate for free and the benefits of participation include learning more about museums and local heritage, increased confidence and increased engagement with other heritage activities.

*"I think takeover days are a good approach for meaningful engagement with young people."* (Newport Museum)

*"The children have had a once in a lifetime experience that enabled them to organise, construct and lead a tour around our National Museum. As a result of this experience the*

*children's self-confidence and communication skills have increased*

*incredibly. They now have far more self-belief which has impacted on their learning in school."* (Headteacher, Pennaeth)

- 14 volunteering opportunities created

1.5 One of our Welsh volunteers explained the impact of volunteering with Kids in Museums on their future career as follows:

*"Volunteering with Kids in Museums began my museum career. When writing a review for the Kids in Museums website, I visited the Egypt Centre in Swansea. I then began volunteering for the Egypt Centre and progressed to an Educational Leader. I then decided that my future career was in a museum. I was told that to get work in this sector, I should get an MA in Museum Studies and that the University of Leicester was the best. I enshrined the Kids in Museum's principles of access and engagement in my personal statement. I have now completed my MA and I am beginning my museum career. Volunteering with Kids in Museum shaped how I envisage my future museum career."*

**2. 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?**

2.1 Kids in Museums has partnered with the National Museum and National Library of Wales on many of its projects in Wales. The National Library of Wales has delivered several very effective Takeover Days working with children from disadvantaged backgrounds from Fusion areas.

*“Verbal feedback from the school was very positive. The children particularly enjoyed doing ‘real work’ and loved the fact that items they digitised appeared immediately on the Library website. The teachers were very surprised at the level of access given to the schoolchildren and felt that they really had contributed to the Library’s work that day. By taking part they gained a unique insight into their Welsh heritage, both in text, audio and film and saw the value of its preservation and how it is used today.”* (Feedback about National Library of Wales Takeover Day from participating school)

2.2 The museums that make up the National Museum have been some of our most important and long-term partners and supporters in Wales. They were early signatories to the Kids in Museums Manifesto, have provided space for training and events and are long-term participants in Takeover Day. Most of the national museums have now been involved with Takeover Day for five or six years and this has been valuable in Kids in Museums’ efforts to embed this approach to participation in Welsh museums.

### **3. What impact has the Welsh Government’s Fusion programme had on using culture to tackle poverty?**

3.1 Fusion has made the Welsh Government’s efforts more focused, with more scope for regional collaboration (see below). It has also helped us to shape and better target Takeover Day to ensure it reaches those who face most barriers to visiting and participating in museums.

*“Takeover Day encourages organisations who do not engage with young people on a regular basis to involve them more and make their setting more inclusive.”*

(Techniquet Glyndwr)

3.2 In 2017, nearly 75% of the museums participating in Takeover Day were part of a Fusion network. Support from Fusion coordinators was identified by museums as a key factor in enabling them to run a Takeover Day.

3.3 Participating museums identified that running a Takeover Day project helped young people achieve all the seven fusion indicators. The three listed below were achieved in 60 – 70% of Takeover Day participants in 2017:

- Better able to manage their mental wellbeing and physical health
- Improved attitude to formal learning
- Improved digital skills

*“Participants have since returned on work placement and as volunteers; participants took over social media.”* (Glamorgan Archives)

*“A school came from Communities First – no parents but an opportunity for children to participate and visit a museum which they might not have visited otherwise.”* (Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum and Llandudno Museum)

3.4 Although the support from Fusion and the framework provided by the Fusion indicators has enabled some museums to deliver Takeover Day events with a strong focus on skills development and access for disadvantaged young people, there are still barriers to some museums becoming involved that Fusion has not been able to address. These mainly relate to staff capacity and schools having the time and resources to work with a museum.

#### **4. How effective have the Fusion pioneer programmes been in stimulating local collaboration?**

4.1 From Kids in Museums’ experience of working in Wales, collaborative networks are one of Fusion's strengths. They encourage local partnerships across different sectors which save a lot of time and resources and help to ensure we are working with disadvantaged audiences, which does not happen in England.

Some examples of this from Kids in Museums’ work include:

##### **4.2 Carmarthenshire**

In 2017, Llanelly House, Llanelli Library and Parc Howard Museum worked together to deliver Takeover Day. The three venues were introduced to Takeover Day by the Fusion Coordinator and two were completely new to the project.

Working together on the project enabled the three venues to share best practice and offer an excellent experience to the young people involved. The young people gained confidence and learned new skills through their participation in the project such as leading guided tours. The staff at all three venues were pleased with the outcome of the project and planning future Takeover Day style events.

*“The participants we worked with found spending more than a few moments engaged in a single activity very challenging – and they were hand-picked because they often get overlooked when it comes to opportunities. Our goal was simply to provide a positive welcome and an insight into what happens behind the scenes at a museum. This goal was achieved because most participants came back after lunch and stayed at the museum all day – and one even made the journey independently, which was a significant step in terms of demonstrating commitment to the day.”*

As a result of the success of the Takeover Day, we were also able to partner with Get It Loud In Libraries to run a live music event for local young people at Llanelli Library.

#### 4.3 Neath Port Talbot

In 2018, Kids in Museums have supported Tai Tarian in Port Talbot to bring together local arts, heritage and educational organisations to work with a group of pupils from Ysgol Bae Baglan on a project celebrating local cinematic heritage. The project, which will run in 2019 will enable the young people to learn a number of digital and practical heritage skills as well as building skills such as confidence and team work.

#### 4.4 Conwy

Through the Fusion network Kids in Museums has been invited to events that has enabled networking with other organisations. The Fusion coordinator has also promoted the work of Kids in Museums and encouraged new venues to join in Takeover Day linking venues with the North Wales Coordinator. This resulted in the Sir Henry Jones Museum taking part in Takeover Day for the first time this year.

## 4.5 Gwynedd

An invitation to Kids in Museums to attend a Fusion meeting enabled us to establish better links with Mantell Gwynedd the county volunteer bureau and generally raise awareness of our work. Networking opportunities created partly through the Fusion network facilitated Kids in Museums to collaborate with EDAU to hold an event about Takeover Day for practitioners, heritage venues and teachers in March 2018.

We have also run a live music event at the National Slate Museum, bringing a new audience from this Fusion area to the museum for the first time. Over two thirds of the audience were under 18.

## 4.6 Training for South Wales Fusion Areas

In March 2018, Kids in Museums was able to work with the Fusion areas in Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen and Caerphilly partnered with Kids in Museums to deliver some training about supporting young people on the autism spectrum to visit and engage with cultural venues. The support of the Fusion coordinators meant that the training had a large reach and we were able to draw on a range of case studies and share learning across different sectors.

4.7 The Fusion coordinators in all these areas have helped Kids in Museums to foster local collaboration to share knowledge and skills and develop active participation in culture and heritage for local young people. However, in both Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire, additional project funding above the Fusion grant was needed to support project activity and this remains a challenge to promote longer term, larger scale collaborations.