



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020**

**POSITIVE IMPACTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATING AND  
ENGAGING WITH THE COUNCIL'S ARTS SERVICE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND  
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report has been prepared to provide the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with information on the positive impact that participating and engaging with the Council's Arts Service during 2018/19 and 2019 to the present, has had on the health and wellbeing of young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.
- 2.2 Consider whether further information is required.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To provide the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with information on the arts and creative industries provision for young people provided by the Council's Arts Service during 2018/19 and 2019 to the present, and its impact on their health and wellbeing.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Arts Service consists of the Coliseum Theatre and the Park & Dare Theatre (collectively known as RCT Theatres) and an Arts & Creative Industries Team.

- 4.2 RCT Theatres are an Arts Portfolio Wales client of the Arts Council of Wales, receiving annual revenue funding as a Venue and Producing House.
- 4.3 The Arts Service's Youth Arts and SONIG Youth Music Industry programmes are commissioned by the Resilient Families Services Families First programme.
- 4.4 The Arts Service accesses other external funding and supports artists and organisations in their applications to develop arts and creative industries projects across Rhondda Cynon Taf. These include:
- Arts Council of Wales' National Lottery Funding
  - PRS Foundation
  - Welsh Government's Creative Wales
- 4.5 The Arts Service delivers arts and creative industries projects in partnership with other Council Services and organisations that support young people. These include:
- University of South Wales
  - Coleg y Cymoedd
  - Youth Service
  - Young Carers Project
  - Miskin

## **5. KEY PROJECTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

### **5.1 Fortitude through Music**

- 5.1.1 This ten-week pre-employability programme was delivered during 2018/19 for young people aged 16+ not in education, training or employment.
- 5.1.2 The programme engages participants in self-development techniques and music activity, from learning instruments to song-writing and performance, and in doing so, supports them to realise their potential, improve their confidence, work with others, be creative, and explore future career opportunities.
- 5.1.3 Twenty-three young people participated in the 2018/19 Fortitude through Music programme, with young people improving emotional and mental wellbeing, showing positive changes to lifestyle behaviour, and improved resilience. Appendix 1 is a case study for one of the participants.

5.1.4 Three participants were referred via Cwm Taf's Youth Offending Service. Feedback from Sally Chugg, Prevention Team Operational Manager, highlighted that one of these young people had not left their bedroom for weeks. She captured that:

"All three boys thrived in this project and to see them on stage at the end was a transformation. I am so grateful that this was available for them. The more diverse our projects, the more likely we are to find young people engaging in activities close to their heart. Certainly, for these young people their sense of identity and belonging increased."

5.1.5 The 2019/20 Fortitude through Music programme has recently started with over 30 young people interested in participating.

## **5.2 Hot Jam Rock and Pop Summer School**

5.2.1 This three-day project was delivered in August 2019 for young musicians aged 11 – 18 years.

5.2.2 Participants are coached by Hot Jam's expert tutors on a variety of music techniques specific to their instrument, improvisation and song-writing.

5.2.3 Twenty-five young people participated in 2018/19, many experiencing improved emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as showing positive changes to lifestyle behaviour.

5.2.4 100% of participants indicated that they were proud of their involvement, whilst 80% said they felt better about life as a result of the project. Appendix 2 is a case study from the project.

5.2.5 One of the young people was referred by their Social Worker. She noted that:

"The sessions were very professional and despite a torrid time in her personal life, she absolutely loved it. Really helped boost her confidence and has given her a wider perspective of life and the future."

## **5.3 Craft Sessions at Glyncornel**

5.3.1 This project provided weekly arts and crafts sessions for young people accessing the Miskin Project at Glyncornel.

5.3.2 Facilitated by Craft of Hearts, the sessions used the arts to improve confidence and self-esteem in young people.

5.3.3 Over twenty young people have participated to date during 2019/20, with many experiencing improved emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as showing positive changes to lifestyle behaviours.

5.3.4 One young person embarked upon a volunteering opportunity with Craft of Hearts as a result of participating in the project.

## **5.4 Hip Hop Dance**

5.4.1 This project provided hip-hop dance sessions for young people at the Park and Dare Theatre.

5.4.2 Avant Cymru delivered the sessions as part of the week-long Breakin' Convention: A Sadler's Wells Open Art Surgery.

5.4.3 Seven young people participated and performed as part of the project during 2018/19, improving emotional and mental wellbeing and indicating positive changes to lifestyle behaviours.

5.4.4 One participant continues to attend weekly dance classes delivered by Avant Cymru and has recently been awarded a Council Arts Bursary to attend an international intensive hip-hop training course during summer 2020 at Krakow, Poland.

5.4.5 The Avant Cymru Director noted in the Arts Bursary application made on behalf of the young person:

“He advocates for arts for better health and wellbeing. As an autistic person he explains that arts helps him develop social relationships.”

## **5.5 Young Promoters Network**

5.5.1 This network creates opportunities for aspiring young promoters, photographers and music artists aged 14-25 years old to develop their skills and knowledge of careers within the music industry through providing supported real experiences in performance, photography and event promotion.

5.5.2 Over fifty young people have participated to date during 2019/20, with many more attending the Young Promoters Network's Music Events for young people across the borough as audience members.

5.5.3 Two members of the network accessed an internship opportunity with Orchard Live, Wales' biggest independent live music company during summer 2019.

5.5.4 On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019, Arts Service staff and project participants gave evidence to the National Assembly's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's inquiry into live music and developing talent. Evidence was also heard from John Rostron, Executive Chair of the Association of Independent Promoters, co-founder of the Welsh Music Prize, and Art Associate of the Arts Council of Wales. He highlighted that:

"I think (Forté) and Young Promoters Network is an outstanding project, because it reaches—it wasn't a music project. It started as, 'How do we reach difficult people? We think music is the key.' It's just ignited these young people in these poor areas who have aspirations, and it's completely open."

## **5.6 Forte**

5.6.1 The Forte project supports the development of emerging young music artists aged 16-25 years old across south Wales through the provision of creative and career development opportunities.

5.6.2 Now in its fifth year, 10 young artists/bands have participated in the project each year, accessing sessions led by experts in areas such as personal development, interview techniques, identity and song-writing.

5.6.3 Many artists have the opportunity to perform at Young Promoters Network events, high-profile festivals such as Green Man, and have also succeeded in being selected for an Arts Council of Wales / BBC Wales Launchpad funding and/or becoming a Horizons 12 artist.

5.6.4 One of the sessions held focuses on mental health, and a band member reported that it was "good to learn how to relax, what to do if things got too stressful...nice to connect with everyone."

5.6.5 As indicated at 5.5.4 above, on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019, Arts Service staff and project participants gave evidence to the National Assembly's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's inquiry into live music and developing talent. The evidence reported noted that:

"understanding oneself and exploring your ideas of who you are as a person is something that music in particular is excellent at doing...we do see a lot of young people who struggle with mental well-being and we try to put a framework and infrastructure, particularly with Forte, to combat that."

The agenda, minutes, webcast and transcript for this session are available:

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=445&MId=5709&Ver=4>

## **6. RECENT RESEARCH**

6.1 BBC Arts recently commissioned the UK-wide Great British Creativity Test online survey, produced in partnership with University College London (UCL).

6.2 The online survey of almost 50,000 people published in February 2019 found that “taking part in creative activities helps people manage stress, face up to challenges and explore solutions to problems in their lives.” (Sharrat, C (2019) *Even minimal creative activity boosts wellbeing, research finds*, Arts Professional, <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/even-minimal-creative-activity-boosts-wellbeing-research-finds>)

6.3 The research notes that:

“There is a rich literature of studies showing affective benefits of engaging in artistic creative activities such as making music, writing, dancing and crafts. Artistic creative activities have been shown to modulate *emotions* (rapidly-changing reactions to events in the external or internal environment), influence our *moods* (more generalised, less intense states of feeling lasting longer periods), and affect our *mental health*. As a result, everyday artistic creative activities can impact simultaneously on immediate, mid-term and longer-term affective levels.”

(Fancourt D, Garnett C, Spiro N, West R, Müllensiefen D (2019) *How do artistic creative activities regulate our emotions? Validation of the Emotion Regulation Strategies for Artistic Creative Activities Scale (ERS-ACA)*. PLOS ONE 14(2): e0211362. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211362>)

6.4 The findings from the research have been used to create an online ‘Feel Good Test’ that can be used by individuals over the age of 18 to determine how being creative could improve their wellbeing: <https://nquire.org.uk/mission/the-feel-good-test>

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **8. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT**

- 8.1 No consultation exercise has been required.
- 8.2 However, the service works in partnership with those that work with young people to identify their needs, and it is through this partnership working that we develop arts and creative industries projects that support young people.
- 8.3 The Arts Service works with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service and considers responses received to its 'Your Voice' survey.
- 8.4 Feedback is also sought from participants during and at the end of sessions. This is considered when reviewing the future development of the services arts and creative industries offer.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to the recommendations in this report.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 10.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

## **11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

- 11.1 Providing opportunities for young people to participate in and engage with the arts and creative industries and the positive impact on their health and wellbeing contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan Priority: People – promoting independence and positive lives for everyone and Economy – building a strong economy.
- 11.2 The provision contributes to the seven national wellbeing goals, particularly:
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language;
  - A prosperous Wales;
  - A healthier Wales;
  - A Wales of cohesive communities.
- 11.3 The provision is consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term – encouraging and providing opportunities to participate in and engage with the arts and creative industries aims to have a long-term positive impact on young people’s health and wellbeing.
- Prevention – engagement and participation opportunities offer early intervention and prevention support;
- Integrated – contributing to a range of local, regional and national strategic priorities, by adopting an integrated and coherent approach;
- Collaboration - through working across Council services and public, private and third sector agencies, locally, regionally and nationally;
- Involvement – through consultation, feedback, advisory groups and professional networks.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 This report highlights key projects targeted at young people during 2018/19 and 2019/20 and their positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

12.2 Opportunities across a range of arts and creative industries activities have encouraged young people to engage with and participate in the arts, which has had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

### **Other Information:-**

#### ***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***

Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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**IMPACT OF PARTICIPATING AND ENGAGING WITH ARTS AND  
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ACTIVITY ON THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Background Papers**

None

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**FORTITUDE THROUGH MUSIC PARTICIPANT CASE STUDY**

**Details of the project**

The Fortitude through Music Programme is an arts focused pre-employability course that offers participants who are Not in Education Employment and Training the opportunity to engage in music activities. The course mainly features song writing and performing incorporating other transferable employability skills such as music production, Theatre Fforwm, an accreditation, life coaching and mindfulness.

This particular Fortitude project has seen the participants taking part in work experience on the Motorpoint Arena's Live X Factor Tour, celebrating the course with a performance, speed networking with industry professionals and touring the Coliseum Theatre.

**General background of participant**

AM enrolled on the course through his Care2work support worker. This service supports young people into employment who have been in care or at risk of going into care. AM attended Maes Gwyn School, a specialised school for young people with learning and behavioural difficulties. He then went onto college studying catering and hairdressing that he says he thoroughly enjoyed. However, his main passion has always been dancing and rapping.

AM developed anxiety and depression after the death of his brother and his Aunt. The participant enjoys entertaining and has developed an online persona where he uploads entertaining videos. He really takes pleasure from this and enjoys the recognition he gets from being an internet personality who has gone viral. Support workers around him openly express that he may be susceptible to negative attention through this but he continues self-recording the videos and developing his fan base. During the course AM faced the difficulties of having to attend a court hearing for criminal charges against him and is very open about his class A drug misuse.

**Describe what the participant was like at the beginning of this study**

AM was very anxious at the beginning of the course. After having difficulty attending through public transport, he was driven by his support worker to begin with but the aim was to encourage him to travel alone. He took part in the icebreaker games but was eagerly awaiting the break to go outside.

It appeared as if AM was a charismatic person, friendly but demonstrated lots of bravado in front of the other participants. AM has created a persona online that is influenced by rap music with derogatory language and swearing, he only performs to cover songs and plays no instruments. In the first few sessions when AM would be performing on the microphone he would use lots of derogatory language and swearing.

### **Describe the activity participated in and what the individual did**

Over the 9 weeks, the Fortitude through Music course incorporates song writing and band sessions every afternoon where the group work together and individually learning new skills and developing existing skills working towards a 45-minute performance.

AM participated in a theatre forum session where as well as completing icebreaker exercises the tutor identifies individuals' barriers around employment. Participants were involved in all of the following sessions; Life-coaching and mindfulness, vocal coaching, speed networking, music production techniques and a 'how to be an entrepreneur' discussion.

AM also took part in work experience, this involved manning the ticket tills, welcoming members of the public into the venue and sign posting them on to the appropriate rooms. They worked together to storyboard, direct and record a music video of their original song.

### **How did the participant change during the activity**

The participant flourished whilst working at the Motorpoint Arena being well mannered, helpful and approachable, he delivered the task with a smile on his face throughout. AM fully committed to the whole length of the course, something that previously he has found difficult to do. When working on the song writing AM's communication skills developed, he became confident in suggesting lyrics, ideas and would sing with the group. He developed the confidence to perform one solo song and three with the group. AM overcame his issues in regards to using public transport and towards the end was attending the course without the support of his Care2work team. His time keeping improved, AM managed to be punctual even though he was attending on public transport and was always a pleasure to work with. He developed a great attitude towards learning, making music and networking whilst being very enthusiastic. AM wrote an original song with the group that he was really proud of, refrained from performing any music that included swearing and built up the confidence to play the drums. Although he did not perform in the event playing the drums, he would regularly attempt to learn drum patterns and explore them throughout the course.

### **What next for the participant**

The participant has enrolled onto both; a security course and a next step employability Music course. Since attending the course AM has expressed that he would like to pursue a career in music and we will be supporting him individually to look at developing making money through social media. We would also like to support him by linking him with a rap tutor to write original material and develop his musicianship from covers to something that he can really take ownership of.

The participant has already started the Care2Work catering project and has completed a stewarding course, further developing independent living skills and earning other qualification.

**HOT JAM MUSIC SONG-WRITING BOOTCAMP CASE STUDY**

**Why / How participants were chosen?**

Participants had previously taken part in courses and had been taking lessons with Hot Jam practitioners in school. The course was also advertised on social media (Twitter, Facebook and schools). The course information was sent to officers in the council and various community associations to aid in recruiting participants. The participants contacted us if they were interested in attending.

**Project Outcomes**

The main project outcomes are: to learn to write original songs; learn how to structure a song and to memorise what has been written to perform at the showcase. The aims are to be able to work in a team together; listen to each other; allow everyone's ideas to come together; and to learn stage craft and presence; to improve confidence and self-esteem.

**What was delivered, where & when? Who supported the project?**

The Hot Jam song-writing boot camp held at the Park & Dare Theatre is where young aspiring musicians attend to be coached by professional musicians, form new relationships and improve transferable life skills like communication, teamwork and confidence. The young people have the choice of undertaking drum/ bass/ guitar tuition, singing coaching, improving performance skills and learning how to write songs. Taking all of these activities into account they then work towards showcasing their talents and what they have learnt over the duration of the course.

**Pen picture, how many did we reach & geographical info**

22 young people between ages 11-16, in full time education

3 young people being supported into education, employment and training (targeted 16-24's)

All from RCT

**Outcomes achieved**

Each group wrote an original song to perform on stage and also played some cover songs, most of the bands successfully performed three songs. They played and developed their instrumental skills, developed their stage craft, and built the confidence to perform really well on stage. The feedback forms showed that 100% were proud of their involvement and 80% noted a higher quality feeling about life in general than before the course. 17 out of 17 family members said that the project had a positive impact on their family life and 100% also said that they feel the project has a positive impact on the participant.

### **Links to Wellbeing goals**

20 young people out of 25 young people asked demonstrated on our feedback forms that they felt better after the project than before.

16 young people said that they were proud of their involvement and 9 said they strongly agree.

### **Quotes - Participants**

'I loved it.'

'Everything was so good.'

'Very good.'

'It was fun.'

'Great fun, look forward to it all summer, really enjoyed.'

'Thank you so much to the teachers. They help us loads and I have loads of confidence by the end.'

### **Quotes –Family members at showcase**

'We are very proud of (participant name) and the confidence that this course has given her. The teachers and tutors have been very supportive and seemed to have helped all of the students embrace their talents.'

'This is the third year we have been and it's the best one yet.'

'Brilliant! Long may it continue. Teachers should be supported to enable them to bring out the musical talent in young people. Keep music alive in the valleys.'

'On a daily basis she has spoken about her worries and excitement on this course. I know she thoroughly enjoys it EVERY year! Love seeing her develop.'

### **What's next for participants?**

The 22 young people will be invited to future song writing boot camps and signposted to other arts related activities. One band will be supported through SONIG's Young Promoters Network. One young person will continue vocal coaching that she has been supported into via SONIG Youth Music Industry. The 3 being supported into education, employment and training will receive a one to one mentoring meeting to see how they can be supported further.

