



Tuesday, 6 March 2018

Mr Nick Ramsey AM
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Dear Mr. Ramsey

Public Accounts Committee: Scrutiny of Accounts 2016/17

I write to respond to the Committee's report on the *Scrutiny of Accounts 2016/17*.

We welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Committee and have read its report with care. We entirely accept the Committee's general encouragement to make statutory accounts more accessible to the public. Whilst the format of these is largely prescribed given our charitable status, we'll continue to make what changes that we can to achieve this goal.

There are two recommendations in the Committee's report that are specific to the Arts Council of Wales. I'll deal with each in turn.

Recommendation:

We are not content with the level of support the Arts Council of Wales is providing to support engagement with NEETs and recommend that the Arts Council review this support with a view to increasing it.

Response:

We note the Committee's concerns. Previous support to NEETs was targeted through a single European-funded programme. With European funding no longer available we have had to re-appraise our approach. Rather than limiting activity to a single programme we have extended our support to children and young people living in poverty (including NEETs). We have ambitious plans for the future and look forward demonstrating to the Committee that engagement with NEETs has increased as a result of our activities.

Plas Bute, Caerdydd CF10 5AL
Ffôn: 0845 8734 900
Ffacs: 029 2044 1400
SMS: 07797 800504
Epost: gwybodaeth@celf.cymru
Gwefan: www.celf.cymru

Bute Place, Cardiff CF10 5AL
Tel: 0845 8734 900
Fax: 029 2044 1400
SMS: 07797 800504
Email: info@arts.wales
Website: www.arts.wales



Swyddfeydd Lleol/Local Offices:

Caerdydd/Cardiff, Bae Colwyn/Colwyn Bay, Caerfyrddin/Carmarthen
Rhif Elusen Gofrestredig/Registered Charity Number: 1034245

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg, ni fydd gohebu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.
We welcome correspondences in Welsh and English, corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

Recommendation: We are concerned that the role of Director of Finance at the Arts Council of Wales is now a part time post and we recommend that the Board of the Arts Council confirm that it is satisfied that responsibility for strategic financial oversight of the Council is being satisfactorily fulfilled within the organisation

Response:

We note the Committee's concerns. The creation of a new part-time role of Director of Finance was a consequence of an organisational review in which we reduced our running costs to increase funding to front-line arts activity. This required savings at all levels within our organisation, including at a senior level. The previous post of Director of Finance and Resources was discontinued with non-financial responsibilities re-assigned to other suitably qualified senior managers.

Prior to its introduction, the rationale for the reduced hours post was scrutinised by the Council's Audit and Risk Committee, HR and Remuneration Committee and internal auditors (Deloitte). Since their introduction, we can confirm that the new arrangements have been operating satisfactorily and no concerns have been noted. We expect this continue and would wish to reassure the Committee that our financial performance is subject to routine monitoring by our independent internal and external auditors (the Wales Audit Office).

Finally, if I can be of further assistance to the Committee please don't hesitate to let me know.

*Yours sincerely
Nick Capaldi*

Nick Capaldi
Chief Executive