



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP

17TH JANUARY 2023

REPORT ON YOUTH MUSIC PROVISION WITHIN THE ARTS SERVICE

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITIES, COUNCILLOR BOB HARRIS**

Author(s): Adrian Williams, Interim Strategic Arts & Culture Manager - 01443 570031

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group of Youth Music provision within the Arts Service

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group:

- 2.1 Consider the contents of the report and comment on the information provided.
- 2.2 That the feedback and comments of the Steering Group are reported to Cabinet to inform their decision.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This report provides an opportunity for the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group to consider the Youth Music provision within the Arts Service.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Arts Service's Youth Arts and SONIG Youth Music Industry (YAS) programmes are commissioned by the Resilient Families Services Families First programme.
- 4.2 The Arts Service's Youth Arts and SONIG programmes deliver a range of projects for young people between the ages of 8 and 25 which aim to:
- Raise Self Esteem & Wellbeing
 - Develop Resilience

- Build skills through the arts

5. KEY SONIG PROJECTS

5.1 Fortitude through Music

5.1.1 This eight-week pre-employability programme was delivered during 2022/23 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 12 young people participated in the 2022/23 Fortitude through Music programme, with 7 young people showing improved emotional and mental wellbeing, showing positive changes to lifestyle-behaviour, and improved resilience.

5.1.4 This year Fortitude saw a transformation in confidence for all members and two members of the Fortitude group will be participating in peer tutor training in February. They have also been signposted onto new opportunities within the creative industries.

5.1.5 Fortitude also benefits from a successful partnership between YEPS and the Arts Service with two new referrals to the YEPS mental health workers, as well as new music projects planned for the final quarter of 2022-23.

5.1.6 This year's Fortitude was completed in December, with a sharing for friends and families at Jacs in Aberdare.

5.2 Hot Jam Rock Schools

5.2.1 This three-day project was delivered at the Park & Dare Theatre in August 2022 for young musicians aged 11 – 18 years.

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

5.2.3 Many of the young people who participated in 2022/23, reported improved emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as 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.

5.2.5 Hot Jam is planned to return to the Coliseum in February half term 2023

5.3 SONIG Rap collective Project Prosper

5.3.1 In 2021 the Rap Collective wanted to create an identity for themselves and the name 'Project Prosper' was chosen and a logo designed

5.3.2 Project Prosper has been resident in Ty Gwyn working with 11 – 15 year olds. In collaboration with YEPS, the project has been working with Young Neets from the Step 4 programme (for young people with antisocial behaviours) at Treorchy Comp

5.3.3 Sonig commissioned the rap tutor for Ty Gwyn 13 – 15 year olds, which culminated in a recording session and the recording was sent out to RCT services and will be on the YAS website.

5.3.4 Sonig were successful in an application for funding from Ty Cerdd to focus on the development of a project for the younger age group, 11 – 13 years, to provide a safe and age appropriate context for them.

5.3.5 These young people participated and performed as part of the project and expressed outcomes of improved emotional and mental wellbeing as well as indicating they had made positive changes to lifestyle behaviours.

5.4 Young Promoters Network (YPN)

5.4.1 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 live experiences in performance, photography and event promotion.

5.4.2 A significant feature of YPN is that it has always been run by young people who have come up through the range of pathways created by Sonig and/or the Forté Project

5.4.3 During the COVID lockdown with no opportunity for Live gigs, Callum Lewis and Ethan Duck worked with Rob Jones the Arts Service's Technical Manager to design "The Box", a mobile recording kit which could be loaned to young people at home to record their songs and music. The recordings were then returned to Callum for upload onto the website

- 5.4.4 At the age of 14, Callum and Ethan first engaged with Sonig on a Hot Jam workshop and as a result, with two others, set up a band, The Pitchforks, who later journeyed through YPN and the Forté Project.
- 5.4.5 Whilst participating in the YPN, Callum also followed an interest in Sound Tech and joined the RCT Tech Team. Later, both Callum and Ethan attended college (Cardiff & Bristol respectively) and took over a job-share running YPN. They have now moved on into further employment.

6. Partnership Projects

6.1 Forté Project

- 6.1.1 Forté project supports the development of emerging young music artists aged 16-25 years old throughout Wales with major funding from Arts Council Wales (ACW)
- 6.1.2 From its inception within, and with support from, RCT Arts Service, the Forté Project has now expanded to play an integral part in shaping a new future for the arts in Wales. The project operates in the context of Beacons Cymru which is in its second year of funding from Creative Wales (WG) and continues to be managed by Spike Griffiths. The service is utilising its project skills and expertise in order to nurture our young people and help them to identify career pathways within the music sector.
- 6.1.3 Forté is now in its eighth year, and 10 young artists/bands participate in the project each year. They access sessions led by experts in areas such as personal development, interview techniques, professional identity and songwriting.
- 6.1.4 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.”
- 6.1.5 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 Arts Council of Wales / BBC Wales Launchpad funding and/or becoming a Horizons 12 artist.
- 6.1.6 Future ambitions include the use Stiwdio 1 at the Park and Dare and YMa in Pontypridd

6.2 Beacons Cymru

6.2.1 Beacons is now in its second year of funding from Creative Wales (WG) and is a Wales-wide organisation supporting the next generation of young people aspiring to work in the music industry.

6.2.2 Beacons has recently created a new, bilingual, music industry magazine (Crwth) with a focus on Welsh music industry news, profiles and opportunity. Crwth is designed and delivered by young emerging industry personnel, and shines a light on the music industry, culture and art in modern Wales.

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.

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 the recommendations in this report.

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

11.1 As the projects are funded by Families First, we are supported to not only contribute to the delivery of the Wales Government priorities but also the Council's corporate priorities, 'Economy', 'People' and 'Place'.

11.2 The Arts Service 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 programme and our involvement is consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term – enabling us to co-create work, engage with our communities and build partnerships that seek to achieve a more resilient and sustainable arts and creative industries provision within the County Borough;
- Prevention – by understanding our community’s needs, concerns, opportunities and aspiration, we can provide engagement, participation and performance opportunities that address the early intervention and prevention agenda;
- Integrated – through community engagement work with key partners and contributing more effectively to a range of local, regional and national strategic priorities in an integrated and coherent way;
- Collaboration – through creating and working with our communities in collaboration with key artists and arts organisations whose values align with ours and with whom we can work in partnership to achieve our goals;
- Involvement – developing our creativity and community engagement through consultation, feedback, advisory groups and professional networks.

12. **CONCLUSION**

12.1 This report informs members of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group on Youth Music provision within the Arts Service

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Manager