

Summer Arts Colleges 2016-2017



Photo credit: Thomas Goddard

Final Report

Written by engage Cymru for
The Foyle Foundation
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“If I had stuff like this on the outside, I wouldn’t get into trouble”
(Young person, Hillside Secure Unit)

Acknowledgements

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Funder

The Foyle Foundation

Partners

Education departments and carers at Hillside Secure Unit Neath and Parc YO1
Unitas

Project artists

Thomas Goddard; Anna Barratt; Pip Lewis and Simone Bizzell-Browning

Critical Friend

Ronda Gowland-Pryce, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton for her generous support and advice

Participants

All the young people who participated and who worked hard to achieve their Arts Award qualifications

How We Used our Grant

In August 2016 engage Cymru piloted two innovative Summer Arts Colleges with Hillside Secure Unit, Neath and Parc Prison Youth Offending Institute, Bridgend. We successfully engaged 14 young people - a mix of young offenders and those experiencing welfare issues – all of whom have had negative experiences of education in the past. Our project artists designed and delivered bespoke activities to inspire and motivate the young people and support them to achieve Bronze Level Arts Award – a nationally recognised qualification. Each young person successfully completed their Award. We worked in partnership with Unitas – a national charity which supports vulnerable young people to find their way back into education, training or employment.

Integral to the success of the project was the training, preparation and planning including Arts Award Advisor training for artists and partners, regular sharing and debrief meetings plus the sharing and advocacy opportunities that arose for engage Cymru as a result of these interventions. In February 2017 the projects were included in the UK Youth Justice Board bulletin and the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance website and newsletter. Both of these platforms have led to advocacy opportunities and created a legacy for the project. Since delivering the projects, the engage Cymru Coordinator has shared the projects at an all Wales Youth Justice Sector meeting and at National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance events, including the Cambridge 'Festival of Ideas' symposium, the engage international Conference in Liverpool in 2016 and engage Area Group meetings across Wales. In terms of embedding sustainability into the project we have been developing partnerships with local authorities and arts organisations in Wales to create further opportunities for vulnerable young people in 2017 and beyond.

Were there any changes to the project budget?

In our original application, engage Cymru applied for funding for a three year project totalling £127,800. We were awarded £30,000 for a one year pilot project. In addition, we received £1,000 partnership funding from Hillside Secure Unit towards training and material costs. The £31,000 funding was spent as follows:-

Artists fees (4 artists x equivalent of 30 days each)	£15,000
Project Coordinator	£7,000
Materials and training resources	£1,000
Project management	£2,000
Travel and accommodation (artists and coordinator)	£2,000
Office costs	£600
Training and moderation costs (Arts Award Advisor training and moderation)	£2,800
Meeting costs (planning, preparation, reflection sessions and debrief meetings)	£600
Total	£31,000

What were the overall aims and objectives?

Aims:-

- To inspire, raise the aspirations and improve the motivation of young offenders in Wales
- To break down barriers that prevent young people from engaging with visual arts venues
- To signpost pathways into the creative industries
- To offer young people the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification

- Offer access to high quality arts experiences to nurture young peoples' creative potential
- Increase young peoples' self-esteem and wellbeing
- Create a cohort of artists within the Wales with the skills and experience to deliver arts interventions with young people in secure settings and social services provision
- Create an innovative, sustainable model aimed at reducing offending and re-offending behaviour which will attract buy-in from the youth justice and social care sectors and create a legacy for the project

Objectives:-

- Deliver two high quality arts intervention with Hillside Secure Unit and Parc YOI in partnership with Unitas
- Support young offenders to gain an Arts Award qualification
- Train project partners and artists to become Arts Award Advisors
- Share learning and outcomes with the arts and youth justice sectors at key events and via sector-relevant publications and platforms

Without exception, we have successfully fulfilled all of our aims and objectives. We achieved these through:-

- Working with highly experienced and resilient artist educators who had the capacity to work flexibly and responsively and who had taken part in engage Cymru 'Artists as Learners' professional development training focusing on engaging high tariff young people
- Working in partnership with Unitas
- Regular planning and de-briefing sessions with artists and partners
- Building in action learning sets to help tackle any project management issues and concerns in partnership with gallery educators in Wales
- Applying 'quality principles' throughout planning and delivery as outlined in the Artworks Cymru 'Quality Principles Framework' – A Framework commissioned by the Arts Council of Wales
- The support and advice of our '*critical friend*' Ronda Gowland-Pryce of the John Hansard Gallery, who has a long track record of delivering high quality Arts Award projects with young offenders in partnership with Southampton Youth Offending Service and the Office of the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner

The project did however throw up a number of challenges along the way and there are a number of things we would consider when delivering projects in similar environments in the future. These include:-

- A longer lead in time for planning and training would have been helpful. Because of the nature of working with secure environments, issues cropped up which we had not anticipated, particularly around staffing levels and staff capacity. This was particularly relevant to the Parc YOI project. For example, staff at Parc were unable to undertake Arts Award Advisor training.
- Summer Arts Colleges delivered by Unitas have traditionally taken place during a 3-week period in August when at risk young people are not in education and more likely to offend or demonstrate unsociable behaviour. Working with a secure unit and YOI meant that we could have run our projects at any time of year and/or spread the interventions out over a longer period, putting less pressure on the artists, participants and staff.
- In order to undertake the most effective evaluation, Unitas require specific data including young people profiles, start and end project literacy and numeracy assessments and questionnaires. This paperwork was incomplete because of (i) permission not being given to release young peoples' profiles; (ii) staff capacity to support the young people with assessments and questionnaires and (ii) the reluctance of young people to complete assessments and forms due to poor literacy and numeracy skills
- Some key education staff at Hillside Secure Unit took their holiday during August. In terms of getting decisions on issues that arose, it would have been useful to have these key personnel available
- A key challenge within Bronze Level Arts Award is ensuring young people visit a cultural venue as part of their Award. This was not possible for young people in secure settings so we had to 'bring the gallery' to them. Our artists were innovative in their approach to this challenge but in any future delivery will need to give this greater consideration.
- Although ordered by the Education Officer at Parc YOI, the art materials did not arrive so artists were forced to abandon their initial work plan and create a new one daily, depending on what resources, staff and materials were available. The artists were not permitted to bring any of their own materials or tools into the setting for security, health and reasons.

How have you measured success factors?

We used a range of methodologies to measure success, including:-

- Unitas standard literacy and numeracy assessment forms*
- Unitas pre and post project questionnaires*
- Planning meetings with partners and artists to set aims and objectives
- Reflection sessions with the artists during and post project
- De-briefing with prison and secure unit staff post project
- Verbal feedback from the young people

- Number of young people achieving Arts Award

*In the case of Parc YOI, it was not possible to obtain the data required in relation to assessment forms or questionnaires for the reasons outlined above.

Within the scope of this project, and due to the nature of the sites we were working in, we are unable to track the young people beyond the timescale of the project to see whether there have been any long term benefits from participating. At the suggestion of Youth Offending Service Team leaders in Wales any future programmes with young people who are at risk of offending it would be important to build in tracking to establish the longer term benefits and to measure whether participation in the project has contributed to a decrease in offending behaviour.

What were the overall core achievements/highlights of the organisation's work in the past year?

- 100% of the young people who participated in the full three week programme achieved Bronze Level Arts Award. This is broken down as 8 young people at Parc YOI and 6 young people at Hillside Secure Unit.
- For many this is the first qualification they have ever received. Their pride and self-esteem were clearly visible. When asked how we could improve the project one young person said *"this has been an amazing....you just can't change it"*.
- 75% of young people from Hillside Secure Unit, when asked about their overall experience of Summer Arts College said *"very positive"*. This is in line with the wider Unitas *'Outcomes and Impact of the Summer Arts College Programme Report 2007-2012'* where out of 488 respondents 75% had the same level of response.
- 75% of young people from Hillside stated that in comparison to other subjects studied, the art activities participants took part in as part of Summer Arts College were *"more interesting"* and *"more hands on"*. Again this compares favourably with the Unitas report (above) where 75% of young people reported their views on the types of activities offered as *'very positive'*.
- The project has helped to raise engage Cymru's profile within the youth justice sector. It has been featured in a recent pan UK Youth Justice Board bulletin and engage Cymru has been invited to speak at an All Wales Youth Offending Service annual event in March 2017. Link to YJB newsletter:- <http://youthjusticeboard.newsweaver.co.uk/yots2/1ut38z0fn341i26k30rido?email=true&a=11&p=51411503>
- engage Cymru has been approached by a young peoples' secure setting in Milton Keynes about running a similar intervention, and we were able to signpost them to a gallery in their region who deliver Arts Award
- We have been invited by Parc Prison YOI via Arts & Business Cymru to propose artist led 'impact outcome and communication training sessions in 2017
- Our projects were featured in a recent National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance newsletter and on their website. Link:- <https://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk/?s=engage+cymru>
- The four project artists have had unique hands-on professional development through this programme, in terms of working with young offenders. Through this they are now keen advocates of Arts Award being used as a focus with high tariff young people as a key motivating factor.
- Several young people have expressed a keen interest in completing the higher level Silver Arts Award
- Arts Award moderator feedback has been hugely positive on the artists' delivery style and young peoples' creativity. *"...some very powerful work has taken place and the young people have had meaningful opportunities to respond to new art work and develop their skills and creative response"* (Arts Award Moderator)
- 14 teachers and carers from Hillside have completed their Arts Award Advisor training and are able to support their young people achieve Discover – Silver Level Arts Award
- Education staff at Parc YOI have said that the activities the young people participated in for Arts Award has helped them gain higher than expected grades for their NOCN and GCSE qualifications
- Staff at Hillside reported that they received favourable comments from ESTYN on their inspection from their involvement in our project
- The project has levered partnership funding from Denbighshire and Helfa Gelf in 2017 to deliver a training event aimed at the arts and youth justice sectors to promote the benefits of artist-led interventions
- engage Cymru has aligned itself with recommendations made in the recent Review of the Youth Justice Service in England and Wales by Charlie Taylor, commissioned by UK Government, and in particular the benefits of offering meaningful engagement activities to 'at risk' young people and young offenders as a way of preventing offending or re-offending behaviour
- engage has become a member of the Prison Arts Network

Have there been any significant changes to the organisation (staff or other changes which have impacted on the project/org)?

There have been no changes in project management staff or our organisation as a whole.

