

Manifesto for a Healthy and Resilient Wales

We highlight the key actions that will support charitable trusts across leisure and culture in fulfilling their significant role as partners in creating a healthy and resilient Wales.

With the country projected to start recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic thanks to the confirmation of a working vaccine and roll-out, the public's confidence and level of disposable income to return to the public leisure and culture sector will take much longer to recover. These sectors will need specific investment to ensure they survive, thrive and continue to support the public in the upcoming years.

Together we can ensure that culture and leisure continue to be a part of our daily lives, contributing to making our lives happier and healthier, and, ultimately, making Wales a more resilient nation.

We ask Welsh Government to take a preventative approach to our nation's health and to recognise the crucial role that public leisure and culture have in improving wellbeing and mental health, achieving long-term health improvements, and for reducing pressures on our NHS. Our five key asks are therefore for Welsh Government to:

- 1** Encourage collaboration between NHS Wales, Public Health Wales, and charitable culture and leisure trusts on a national, regional and local level.
- 2** Underwrite centralised support and investment for arts, culture and sports on prescription by expanding the National Exercise Referral Scheme into social prescribing, including referrals for young people and for a wider range of health conditions.
- 3** Commit to properly finance, resource and encourage local government so that they are able to invest in public leisure and culture to survive and thrive locally, in particular through partnerships with their local leisure and culture trusts.
- 4** Commit to capital grant investment in our nation's ageing building stock to make it future-proof and reduce its carbon footprint.
- 5** Incorporate 20 minute neighbourhoods in all planning commitments, and work with the public culture and leisure sector to ensure culture, recreational sport and leisure are a part of our everyday lives.



Why are charitable trusts important?

Trusts manage 50% of public leisure in Wales, offering an accessible sporting pathway for all ages to be active. Their leisure and sport facilities are central to the thriving sports and leisure landscape in Wales, providing access not only to individuals, but to National Governing Bodies, clubs, and elite sportsmen- and women.

In addition, trusts manage public libraries in four Welsh local authority areas. Charitable trusts also manage a range of locally and nationally important arts and cultural venues including The Riverfront in Newport, the Gwyn Hall in Neath, and Cyfarthfa Castle in Merthyr Tydfil.

Combined, Welsh leisure and culture trusts provide employment for over 3000 people.

Charitable trusts across leisure and culture are uniquely placed to support a wide range of public policy objectives due their strong position as community anchor organisations. Their facilities and programming encourage life skills like swimming, and offer vital social support networks and access to other community groups and clubs, above and beyond their core activities of physical activity classes, book lending, or performances.

Trusts are a key partner for local government and contribute significantly to Local Authorities' statutory duties under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The application of the Act warrants the inclusion of charitable trusts, not least because of the recognition it gives to arts, culture, sport and leisure as the wider determinants of health, but because the trust model is founded on cross-subsidy to ensure those communities who are in most need of inclusive activities and services, can access them. Trusts:

- i. cross-subsidise services i.e. more profitable activities will subsidise other health and community outreach work, and;
- ii. cross-subsidise access i.e. using income from those who can afford to pay is used to support reduced cost or free activities for those with less disposable income.

According to data from 4Global through DataHub, the entire leisure sector contributed over £181 million in social value to the Welsh economy in 2019; with members of Community Leisure UK (i.e. leisure trusts) contributing £99,854,241. This social value is measured through savings to the NHS as well as reduced crime levels and improved mental and physical health of communities. Leisure trusts further manage the National Exercise Referral Scheme on behalf of their Council partners.

What has been the impact of Covid-19 on charitable trusts?

During the Covid-19 pandemic, charitable trusts significantly contributed to the Covid-19 response. They transformed a leisure centre into a field hospital¹, facilitated the launch of a new service in Newport to help Covid patients recover², encouraged creative activities to support mental health and wellbeing of the elderly³, transformed leisure sites into mass Covid-19 testing centres⁴, and, later on, transformed those same facilities into mass Covid-19 vaccination centres⁵. Trusts are ready to continue this important health and wellbeing work and to reinforce their position as valuable partners.

Like other sectors, public leisure and culture have been significantly hit by the pandemic. With reserves plummeting and costs increasing, it is thanks to a combination of the support of local authorities, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, investment through the Culture Recovery Fund and Sport Wales' Sport Resilience Funding, and the ability for leisure trusts to access the Hardship Fund for local authorities that they managed to stabilise their financial position. Most of these funding packages are due to end in March 2021.

Therefore, leisure and culture trusts will require additional support post March 2021 if they are to survive and fulfil their role as community anchor organisations.

Who are Community Leisure UK (Wales) and their members?

Community Leisure UK (Wales) represents charitable Trusts, which are registered charities, societies or community interest companies (with a public benefit asset lock) managing and providing public leisure, sport, arts and/or culture services in partnership with their Local Authority for communities across Wales.

Community Leisure UK (Wales) member trusts are:

- Aura Leisure & Libraries (Flintshire)
- Freedom Leisure (Powys, Wrexham, Swansea)
- Wales National Pool Swansea (Swansea)
- Celtic Leisure (Neath Port Talbot)
- Halo Leisure (Bridgend)
- Awen Cultural Trust (Bridgend)
- GLL (Cardiff)
- Wellbeing@Merthyr (Merthyr Tydfil)
- Newport Live (Newport)
- Torfaen Leisure Trust (Torfaen)
- Aneurin Leisure (Blaenau Gwent).

Our team

Kirsty Cumming

Chief Executive Officer

kirstycumming@communityleisureuk.org

Jennifer Huygen

Engagement & Policy Manager

jenniferhuygen@communityleisureuk.org

Theo Jobst

Project & Research Officer - Scotland

theojobst@communityleisureuk.org

Rachel Sim

Project & Research Officer

- England & Wales

rachelsim@communityleisureuk.org

Kate Doyle

Administration & Operations Coordinator

katedoyle@communityleisureuk.org

Executive Board

The Board of Community Leisure UK is entirely comprised of non executive directors who are all Chief Executives of member leisure and culture trusts across the UK. The Board give their time to Community Leisure UK for free, for the purpose of furthering the community trust model and ethos.



communityleisureuk.org

[@CommLeisureUK](https://twitter.com/CommLeisureUK)

in Community Leisure UK

¹ aura.wales/2020/04/02/deeside-leisure-centre-to-become-north-wales-third-temporary-hospital-for-covid-19-patients

² channel4.com/news/new-service-launched-in-newport-to-help-covid-patients-recover

³ newsfromwales.co.uk/news/dont-feel-trapped-at-home-get-creative

⁴ merthyr.gov.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/merthyr-tydfil-to-be-first-whole-area-testing-pilot-in-wales

⁵ twitter.com/AneurinBevanUHB/status/1340673661574012930?s=09