

Assessing the Economic Impact of the Arts on Health and Healthcare Services in Wales

A report for Arts Council of Wales by the Centre for Health Economics and Medicines Evaluation ([CHEME](#)), Bangor University.

JANUARY 2026

BACKGROUND AND
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS



Arts Care Gofal Celf

Why this report, and why now?

At Arts Council of Wales, our aim is to contribute to all seven Wellbeing of Future Generations goals. Creativity has great potential to power a prosperous, resilient and more equal Wales; a globally responsible Wales of more cohesive communities where vibrant culture and Welsh language thrive, and of course, a healthier Wales.

As Welsh Government juggles competing priorities, it is vital that we make the case for public funding of the arts and demonstrate all the ways in which they contribute to making Wales better.

This new report from Bangor University provides an independent assessment of the economic impact of the arts on the NHS and social care in Wales. It also looks at wider population health and societal impacts.

This is the first time the economic impact of the arts on the NHS and social care in Wales has been investigated at a national level.

**To read the full report,
visit: arts.wales**

Background

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- The **Assessing the Economic Impact of the Arts on Health and Healthcare Services in Wales** report builds on a 2024 report by Frontier Economics and University College London that explored these economic impacts at UK level.
- It applies the models used in that research to Welsh population figures and attendance and participation data for Arts Council of Wales (ACW) multi-year funded organisations between 2019-2024.
- There is a growing body of evidence linking engagement in arts and culture to better physical and mental health across the life-course.
- Establishing the financial value of these benefits, and possible savings for the NHS and social care, is an important emerging area of research.
- The report also explored, from a financial perspective, the potential of Arts Council of Wales (ACW) funded projects in addressing key health and wellbeing challenges across Wales.

Key findings

These findings point to significant monetary health and wellbeing benefits of arts engagement in Wales.



- ▶ The estimated financial value of health and productivity benefits through all arts engagement in Wales (including but not limited to ACW activity) is at least **£588m** a year.



- ▶ We estimate ACW's investment in multi-year funded organisations generates a financial Return on Investment (ROI) of **£11.08** for every **£1** invested in terms of health, wellbeing and productivity benefits.



- ▶ A dance for strength and balance programme has the potential to save **£5m** a year in healthcare costs by preventing falls amongst the elderly.



- ▶ If 5% of all adult mental health GP appointments were avoided following engagement in the arts, this would save **£17m** per year.



- ▶ If arts programmes could reach 5% of young people in NHS mental health pathways, this would generate annual mental health and wellbeing benefits of **£9.5m**.



- ▶ Arts programmes that support the health and wellbeing of NHS staff have the potential to save up to **£3.5m** a year through reductions in staff sickness and attrition costs.

Invest in the future

Given that per-person public funding on arts and culture in Wales is currently among the lowest in Europe, it is clear that additional investment in the arts would generate even greater health and wellbeing benefits and help reduce demand on the NHS in Wales.

To read the full report, visit: arts.wales



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Oasis One World Choir

PSU and Arts Care Gofal Celf



Hywel Dda University Health Board
(Harpist - Delyth)



Image: Rachel Shiamh



The Arts Council of Wales is the country's official public body for funding and developing the arts. Established by Royal Charter in 1994, we support and develop the arts in Wales for the benefit of people throughout Wales, and we support Welsh arts internationally.

Arts Council of Wales exist to:

- Develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts
- Increase the accessibility of the arts to the public
- Work through the Welsh and English languages
- Work with other public bodies in Wales, and with the other Arts Councils in the UK, to achieve these aims

The outstanding quality of the artistic work produced by the artists and organisations we fund is widely recognised, and we are increasingly developing work with measurable and direct links to health, wellbeing, education, and environmental benefits.

