

Arts Council of Wales

# Our Space - an Engagement Programme for New Audiences

November 2014





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## Introduction

The Our Space programme is intended to reach out to new audiences and to persuade more people to enjoy and take part in the Arts. Since its launch in 2012, we have supported a number of successful projects aiming to engage with local audiences in new and innovative ways.

In September 2014, we commissioned research into the Our Space programme so far. Overall, the scheme has been very positively received, and several significant successes were noted - amongst them partnership working, and the potential for venues to play an increasingly significant role in the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of their local communities. Research by Wellbeing Wales supports this.

However, there are still a great many people for whom attending an arts event is something they either can't do, or would not think of doing. Many reasons prevent them from taking part. So, we're re-launching the scheme with a more targeted approach aimed **at venues only**. We hope you can excite us with your proposals to engage local audiences in transformational and sustainable ways.

This isn't about more of the same old thing. So we're now looking for you to excite us with imaginative new ideas for persuading more people to get involved in your activities. We're not interested in a quick fix – an extra investment in your marketing budget or the more familiar types of short term audience development projects. We're looking for exciting and innovative development programmes that explore new territory and ideas – programmes that have new and different communities of interest in mind. And we want to look to the longer term, with ideas that will bring new people in and entice them to return.

The ideas that are likely to attract our attention will be new, innovative and interactive. They'll test new ways of working and perhaps use new technologies, but they will have a practical focus on real outcomes. They'll promote and support collaborative working, and will display a real commitment to identifying, and growing, new arts audiences.

## Who are we talking about?

We're particularly interested in reaching out to those audiences who for whatever reason feel disengaged from the Arts, or who face particular barriers that prevent them from taking part in the Arts. That's potentially a lot of people from many different backgrounds who do not access the Arts. We want you to think of creative and imaginative ways of engaging with these audiences, and to show us how you're going to do this.

## Creative collaborations and partnerships

Research shows us that partnership working has been an incredibly positive outcome of this programme, so we're placing an emphasis on this once again. We want to see arts organisations working with each other and/or with a range of different local partners. Experience has shown us that the most successful and exciting projects are those that have partnership working at their heart.

We'll not be prescriptive about what form these partnerships should take, how many should be involved, or who should be involved. We're open to your ideas and proposals. But remember, we're looking for collaborations that push boundaries, and are innovative and exciting.

If you can convince us as to why you've made that choice, you'll have taken the first step in persuading us to consider your proposal.

### How Will this work?

We've said this isn't a quick fix. We're in it for the long haul, and so should you be. We're looking for ideas that are new and exciting, but also achievable and, above all, sustainable. We are looking for projects **that can start in early 2015**.

As before, we're proposing to run the programme in two parts:

Part 1 will be about **research and development**. We want projects to be well grounded in evidence, with a clearly formulated understanding of why you want to undertake the activity that you're proposing. We're inviting organisations to submit ideas for projects they wish to develop. From these, we'll choose those projects which represent the most exciting and innovative approach to reaching the target audience, and we'll offer funding to undertake research, and to develop ideas into a full project proposal and plan. If you feel your approach will engage with new technology, we are keen to see a digital partner involved at this early stage.

Part 2 will involve us considering proposals for fully developed, longer term **action research projects**.

It may be that you already have a "big idea" which is formulated, you have partners on board and all you need now is the funding to make it happen. In such instances you would not need to apply for Part 1.

Our aim is to keep paperwork to a minimum and enable everyone concerned to concentrate their energies on developing stimulating ideas. However, you will have to complete an online application form, and supply supporting evidence that clearly outline the ideas, benefits and costs of the project.

For research and development projects we'd like you to include:

- A description of what you want to do
- Details about the organisations/individuals you already have on board or you want to approach about getting involved. (It would be good to know why you've chosen these)
- Who your target audience is going to be
- The anticipated benefits to those taking part
- Estimated budget and timescale for your research and development
- How much funding you are requesting from us

For a fully developed action research project we would like you to include:

- A full description of the proposed programme
- Details about all of organisations/individuals involved and their respective roles within the programme. (You'll need to clearly identify the lead organisation)
- Who your target audience is going to be and any targets in terms of new engagers and returners
- A plan for evaluating the success and the impact of the programme, including the benefits to those taking part
- A detailed budget and timescale for the programme, including known or anticipated start and end dates
- How much funding you want from us.
- Details of any additional or partnership funding you have towards the programme

## Who Can Apply?

This project is about developing new audiences for the Arts rather than increasing the number of people engaged in participatory activities. For this phase **we will only accept applications from presenting venues such as theatres, arts centres, galleries and other such spaces**. However, we expect applicants to work collaboratively, and would welcome proposals from venues acting as lead partners in partnership with producing companies or other agencies.

We will also welcome proposals that include elements of participatory work, providing the proposals clearly demonstrate how this will lead to increased audiences.

## Timescale for Awarding Funding

The deadline for applications is **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015**. Applications received after this cannot be considered.

The decision-making meeting will be held on **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015**, and we will let you know the outcome of your application as soon as possible after this.

**Remember, your project must have a start date early in 2015, and no later than 1 April 2015 to be eligible for funding.**

### What we will expect from you

This programme is all about testing, and learning from, new ways of working. We want to make sure that successful ideas are promoted and shared. So we'll be asking all those who receive our support to provide us with a comprehensive report including visual evidence and full financial details at the end of your project. If you've undertaken a full action research programme we'll expect you to submit a full evaluation report.

For those initiatives taking place over more than 1 year, we'll ask you to provide interim reports detailing what has been achieved so far, and your projections for the remainder of the project.

### Interested?

To apply for funding, you will need to complete an application form. **This is not for general lottery funding, so you must contact us for a link to the relevant form or we will be unable to process your request.**

You will also be asked to upload supporting information, to include a project budget and also a brief proposal (no longer than two sides of A4) that clearly outline the benefits of the project.

To receive a link to an application form for strategic funding you can contact either:

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