

## Our Ethical Pledge

### Introduction

Literature Wales often talks about being a ‘values-led’ organisation. But what does this mean in practice?

Below, we set out some actions we take to work in line with our values. This includes everything from paying fair fees to freelancers, to reducing our carbon emissions. We are committed to being the change we’d like to see in the world, and welcome comments and suggestions on how we conduct ourselves. Just like all of us as individuals, Literature Wales is a work in progress, and we hope to improve and adapt over the coming years. This document is designed to support the 4 pillars of the Welsh Government’s Cultural Contract.

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#### 1) Fair work for freelancers

Literature Wales relies on freelancers to deliver our vision effectively. We care about treating this vital workforce fairly and ethically and are improving our practices every year. All freelancers (creative or otherwise) can expect opportunity, security, enjoyment, respect, and a voice in what we do. We will work collaboratively with freelancers, and they can expect to:

- Receive a fair fee. We ensure that we pay additional fees for time spent preparing work or contributing to our impact measuring. In 2022, we are investing in research with [Aberystwyth University Business School](#) to better understand the market in Wales, and what constitutes fair pay. The results of this large research project will be published by the end of 2022.
- Receive a detailed contract which clearly and concisely sets out what is expected from the freelancer, and what support they can expect from Literature Wales.
- We will support freelancers with understanding and working in line with our policies, including but not limited to Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Accessibility, and provide specific training where required.

Where we publicise callouts and recruitment for freelancers, we will ensure they are written in clear and accessible language and by providing different formats of documents for those with access requirements and offering BSL interpretation for online events.

All our callouts are open and transparent, from opportunities to run projects to delivering and ambassadorial roles such as the National Poet of Wales. This ensures a democratic and fair approach to contracting freelancers. In 2023 we will move to conducting annual callouts for freelancers with certain skills (tradespeople, photographers, videographers) to create an up-to-date contact list rather than requiring applications, or numerous quotes, for every project.

## 2) Fair work for contracted staff

At the heart of Literature Wales are its employees and we rely on them to effectively deliver the ambitions and priorities of the Strategic Plan for 2022-2025. We care about the health and well-being of our team and recognise the importance of sustaining a healthy, supportive, and inclusive culture, that is also reflective of the true nature of Wales' rich and diverse communities.

Our approach to human resources is based on transparency, consultation, accountability, and learning. We will continue to develop, expand, and professionalise our approach in consultation with the team to support a sustainable working practice and business model.

Fair Work is work that offers employees opportunity, security, enjoyment, respect, and a voice, whilst also managing and balancing the organisation's rights and responsibilities with those of its workers, to generate benefits for wider society.

Key to ensuring fair work/employment for all contracted staff includes the following:

- Ensuring that the Management Board of Trustees reviews and updates the **Pay Policy** annually. This ensures salaries remain competitive in the labour market, through conducting pay reviews, paying individuals in line with normal industry practice and standards.
- Updating the Equal Opportunities Policy annually to ensure staff and potential workers are **not discriminated against** because of gender, marital or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or because they work part time or on a fixed term contract.
- We will not offer **zero-hour** contracts to any staff, and we will always pay contracted staff the [current UK Real Living Wage](#).
- We recognise the importance of work/life balance and offer 25 days pro rata **annual leave**, plus bank holidays and privilege days as well as volunteering opportunities via the **Sustainability Plan**, and training within work time.
- We will ensure our **recruitment practices** – internal and external - are fair and transparent, and comply our **Equal Opportunities Policy**, and with the law.

- We offer **hybrid working arrangements**, an informal flexible working arrangement which allows workers to split time working between their workplace and a remote working location (e.g. at home). However, this may differ between workers dependent on the nature of tasks/responsibilities and to support well-being.
- We will ensure the organisation's **Family Friendly policies** (inc. but not limited to Maternity, Carer or Adoption leave) are operated fairly and according to the law.
- We will always encourage trade union membership.
- Our **Performance Management Framework** aims to ensure effective and consistent line management for all workers. Our **task-based approach** aims to distribute work fairly, to identify challenges, provide support and reassess workloads where appropriate.
- We encourage a culture of openness within our organisation and believe it can help prevent malpractice – prevention is better than cure. However, we operate a **Whistle blowing policy and grievance processes** to ensure workers are treated fairly, and according to the law, if and when raising issues/concerns.
- Review policies and procedures annually in consultation with workers and Trustees.

### 3) Sustainability

Literature Wales acknowledges and recognises the climate emergency and its devastating impact on our world and the lives of people, with the poorest hardest hit.

We will act where we can, to mitigate further escalation of the crisis and raise awareness through our work. We cannot align our work with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 without recognising the destruction of our environment and climate emergency in everything we do. We will work with partners and our audiences to aim towards a greener, fairer, and more prosperous Wales. To help address these challenges and make Literature Wales as sustainable as possible:

- We will actively act upon our **Sustainability Action Plan** which outlines strict operational measures to limit our carbon footprint and details how some of our creative projects can address the climate crisis thematically.
- Whilst being mindful of **digital poverty** and those less fluent in technology, we will reduce the carbon footprint of literary events by running virtual or hybrid events.
- We will use creativity to educate, explore and challenge, increasing knowledge of the climate emergency and **inspiring lasting change**.
- We will support local producers and suppliers when sourcing ingredients and produce for Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre, benefiting from **seasonal produce** and **lower food miles**.
- We will amplify calls for change by supporting the growing network of laureates in Wales and other inspirational literary figures who use their voices to **call for change**. We will work with partners including Natural Resources Wales, the World Wildlife Foundation, and the Future Generations Commissioner to create high impact, national programmes.

- We will focus on **working locally** and we will assist the development of resilient communities by supporting local literature events and meaningful literature for health and well-being projects.
- We will not use air travel as a business, and will also encourage staff, trustees, and the writers that we work with to use **public transport** options where possible.
- We will work with multiple agencies and organisations, such as Grŵp Llandrillo Menai's Green Academy and our funders, to become a **carbon neutral** organisation.

#### 4) Ethical Fundraising and Partnerships

Literature Wales is a charity and needs to raise money from a variety of funders and partners to achieve our vision. Quite simply; the more money we raise, the more impact we can have.

However, we care about where our money comes from and we try to fundraise as ethically as possible. The Institute of Fundraising says that:

*“Donations to charities should only be rejected in exceptional circumstances, when:*

- *It would be unlawful to accept it (e.g. the organisation knows that the gift comprises the proceeds of crime); or*
- *Accepting the donation would be detrimental to the achievement of the purposes of the organisation, as set out in its constitution. This anticipated detriment must be set against the benefit of having the funds from the donor, which would enable the organisation to pursue its purposes.”*

This second point can leave quite a few grey areas. Whilst our Ethical Fundraising policy contains several absolute no-gos (such as taking funding from people or organisations involved in the fossil fuel business, or on behalf of political parties), many potential funding sources lie in an ethically fuzzy area. We have developed a rigorous internal system for weighing up the potential benefits or adverse effects of funds, which is overseen by our Board of Trustees.

A lot of Literature Wales' work is delivered in partnership with other charities and businesses. Often our partners help us reach a particular community or are the experts in their field.

It's important to us that our partners share our values and vision. That's why we have a rigorous process to develop partnerships, including a conversation at the outset about our values and delivery principles, which are then built into partnership agreement documents.

We aim to be transparent about where our money comes from and how its spent. If you're interested in finding out more, you can read our <annual reports> or <get in touch>

#### 5) Inclusion

Literature Wales aims to establish a welcoming and kind approach to bringing a diverse range of people together within the arts and literature sector – whether as writers, audiences,

literature professionals, producers, staff, readers or participants – regardless of their background. We are a national company with inclusive values, and we welcome everyone in Wales to engage with us and our work. We know that the sector still presents a range of barriers which prevent writers, readers and audiences accessing literature. To help address these barriers and make Literature Wales as inclusive as possible:

- We will issue **Access Riders** to all contracted facilitators who run projects for us, ensuring we can provide an accessible, safe and comfortable environment for them to work. Every individual's access requirements will be unique, but through these Riders, we hope to learn more about how to make our events and projects more inclusive and accessible to all.
- As detailed in the Communications section, we will provide content in multiple formats, so that our audiences can access them easily
- The Literature Wales team of staff will regularly engage in range of **inclusion training** sessions, including Accessibility Training, Disability and Deaf Awareness Training.
- Most of our activities will be **free of charge**, and aimed at under-represented groups. For the Tŷ Newydd programme of open courses, **bursaries** will be available for writers who cannot afford to attend, and a parallel programme of strategic courses will run to provide writer development training free of charge for specific groups.
- We will aim to employ more staff, and contract more facilitators and tutor with a **wide range of lived experience** to run our activities, acting as role models and encouraging under-represented groups to feel comfortable in taking part in our work.
- We will **experiment with different platforms** to try and reach audiences, using virtual meeting rooms to reach those who cannot travel, but being mindful of the challenges of digital poverty.
- Our **Welsh Language** Development Plan outlines our responsibility towards the Welsh language. We will ensure that it's treated equally to the English in all that we do, and that Welsh speakers are included in our programmes.

## 6) Communications

Literature Wales aims to ensure that all its communications are useful and relevant to its audiences, and that they can engage with it in the manner which best suits them. We endeavour to achieve **clear, concise, and correct** communications in all instances, whilst ensuring that the tone and content is appropriate for the intended audience.

- **Value-led:** We will always uphold our values, and they will inform our communications, including which newspapers we approach for coverage, where we place adverts, what external social media posts we share, and what kind of events we will contribute to.
- **Inclusive:** We will aim to provide content in multiple formats, so that our audiences can access them easily. This includes providing subtitles to our videos, providing Dyslexia friendly versions of the documents we send the public, provide live captioning for online events wherever possible, and more.

- **Professional:** We will be polite, fair and respectful.
- **Responsible:** We will be considerate of other people's privacy and respect confidentiality. We will always act on communications that displays conduct or language that we deem inappropriate and report any correspondence or messaging that crosses a line to the relevant authorities. We will abide by all of Literature Wales' policies associated with communications, including our IT, Telephone and Communications Policy, Social Media Policy & Community Guidelines, Welsh Language Development Plan and the terms of use of the social media platforms we use.
- **Accurate:** We endeavour to ensure that our content is accurate and fact-checked where needed. If we make a mistake, we will correct it promptly.
- **Transparent:** We will be clear and open about our activity – how decisions are made and how they are delivered and funded.
- **Language:** We will share our content in both Welsh and English and ensure that our community can engage with us in either language. We will be respectful of all of Wales' languages and celebrate the multilingualism of our communities.

## 7) Transparency

Literature Wales recognises the need for transparency. We want to be accountable to our funders, stakeholders and the general public. We will ensure relevant information is available to the public and we respond to reasonable requests for additional information in an appropriate manner.

We will always:

- Share our annual report and accounts on our website and Companies House. This will include:
  - annual spend on writers' fees and expenses during the financial year
  - Income analysis, % of income received from public funds, commercial income, donations, etc.
- Publish our quarterly impact reports on our website, which include our progress against goals set by Arts Council Wales, as well as operational targets such as EDI and Sustainability.
- Complete the Charity Commission annual return on time each year, reporting on income levels and expenditure for the previous financial year.
- Properly record any payments to its trustees for services, i.e., writers' fees, in a Register of Benefits. This is updated quarterly and published on the organisation's website.
- Recognise our partner's contributions to projects and reflect this in any promotional materials, i.e., social media, leaflets, posters.

- Share creative and operational learning points with the sector, via our organisation reports and through networks such as What Next Cymru and with interested parties.
- Respond to reasonable requests for information about our programme, or advice, within 10 working days. Complex requests may take longer, but within that time frame you can expect a response explaining when you should hear back, and provide you with a designated contact person.
- Respond to complaints in a timely and reasonable manner.

## 8) EDI

As set out in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan, Literature Wales are committed to transforming our literary culture into one that is representative and accessible for everyone in Wales. Striving for equality, diversity and inclusion is essential for the literature sector to thrive and be meaningful to all. This belief sits at the core of our values as an organisation and drives our vision and strategy.

### Being actively anti-racist

- We will call out racism in our sector when it occurs.
- We will strive to be role models for the sector, making sure our working policies and projects promote inclusivity and an anti-racist approach. For example, our flagship writer development programme **Representing Wales** has so far provided intense support to a new cohort of 14 writers from low-income backgrounds, and continues to support 12 writers of colour from the first round through our 3-year aftercare programme.
- We support the Government initiative to make Wales an Anti-Racist nation and will work with partners across Wales to help make this a reality. For example, we have worked closely with the educational organisation DARPL (Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Training). This has included the ongoing development of anti-racist professional training for teachers in schools across Wales.

### Our workforce

- We will continue to use recruitment process that encourage inclusion and transparency. For example, we take positive action by offering guaranteed interviews to applicants who meet the suitability requirements of the role and who identify as under-represented within the literary sector.
- We will use these practices to employ both Literature Wales staff and Literature Wales board members.

## **Participation**

- We will provide meaningful opportunities to upskill facilitators and workshop leaders with lived experience in order to engage effectively with our target under-represented communities
- We will offer opportunities through a variety of platforms – including online workshops for those that cannot travel due to health reasons and/or caring responsibilities
- We will ensure legacy for intervention activities by working in partnership

## **Writer Development**

- We will provide targeted investment of money and time for our target under-represented communities
- We will create a continuum of inspiration, learning & professional development from primary school to professional.
- We will engage visible role models to inspire, lead and mentor
- Work to disable historic barriers for people to develop as professional writers
- We will develop a nonbiased, inclusive, internal assessment structures that don't rely, with the intention of fairness, on overly complicated assessment methods that put inappropriate burden on writers.

## **Wales' Literary Culture**

- We will share our platform
- We will ensure ambassadorial roles are carefully appointed – chosen to reflect the communities they serve
- We will employ a diverse range of facilitators to lead our work