

**Peter Hall
Clerk
Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure
Room 344
Parliament Buildings
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19 May 2014

Dear Peter

INQUIRY INTO INCLUSION IN THE ARTS OF WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES

Thank you for your letter of 10 March noting the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure's Inquiry into Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities and inviting OFMDFM to provide written evidence.

OFMDFM welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee's Inquiry. Please find the Department's comments attached at Appendix 1.

Yours sincerely

Signed Colette Kerr

**Colette Kerr
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer**

INQUIRY INTO INCLUSION IN THE ARTS OF WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES

WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM OFMDFM

Tackling Disadvantage

1. Priority 2 of the Programme for Government is Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Well Being. The overall aim of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is to contribute to and oversee the co-ordination of Executive policies and programmes to deliver a peaceful, fair, equal and prosperous society.
2. In pursuing this aim, one of the key objectives of the Department is to tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity, by driving a programme across Government to reduce poverty; promoting and protecting the interests of children, older people, people with disabilities, victims and survivors and other socially excluded groups; addressing inequality and disadvantage; and drive the delivery of Government responsibilities in a sustainable manner.
3. Lifetime Opportunities, the Child Poverty Strategy, the Economic Strategy, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and a number of other strategies, policies and initiatives such as the Social Investment Fund collectively focus on improving the position of those facing disadvantage and inequality, contributing to Priority 2 of the Programme for Government.
4. The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) coordinates delivery and reporting on Delivering Social Change, the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People, and Play and Leisure policy in respect of children and young people. It also coordinates Executive reporting on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. OFMDFM does not deliver services in respect of the arts however some of the policies and strategies which it leads on are relevant to the Committee Inquiry into Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities.

Children and Young People's Strategy

5. The Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young people: Our Children, Our Pledge 2006 – 16 includes an outcome 'Enjoying, Learning and Achieving'. The indicators under this outcome which are reported on through the Young Person's Behaviours and Attitudes Survey include:
 - Percentage of pupils (Years 8-12) who took part in (or did) Arts activities in the last year; and
 - Percentage of pupils (Years 8-12) who enjoyed the last Arts event they went to.
6. These indicators are not reported on according to level of income.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

7. Article 31 of the UNCRC highlights the range of activities that contribute to play and leisure.
 - A. *States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.*
 - B. *States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.*
8. General comment No. 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (art. 31)* published by the Committee on the Rights of the Child provides an in depth account of the reasons why Article 31 is important, provides interpretation and analysis, describes challenges to children enjoying their rights and offers guidance about practical measures of implementation. It also highlights other articles of the UNCRC which are relevant to access to artistic activities and notes that children living in poverty require particular attention to realize their rights under article 31.

Play and Leisure Signature Programme

9. The N.I. Play and Leisure Implementation Plan seeks to deliver on the commitments made in the Executive's Play and Leisure Policy Statement of January 2009 and to meet obligations under Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Play and Leisure Implementation Plan was issued in September 2011 and is scheduled to run until 2016 in line with the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People.
10. In October 2013, Ministers announced potential investment of up to £1.6m in a Play and Leisure Signature Programme to enhance play and leisure opportunities for children and young people to support and further delivery for play and leisure. The project and how it will be delivered is currently being designed with stakeholders taking account of General Comment 17 and existing initiatives and strategies. The programme details will be announced in summer 2014.

Child Poverty Strategy 2011-14

11. The Executive's Child Poverty Strategy 2011-14 included the following priority action areas:
 - Improve school readiness and Increase participation in formal and non-formal education, youth services and sports through accessible and affordable culture, arts and leisure services.'
 - Address socio-economic disadvantage in children and maximise access to key services for children and young people.
 - Promote affordable, accessible play and leisure provision for all children and young people.
12. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has recently provided a progress report against this action for inclusion in the third annual report (1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014) on the Child Poverty Strategy. Content from this report is provided below for information:
13. Arts Council's 5 year strategic plan 'Ambition for the Arts' (2013-2017) aims to place the arts at the heart of our social, economic and creative life and recognises that this can only be achieved through working with a broad range of partners across all sectors, public, private and voluntary. ACNI provides support through the Annual

Funding Programme and Project Lottery Funding to arts organisations in developing access to and participation in the arts.

14. In the context of its wider strategic plan, the Arts Council has set out a Youth Arts Strategy. It places emphasis on the entitlement of Children and Young People to engage in a diverse range of arts-led cultural opportunities in safe and enabling environments. In the broadest possible sense, youth arts includes participative arts and work created for young people as audiences.
15. The Youth Arts Strategy sets out a programme aimed at our most disadvantaged and hard to reach young people, with a priority on a mental health and wellbeing project targeting young people at risk.
16. It also refers to a range of creative, cultural or expressive activities, involving children and young people up to the age of 25 years - both in and outside of formal education settings such as community groups. However, it is not confined to these settings and can take place at almost any location, and involve any kind of art form or creative activity. Examples of projects which provide opportunity for children/low income families include:
 - Belfast Community Circus outreach programme;
 - WheelWorks – Art Cart Digital Arts Outreach Programme;
 - Beat Initiative – Carnival Arts training to increase confidence, nurture skills and create avenues to employment;
 - ‘In Your Space’ (Derry) - dedicated circus skill workshops delivered to people from section 75 communities;
 - Kids in Control – Physical Theatre community outreach programme.
 - New Lodge Arts - Arts Academy delivers workshops to children and young people in north Belfast, including Summer Arts Academy;
 - Play Resource Warehouse – is a provider of art resources and free materials, the organisation launched a new pilot project “kids in Transition” to use arts as a tool to help the transition from pre-primary to post primary education;
 - The MAC, The Crescent Arts Centre, The Millennium Forum, The Nerve Centre, The Black Box venues all have dedicated Education and Outreach programmes that target and engage children, young people from disadvantaged communities.

- The Grand Opera House Youth Musical project offers bursaries to young people in socially disadvantaged areas to provide participatory opportunities in the theatre.
- NI Screen - After School Film Clubs to run in 300 Extended Service Schools. (Free to access service) 269 After School Film Clubs with 5,528 members. Clubs have organised 1,839 film screenings with audience of 24,632 children. 5,134 film reviews by children uploaded to club website. (Film Club stats cover April to end December 2013)
- Creative Learning Centre Programmes training young people in the use of creative digital technologies. Free to access service. CLCs have worked with over 2,417 young people in school and in community and youth settings delivering 242 training sessions. 62 training sessions for 27 youth and hard to reach groups provided in community settings. (CLC stats cover April to end December 2013)

17. In addition, specific targeted funding programmes, such as the Intercultural Arts, have served to create accessible provision in a way that also helps foster the expression of cultural pluralism, build dialogue and promote mutual understanding, including:

- NI Screen's Digital Film Archive Outreach Presentations provide free access to culture and history. 46 DFA outreach presentations delivered per year. DFA sites have made 92 presentations including young people and families. Partner organisations have provided 80 presentations (Stats cover April-end December 2013).
- Cinemagic Screen Festival for Young People – 110 screenings for 7500 young people and 100 education events for 6,000 young people. (107 screenings for 6,520 young people. 88 education events for 5,755 young people).
- Foyle Film Festival Education Programme (50 screenings and events for an estimated 1,400 young people).

18. The Department has also made us aware that 'DCAL will be running a series of Roadshows beginning in March 2014 which aim to raise awareness of the value and potential of culture, arts and leisure initiatives in helping to address economic and social disadvantage. Child poverty will be one of the issues touched upon.' The expected result is greater awareness amongst voluntary organisations of how the 'DCAL family' can contribute to tackling child poverty.

Future Strategy to tackle Child Poverty

19. We are currently revising our child poverty strategy. A consultation document, *Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People*, was published in January, setting out proposals for a new outcomes-based strategy, under the banner of Delivering Social Change. The consultation closed on 31 March 2014 and the responses received and the views raised during the consultation period are currently being reviewed and analysed and will inform a new strategy to be put to the Executive shortly. Arts were not directly mentioned in the consultation document; however, departments still have an opportunity to propose actions for the new strategy.

Deprivation Indicators

20. Various measures of economic deprivation are used. These include the income-based measures set out in the UK Child Poverty Act 2010 (absolute poverty, relative poverty and combined low income and material deprivation) of which we are required to report on annually; area based measures based on the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure, and other measures demonstrating association with deprivation such as pupils' entitlement of Free School Meals. In this context, it would be helpful if the Committee could define 'working class communities' in the context of this Inquiry.

21. The combined low income and material deprivation measure is intended to demonstrate the everyday impact of low income on families and indicates disposable income. The material deprivation question and its responses are presented in the Household Below Average Income report that is produced by the Department for Social Development (http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/hbai_2011-12.pdf see pages 134-139). The question provides respondents with a list of items and services and asks whether respondents have access to or are able to provide these items/services. This includes the ability to participate in 'leisure or social activities', however, participation in the Arts is not included. Those that could be considered related to leisure or social activities are:

- Outdoor space / facilities to play safely
- Leisure equipment such as sports equipment or a bicycle
- At least one weeks holiday away from home with family
- Hobby or leisure activity

- Go on a school trip at least once a term
- Go to a playgroup at least once a week
- Attend organised activity once a week
- Holiday away from home one week a year not with relatives
- Go out socially at least once a month
- See friends or family at least once a month