

# Operational Plan 2020/21



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## 1 Foreword

Our Operational Plan, which sets out the programme of activity during 2020/2021, was drafted before the full impact of the Coronavirus emergency was understood. All our activity has been refocussed over the short- to medium-term to respond to the emergency and to ensure we support the sector through these hugely challenging times. Only when the emergency position created by the virus has dissipated will we as an organisation revert back to delivering this Operational Plan. As the situation at this time will largely be unknown, we plan to revisit which actions can and should still be taken forward and which new actions the Books Council need to take forward to ensure that growth and prosperity return to the publishing sector in Wales. We will monitor the developments carefully and continue to make every effort to safeguard the book industry in Wales, our staff and volunteers.

It is a matter of great delight and pride that Creative Wales states that *“a healthy publishing industry is an essential part of Wales’s cultural identity; through our support of the Books Council of Wales (BCW), we will keep supporting essential services for the publishing industry in both the Welsh and the English languages”*. This commitment from Welsh Government enables us to support our mission and core activities such as:

- contribute to the Well-being objectives as outlined in Welsh Government’s national strategy: **Prosperity for All**
- support the three pillars of the **International Strategy (2020)** – Creativity, Sustainability and Technology – and contribute content to **Dyma Gymru**
- support **Curriculum for Wales 2022** by
  - **proactively engaging with Areas of Learning that will benefit from leisure content supported by our grants system**
  - **offer a holistic overview of resources available and help develop strategies to lessen the dependency on English publishers**
  - run programmes in support of the **National Literacy Programme** and the aims of the **Child Poverty Strategy**.
- continue to support **Cymraeg 2050**, working closely with the National Centre for Learning Welsh, supporting specific campaigns such as:
  - the **Welsh Language Charter**
  - **Cymraeg Campus**
- deliver and promote the **Darllen yn Well (Reading Well)** programme, thus contributing to the Action Plan 2019/2020 **‘More than just Words’** and to the Delivery Plan 2019–22, **‘Together for Mental Health’**.

Developing and supporting the publishing industry in Wales has always been a core purpose of our grants. The funding we receive from Welsh Government not only enables the production of a broad range of popular and diverse books and magazines in both languages, it also supports 29 editorial and marketing posts in micro enterprises across the whole of Wales. Nurturing talent through our strategic engagement also enables us to further act on the recommendations of Dr Siwan Rosser’s report, *Survey of Books for Children and Young People: Final Report (2017)*<sup>1</sup> as well as address specific areas such as resources for learners, original illustrations in Welsh children’s books, digital technologies such as augmented reality, and digital audio books in the Welsh language. Due to the dynamic nature of our industry we

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.clc.org.uk/7082.file.dld>

are looking forward to supporting new enterprises and initiatives in this financial year and, in cooperation with Business Wales and other relevant organisations, to delivering training and conferences aimed at making the whole sector more resilient.

We were awarded a substantial investment by Welsh Government in 2019 to renew our distribution and warehousing systems, as well as our online ordering system gwales.com, and this year will see the start of the two-year implementation period. This is a unique opportunity to innovate and answer the rapid digital change our industry is experiencing. The investment will transform the reach and market access of publishers and independent bookshops, thus making a substantial contribution to the foundational and rural economy of Wales. Securing the necessary expertise by hiring an experienced project manager is the first crucial step, followed by tendering for the new system. We will consult with clients (publishers and retailers) to ensure that the new specifications answer their key concerns and areas of improvement, as well as our own functionality needs.

Once the core system has been chosen, we will begin to plan for the replacement of gwales.com. Given that this system is widely used not only by individual users but also by schools, libraries and other organisations, the consultation regarding functionality is envisaged to be broader to include all relevant stakeholders. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for international showcasing and integration with other existing platforms.

We will continue our contribution to the International Literature Stakeholder Group and, as the sector lead, we will work with colleagues to propose a 5-year strategy to increase the international showcasing opportunities for publishers and writers in key markets in support of Welsh Government's International Strategy. Writing and literature by their very essence are at the centre of cultural diplomacy, showcasing Wales as a thriving bilingual nation with a rich and long literary heritage to match other, often larger, European nations. We are delighted to have the opportunity to contribute our sector knowledge and substantial expertise of working internationally.

Schools and libraries continue to be central to the book sector ecosystem, both as partners in reading promotion activities and as important institutional customers of independent bookshops. Our five regional representatives will continue to support teachers and librarians in navigating the wealth of resources available, ensuring that they can make effective choices whilst managing limited budgets. This undertaking will be further amplified by our specialist children's books team who will continue to engage with schools to create support materials that respond to schools' priority topics and needs, as well as running an extensive offer of programmes supporting reading for pleasure.

We will continue to engage with colleagues from Welsh Government and other stakeholders in supporting the ambitions of the new curriculum, as well as offering practical solutions and structures to realise those objectives. Our ability to take an overview of existing resources versus the needs of the new curriculum whilst assessing the skills and needs of services providers will allow us to make a substantial, strategic and long-term contribution which will benefit the whole of Wales in the long term.

The final tranche of titles in the Darllen yn Well (Reading Well) programme will have been published towards the end of the financial year 2019/20, and will provide ample opportunity to promote the recent titles on Mental Health for Adults and to continue to raise the profile of the Dementia list. We intend to strengthen our cooperation with health charities, Public Health Wales and regional health boards and to continue contributing to improving Health and Well-being in our communities.

As we will be in the final year of our current Strategic Plan (2016–2021), we will be drafting a new vision which will map our future ambitions. We will review the governance structures of our organisation, as well as the composition and skills of the executive committee, adding expertise where necessary. A draft strategy will be discussed at our annual meeting in summer 2020, followed by a period of consultation with stakeholders with a view to launching the new strategic plan in early 2021. We will, of course, continue to draw on the many volunteers who attend our panels and who give so freely of their time, energy and expertise. Without them we would not be able to achieve our objectives, and this is particularly true in the case of the Chief Officers on whom we call regularly for support. And lastly, heartfelt thanks are due to all our staff whose dedication, enthusiasm and steadfastness underpin this charity and whose continued engagement with an ever-changing sector makes a tangible difference.

## 2 Objectives and Core Functions of the Books Council

This Operational Plan has been prepared in accordance with the main objectives of the Books Council, as set out in its Constitution.

The Council's main objectives, as set out in its Constitution, are:

to promote, encourage and increase the appreciation and interest of the public in literature . . . [and]

- a) to encourage and assist authors and translators by awarding grants and by other means;
- b) to encourage, promote and assist the production and distribution of books and other recorded literary and artistic material howsoever recorded (whether by known means or by means as yet unknown) in Welsh or of Welsh interest;
- c) to organise and hold exhibitions of such books and other materials;
- d) to encourage and promote the publication of such books and other materials in Wales.

### Core Functions

Much of the Council's work is devoted to providing the publishing trade with basic services and, inevitably, these are not short-term projects. Listed below are the core functions that are fundamental in enabling the Books Council of Wales to fulfil its work in accordance with the Constitution.

- 1 Promote all aspects of the publishing industry in Wales by providing a range of services and by linking the interests of authors, publishers, booksellers and libraries and readers.
- 2 Distribute grants to help publish quality materials in both Welsh and English, ensuring that the products are widely available.
- 3 Assist and support authors through the provision of services and the awarding of grants/commissions that are channelled through publishers.
- 4 Promote interest in Welsh- and English-language books from Wales, together with other related material, by providing information and through a full programme of activities.

These core functions are supported by:

- i) Appropriate management structures
- ii) Training programmes
- iii) Effective financial control

### 3 Welsh Government Objectives

The Welsh Government funds the Books Council of Wales in order to enable it to deliver its strategic policy objectives within the field of publishing; this Operational Plan gives details of the Books Council's delivery programme to meet those objectives.

The Operational Plan also contributes to the Welsh Government's wider strategic objectives, which include commitments to ensure a strong and confident nation, lively and prosperous communities, and a fair and just society.

As noted in *Looking Forward: Welsh Books Council Strategic Plan (2016)*<sup>2</sup>, the five-year Strategic Plan, the Council contributes to the following fields:

- Presenting the culture and heritage of Wales by means of a wide variety of reading material presenting the history and people of Wales
- Promoting and encouraging the use of Welsh by presenting it as a living, relevant language
- Promoting literacy and reading as essential life skills
- Contributing to a programme to tackle poverty and deprivation by providing reading material which is both varied and inclusive
- Contributing to the Welsh economy by supporting indigenous industries throughout Wales
- Integrating both cultures in Wales by providing support and services in respect of both languages
- Supporting the education sector by providing reading material that is supplementary to the educational materials sponsored by the Welsh Government
- Promoting Wales overseas by means of the country's rich literature and prestigious authors
- Contributing to the national discourse by supporting magazines in the field of current affairs and literature in addition to academic material
- Supporting digital materials and promoting innovation in the field.

As part of its central role in promoting the publishing industry in Wales, the Books Council of Wales provides a range of services for all sectors of the industry. At the same time, it also places considerable emphasis on serving the public directly by supplying information about books from Wales in both languages and making the material available through bookshops and online. In accordance with the Council's Language Scheme, services to the public are available through the medium of either Welsh or English.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.clc.org.uk/1671.publicationFile.dld>

#### **4 Working in Partnership**

The Council will work in partnership with a wide range of bodies including, naturally, the main partners within the publishing industry, namely publishers and booksellers.

As one of the leading bodies in literature and publishing in Wales, we have a long-standing and important working relationship with Literature Wales. The independent review of publishing and literature and the Welsh Government's response identified the need to strengthen our relationship and to ensure greater joined-up thinking at a strategic level. We are deeply committed to forging closer bonds and to achieving the benefits that this will bring to the publishing industry, to writers and arts practitioners, to other partners and, most of all, to the public as readers, spectators and active participants. We will continue with the strategic collaboration between both bodies, which was developed in 2019/20 and which continues to be the basis for our cooperation, but we will investigate further opportunities as they arise. We will also continue to implement the specific recommendations for the Books Council outlined in the review.

The Books Council also has very close links with local authorities across Wales, and the Books Council's Sales and Information Officers visit schools and libraries on a regular basis. The Council will also continue to work closely with MALD and a number of other educational organisations.

The Books Council will continue to hold meetings with the National Library of Wales and Literature Wales to share information and explore opportunities for collaboration. The Books Council also has close links with the Society of Chief Librarians.

The Books Council will continue its cooperation with the Booksellers Association of Great Britain and Ireland and the Independent Publishers Guild, especially with a view to developing training opportunities.

The Books Council's Child Poverty Strategy commits the Council to pay specific attention to this important field, and an annual progress report is presented to the Welsh Government. In addition to ensuring a supply of reading material for children of differing backgrounds, the Council also collaborates with the education authorities and library authorities in order to support disadvantaged areas.



Partner	Action in 2020/21
Welsh Government	<p data-bbox="751 226 852 255"><u>General</u></p> <ul data-bbox="716 271 1414 338" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="716 271 1414 338">• Exchange information and experience with regard to grant schemes and commissioning books</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="751 376 943 405"><u>Creative Wales</u></p> <ul data-bbox="716 421 1442 837" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="716 421 1442 488">• Liaise closely with the officials responsible for sponsorship of the Books Council</li> <li data-bbox="716 504 1442 600">• Explore further opportunities to support the sustainability and growth of the publishing sector, including support for events and book fairs</li> <li data-bbox="716 616 1442 719">• Proactively support cross-sectorial cooperation in the wider arts, making the most of the content output already supported through the grants system</li> <li data-bbox="716 734 1442 763">• Contribute to skills development in the sector</li> <li data-bbox="716 779 1442 837">• Contribute to furthering diversity and inclusion in the sector and in the representation of the sector's output</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="751 875 1289 904"><u>Education and Public Services Department</u></p> <p data-bbox="751 913 1177 943"><u>Curriculum &amp; Assessment Division</u></p> <ul data-bbox="716 958 1453 1263" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="716 958 1453 1061">• Coordinate World Book Day activities and the reading promotion schemes as part of the Welsh Government's National Literacy Programme</li> <li data-bbox="716 1077 1453 1144">• Collaborate on the Quick Reads/Stori Sydyn project as part of the Basic Skills strategy</li> <li data-bbox="716 1160 1453 1263">• Contribute to the Steering Group for new Resources for the new curriculum and proactively encourage partnership working within the publishing sector</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="751 1301 1066 1330"><u>Welsh Language Division</u></p> <ul data-bbox="716 1346 1449 1585" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="716 1346 1449 1413">• Contribute to the Government's Language Strategy and the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050</li> <li data-bbox="716 1429 1449 1458">• Contribute to the Language Technology Board</li> <li data-bbox="716 1473 1449 1585">• Cooperate with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to support the publication of Amdani, the series for Learners, and identify other gaps in resources</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="751 1630 1398 1659"><u>Economy, Skills and Natural Resources Department</u></p> <p data-bbox="751 1668 1358 1697"><u>Tourism Development and Major Events Division</u></p> <ul data-bbox="716 1713 1422 1780" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="716 1713 1422 1780">• Commission and promote books as part of the Welsh Government's themed years programme</li> </ul>

Welsh Government	<p><u>Culture and Sport Division</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and promote gwales/libraries</li> <li>• Cooperate on reader development schemes</li> <li>• Cooperate in order to develop the gwales/libraries website for use by the libraries</li> <li>• Administer the Summer Reading Challenge grant to libraries</li> <li>• Utilise the grant for the distribution of Darllen yn Well (Reading Well) titles to local authorities</li> </ul> <p><u>Health and Social Services Department</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administer Year 2 of the Reading Well Scheme for the publication of books on Dementia in collaboration with The Reading Agency</li> <li>• Collaborate with Public Health Wales to ensure community engagement with the Reading Well scheme</li> <li>• Proactively promote the scheme in libraries and bookshops</li> <li>• Contribute to the launch of Phase 2 (Mental Health &amp; Well-being) of the scheme</li> </ul>
Arts Council of Wales / Wales Arts International / Literature Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperate on the Book of the Year awards</li> <li>• Literature Wales to contribute to World Book Day activities</li> <li>• Contribute to the Reading Friends scheme</li> <li>• Contribute to the development of an international strategy for Literature from Wales</li> <li>• Cooperate on London Book Fair 2020</li> <li>• Cooperate on a course for authors in Tŷ Newydd</li> <li>• Participate in Literature Wales bursary panels</li> <li>• Invite Literature Wales in an <i>ex-officio</i> capacity to attend BCW Publishing Grants Panels</li> <li>• Cooperate on the Bardd Plant Cymru scheme</li> <li>• Extend joint training courses for illustrators and authors</li> <li>• Joint bid for Culture Delegation to Frankfurt Book Fair</li> </ul>
The Reading Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the Reading Well scheme in the Welsh Language (2019/2020–2020/21)</li> <li>• Deliver the Summer Reading Challenge</li> </ul>
Jerwood Foundation / National Poetry Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver National Poetry Day in Wales in 2020</li> </ul>
BookTrust Cymru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in a reading promotion scheme, explore further cooperation opportunities, and exchange information on relevant projects</li> <li>• Exhibit at BookTrust Cymru conferences</li> </ul>
Wales Literature Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange information on relevant projects</li> <li>• Cooperate on a stall at the London Book Fair 2021</li> <li>• Joint bid for Culture Delegation to Frankfurt Book Fair</li> </ul>

British Council Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership project researching Children's Books in European languages suitable for translation into Welsh, funded by British Council Wales</li> <li>• Joint bid for Culture Delegation to Frankfurt Book Fair</li> </ul>
Booksellers Association of Britain and Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperate on existing schemes such as Books are My Bag</li> <li>• Assist in the establishment of Bookselling Wales</li> </ul>
Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange information with CILIP Cymru/Wales on particular schemes</li> <li>• Exhibit at the annual CILIP Cymru/Wales conference</li> <li>• Arrange the Tir na n-Og Awards, partly sponsored by CILIP Cymru/Wales (Kathleen Cooks Bequest)</li> <li>• Cooperate with the Society of Chief Librarians Wales on reading promotion schemes</li> </ul>
National Literacy Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literary Hubs for Wales</li> </ul>
Read for Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the existing scheme, making more books available to children's wards in hospitals</li> </ul>
National Library of Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh Journals digitisation scheme</li> <li>• Cooperate on exchanging information between NLW catalogue and gwales database</li> <li>• Cooperate on joint events such as Wales Week in London</li> </ul>
Urdd Gobaith Cymru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several projects, including promoting the Tir na n-Og Awards and the Welsh-language Children's Poet Laureate</li> </ul>
Voluntary Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure the support of voluntary organisations and registered charities for reading promotion activities</li> </ul>
Wales TUC Cymru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on the relationship established during the National Year of Reading with a view to promoting books and reading in the workplace</li> </ul>
S4C / BBC / ITV and other media providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Welsh-language Children's Poet Laureate (Bardd Plant Cymru)</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to promote reading and books by means of specific programmes</li> <li>• Engage with commissioners on a regular basis to discuss turning books into programmes</li> </ul>
WJEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share information regarding commissioning educational reading material</li> </ul>
Transport for Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tales on the Rails scheme, National Poetry Day</li> <li>• Investigate additional opportunities for cooperation</li> </ul>
Other WGSBs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperate on staff training and HR matters</li> </ul>

## 5 Mainstreaming

The Council will endeavour to mainstream a number of basic principles established by the Welsh Government.

Principle	Action in 2020/21
Equality	<p>Comply with the Council's equality policy. Ensure equal access to all services offered by the Council.</p> <p>Ensure transparency in the appointment of members to the Council's panels, including public advertisements.</p> <p>Comply with the Council's Language Plan.</p> <p>Through the grant schemes, support a wide range of publications that reflect the various interests of readers.</p>
Diversity & Inclusion	<p>Aim to increase the diversity amongst volunteers, especially with a view to increasing BAME representation, but also age, socio-economic background and disability.</p>
Sustainable Development	<p>Support the infrastructure of the publishing industry, in pursuit of a sustainable economy in Wales.</p> <p>Maintain and support training within the publishing industry to develop skills.</p> <p>Seek opportunities to save energy, particularly as regards fuel, and monitor the recycling of office materials.</p> <p>Monitor the waste management programme regarding the recycling of office materials and comply with the recommendations of the Hazardous Waste Audit.</p>
Social Justice	<p>Continue to support and promote suitable reading material for reluctant readers in partnership with the Welsh Government.</p> <p>Support a wide range of reading material in Welsh and English.</p> <p>Support activity for the promotion of literacy and reading skills.</p>
Disability	<p>Comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Develop online access to information about books from Wales and the Council's services.</p> <p>Promote digital media and audio books.</p> <p>Assist libraries to secure a steady stream of large-print books in Welsh, produced to a high standard.</p>
Promoting the Welsh Language	<p>Comply with the requirements of the Council's Language Scheme.</p> <p>Support staff wishing to learn or improve their Welsh.</p>

- Publicity/Branding

The Council will use its new brand and logo in all its activities and materials to underline and communicate the name change, with a view to achieve the envisaged perception shift, i.e. that the Council is a national charity for Wales and committed to promoting reading and supporting the book industry in Wales through the medium of both Welsh and English.

The Council will comply fully with the Welsh Government's requirements regarding branding and will acknowledge the Welsh Government's support in events and publications, as set out by the Welsh Government. Staff will continue to work closely with Welsh Government officials in order to ensure a coherent and integrated approach to marketing and communication.

## **6 Risk Management**

The Council is aware of the fact that the intrinsic creativity of the publishing industry does include an element of risk – an element that is an essential part of its nature and vital to its existence. As an organisation, we have a responsibility to understand, analyse and manage that risk to the best of our ability.

It is acknowledged that there is an element of risk inherent in any creative activity, including the publishing industry. Without it, there is a strong possibility that the industry would stagnate, thereby missing or refusing progressive opportunities to develop. The Council, through its Publishing Grants Panels, regularly takes risks by supporting and promoting material that is both bold and challenging. The Council is also eager to experiment with innovative schemes to market books and promote reading – whilst taking into consideration the possibility that some schemes will not perform as successfully as others. The Council has a reciprocal arrangement with Literature Wales to attend grants and bursary panels in order to share information and expertise, which also helps to avoid duplication of funding.

Despite the current economic climate and its effect on sales, which could lead to supporting 'safe' reading material, the Publishing Grants Panels are well aware of their responsibilities to support a range of reading materials.

As noted above, responsibility is also a by-product of venturing, and the Council relies heavily on the experience of staff, members of specialist panels, and partners within the publishing industry, to manage the risk involved. The Publishing Grants Panels (both Welsh- and English-language) will supervise the output and performance of individual publishers by means of monitoring reports and appraisal meetings, and a training programme for publishers will assist them in identifying and managing risk.

The in-house Sales and Information/Distribution Centre teams will jointly scrutinise the marketing schemes and the sales/financial targets and will report directly to the Management Team and the Chief Officers.

## 7 Research and Appraisal

In order for the publishing industry to secure the best value for money, it is imperative that research work is commissioned and that schemes are monitored regularly.

We published Dr Siwan Rosser's report into the provision of Welsh-language Children's Books in December 2017 (Dr Siwan Rosser, *Survey of Books for Children and Young People: Final Report, 2017*)<sup>3</sup>. Dr Rosser's report has already been widely welcomed and discussed and it has been especially useful for our Children's Books and Reading Promotion Department and the Children's Books Panel, and more specifically for the Publishing Grants Panel. The ambitious report contains a large number of targets, some of which have already been implemented; others require longer term strategic interventions and/or additional funding, whilst some need to be discussed more extensively by all stakeholders engaged in promoting the Welsh language more widely.

In response to one of the specific recommendations in relation to non-Welsh-speaking parents who choose to educate their children in a Welsh-medium school, we have commissioned Beaufort to undertake research via a parent focus group, and the findings will also support the decision-making processes of the Publishing Grants Panel in light of Dr Rosser's report.

A report on economic research and the impact of the Welsh book industry was undertaken by Professor Max Munday of Cardiff University; it was presented in the summer of 2018 and its findings will help to shape Books Council of Wales policy.

Independent research has also informed recent grant awards. For example, the research into English-language magazines (Tony Bianchi, *A Review of English-language Magazines in Wales, 2013*)<sup>4</sup> fed into the work of drawing up the specifications of the magazines tender for 2015–19 and the most recent round for 2019–2023, with the corresponding research into Welsh-language magazines (Andrew Green, *Adolygiad o Gylchgronau a Chyfnodolion Cymraeg 2015*, unpublished) being relevant to the 2019–2023 licence period.

The Council commissioned market research specialists, Beaufort Research, to survey trends in reading Welsh-language books, and their report was presented in 2019. In addition, in response to the recommendations of Dr Rosser's report on Welsh-language reading material for children and young people, Beaufort conducted research specifically with parents in order to gain further insight into their needs. This will influence future policy in this important area.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cllc.org.uk/7082.file.dld>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cllc.org.uk/4349.file.dld>

## 8 The Books Council's Work Programme for 2020/21

Listed below are a number of schemes that will be implemented by the Books Council in the 2020/21 financial year. These schemes are in accordance with the Council's objectives of promoting the publishing industry in Wales.

### 1 PUBLISHING GRANTS

#### Grants for Welsh-language materials

In the context of Welsh-language publishing, the aim of the Council's main grant schemes is to improve the quality of books, and to increase the variety of books and magazines published; this is achieved by supporting first-rate authors, designers and publishers to write, illustrate, design and edit Welsh-language books and magazines. The Council continues to develop these core schemes and will strive to maintain – as far as possible – the number of titles published.

In addition to this core work, during 2020/21 the Council's priorities will be as follows:

- Plans to divert the money that formerly went to Gomer Press to maintain the number of books published and to attract a variety of new publishers.
- Complete the tender process for the Digital News Service.
- Dr Siwan Rosser's Report – *Survey of Books for Children and Young People: Final Report* (2017) – was published in December 2017. It was warmly welcomed and has resulted in several areas of activity. The work will continue in 2020/21, particularly in the following fields:
  - Young Adults: improve appearance of books and develop new writers (in partnership with Literature Wales).
  - Technology: look for ways to develop augmented reality approaches to facilitate the relationship with Welsh-learners and non-Welsh-speaking parents.
  - Internationalization: in terms of finding international material for translation into Welsh and finding markets for original Welsh texts.
- Look to develop Welsh-language audio book provision.
- Develop a consistent and effective way of measuring the digital reach of the sponsored magazines.
- Continue to promote the Welsh Government's themed years to publishers and in the work of the Books Council of Wales.
- The scheme to support booksellers will continue, and the Council will promote and market the titles supported by publishing grants by generic means, in addition to providing specific grants for publishers to promote new titles.

#### Grants for English-language publications

Support for English-language publications ensures a vibrant range of materials that reflect the distinctive culture of Wales, in the face of fierce competition within the Anglo-American publishing market. They provide readers in Wales with titles that are relevant to them and represent the culture of Wales on an international level. In administering the grant the Council will:

- provide support for infrastructure via the Supported Posts Grants and Revenue Grants in order to maintain funding for jobs in the sector. Furthermore, title-by-title marketing grants will be allocated to ensure that books reach readers and in order to provide publishers with the opportunity to generate vital income from sales.
- prioritise funding for new titles for adults and children suitable for a wide range of readers. This will include maintaining funding for popular books via the Author Advance Grants scheme and maintaining the standard of literary books via the Revenue Grant and the Individual Literary Book Grants.
- in addition, print and digital magazines that contribute to the culture of Wales will be funded to provide a vital platform for debate, analysis and good-quality writing on a wide range of subjects.
- ensure value for money by setting 18-month sales targets for books funded under the Revenue, Author Advance and Marketing schemes. We will encourage a balanced list of books from Revenue-funded publishers and will monitor the quality and cultural value of funded titles. We will continue to work to establish the most effective way to measure the digital reach of magazines which will encourage best practice in this area.
- focus on developing the sector and promoting good practice among publishers who are in receipt of grants. Training opportunities will be offered to publishers of books to encourage excellence and to keep abreast of developments within the industry.
- following the publication of the 50<sup>th</sup> title in the Library of Wales series, work will be done to further develop partnerships and focus on initiatives to encourage the use of classic titles from Wales in education.
- support publishers to create a new Publishers Association for English-language companies in Wales and facilitate the administration of this process.
- work alongside librarians to ensure that libraries are aware of new titles in the field of Welsh writing in English.
- make the most of opportunities to forge partnerships and make a cultural and commercial contribution to the Welsh Government's themed years initiative.

## **2 SALES AND INFORMATION**

- Maximise the sales to independent, specialist bookshops by the following means:
  - Support the booksellers to hold out-of-the-shop events with financial support through the Outreach Scheme;
  - ensure that publishers provide opportunities for the independent booksellers to be present at book launches and author signing sessions;
  - administer an additional discount scheme for independent bookshops;



- hold an annual meeting with the booksellers to see where services and collaboration can be improved.
- Continue supplying books to Cadw under the current agreement and make every effort to win a new tender as and when it arises or ensure that any new arrangements continue to be administered through the Books Council.
- Hold regular meetings with wholesalers and head office buyers in the UK in the context of relevant books, to ensure maximum exposure outside Wales. This will include promoting and selling books from Wales through Waterstones, WHSmith, Gardners and Amazon, focusing especially on facilitating the ordering and distribution arrangements.
- Work in close cooperation with all publishers, Welsh- and English-language, based in Wales, to expand sales opportunities and ensure that the Books Council is competitive compared to other distributors. Offering support to publishers on their Bibliographical Data (metadata), giving them the opportunity to sell their new products in the Sales Conferences (which are held biannually).
- Work in cooperation with bibliographical partners, such as Nielsen, to ensure full metadata on all titles.
- Review the books.wales website ensuring the use of Google Analytics in order to gain a better understanding of how our customers use our website.
- Arrange visits to primary and secondary schools, educational conferences and libraries throughout Wales to exhibit, present and sell the wide provision of materials currently available, highlighting their relevance to the requirements of the curriculum.
- Review the administration of the book reviews on the gwales.com website.

### **3 COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING**

- Work to embed and communicate the new brand across all media.
- Organise stands at the National Eisteddfod, the Urdd Eisteddfod and the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (in collaboration with a bookshop).
- Work in cooperation with the Hay Festival to ensure that books from Wales have a very visible presence at the festival.
- Attend relevant trade fairs in order to ensure that every effort is being made to increase the number of opportunities to sell through non-traditional outlets such as galleries, gift shops and tourist attractions.
- Promote Wales's lively literature scene at events outside of Wales, e.g. London Book Fair, Wales Week in London.
- Increase our social media presence; creating promotional materials and advertisements to attract new followers on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

- Oversee and develop our print marketing campaigns in spring and summer, and at Christmas (*Llyfrau'r Haf*, *Gwledd y Nadolig*, *Summer Reads* and *Festive Reads* catalogues), digital marketing and broadcast media (TV advertisements).

#### 4 PROMOTING BOOKS AND READING

- Develop a sub-brand under the new logo to highlight a programme of events.
- Arrange a programme of activities to raise the profile of, and promote, children's books in both languages; this will include:
  - arranging the books competitions – BookSlam and Darllen dros Gymru.
  - presenting the Tir na n-Og Awards to recognise excellence in the field of children's books in both languages.
  - arranging Author Tours campaigns – working with authors, publishers, booksellers, schools and libraries across Wales.
  - ensure coverage of publications, projects or news relevant to areas of children's and young people's literature in Wales on the @LlyfrDaFabBooks social media accounts.
  - collaborate with Literature Wales to promote the Welsh-language Children's Poet Laureate/Bardd Plant Cymru scheme.
- Arrange a programme of reading promotion activities in relation to the Welsh Government's National Literacy Programme. This will include:
  - coordinating the activities to celebrate Book Day 2020.
  - supporting the Summer Reading Challenge in conjunction with schools and libraries. Emphasis will be placed on targeting and reaching pupils within disadvantaged areas throughout Wales.
  - continue the Quick Reads/Stori Sydyn series for young people and adults to target reluctant readers, both children and adults.
- Continue to implement the Child Poverty Strategy, emphasising the importance of literacy and reading as essential skills and as a powerful tool to tackle the effects of poverty amongst families, children and young people.
- Strengthening the relationship between ourselves and the regional consortia and Welsh Government Education Departments, creating promotional resources to support specific campaigns (e.g. the Welsh Language Charter and Cymraeg Campus). Support the work of developing resources for the new curriculum.
- Collaborate with partners such as The Reading Agency, BookTrust Cymru and the coordinators of World Book Day UK, ensuring that there is a Welsh dimension to the schemes and activities provided.
- Collaborate with the Publishing Grants Department to implement the recommendations of Dr Siwan Rosser's Report – *Survey of Books for Children and Young People: Final Report* (2017) – working with partners such as Urdd Gobaith Cymru and S4C to encourage new ideas, to raise the profile of children's literature and to develop ways of sharing information about books amongst teachers, prospective teachers and parents.

## **5 EDITING AND DESIGN SERVICES**

- Offer a design service of the highest quality to publishing houses, and work with smaller publishers in order to improve the visual aspect of their publications.
- Offer proofreading and copy-editing services to publishers, together with advice and guidance to the creative editors working in the publishing houses.
- Continue to offer an internal editorial and design services to all Books Council departments.
- Review the administration of the Welsh- and English-language book reviews for the gwales.com website.

## **6 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

- Ensure that the Books Council's new website is live so that it has a modern look and to make it more user-friendly.
- Embed the new logo where possible across public and customer-facing platforms.
- Expand the use of the SharePoint system internally and encourage its use to share information with committees, publishers and booksellers, in order to save on printing and posting and sharing information regularly.
- Ensure that staff use effective ways of keeping electronic information that is easy to share and adapt and reduces duplication of processes.
- Prioritise work that strengthens the Council's ability to deal with a cyber attack and aiming to meet the requirements of Cyber Essential Plus by the end of 2021.
- Updating hardware and networks of both sites to accelerate processing and to reduce the risk of losing data or time due to network loss.
- Hold at least 6 meetings of the in-house Technical Team.
- Provide appropriate training for staff to ensure that they make the most effective use of the technology.
- During 2020/2021, the Books Council's Management Team will focus on the implementation of the new IT system. The appointment of a Project Manager to oversee these tasks is crucial, as there will be a need to keep a focus on the project and deliver the Welsh Government's expectations in terms of expenditure. Whilst the initial work will include the tendering, commissioning and contractual needs of the contract, the whole budget will be allocated by the end of this financial year. In order to prepare the data for migration, there are many data cleansing exercises to be completed – for instance, deciding what to do with out-of-print titles, clearing duplicates, and bringing several sets of information together to ensure that there is one core dataset for transfer. A key focus of the year will be the transfer from ONIX 2.1 to ONIX 3.0, which will be essential to ensure that sales to Amazon continue. A new system will automate many processes, therefore a training programme for staff to ensure that they have the necessary skills for what the business needs will be essential. This will have a

transformational impact on how the business works and enable it to compete and operate efficiently.

## **7 THE DISTRIBUTION CENTRE**

- Develop a name that resonates with the commercial nature of the work and develop a brand identity under the new corporate logo; create a separate website outlining the activities and services offered as well as terms and conditions.
- Extend the use of EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) to facilitate electronic communication with booksellers and wholesalers.
- Create a packing system that is up-to-date and suitable for the distribution service.
- Undertake a review of the Distribution Centre's administrative arrangements, to ensure that the use of technology is introduced into processing in order to reduce the processes required.
- Undertake a survey of the service and costs of various distribution companies in order to ensure value for money.
- Continue to analyse and review the Centre's running costs, ensuring that a service of the highest standard is provided to publishers and booksellers and preparing an annual report on the value of this service to publishers.

## **8 FUNDRAISING**

- Review the progress on the Fundraising Strategy, looking at where the strategic priorities are, what type of projects the Books Council will undertake, and what resources are available to implement this strategy.
- Develop fundraising resources including the database, feasibility study and marketing materials.
- Develop the Council's profile among bodies that distribute funding through meetings and networking.
- Develop new opportunities to recruit supporters and corporate sponsors.
- Implement a programme of approved grant applications.

## **9 FINANCE**

- Implement the Strategic Plan by ensuring that the long-term budget provides adequate funding and resources to deliver the strategy.
- Prepare the annual statutory accounts for 2019/20 by the agreed deadlines and receive a clean audit report.
- Implement an online process to administer the Outreach Scheme payments and ensure support is available to independent bookshops.

- Implement changes to the book tokens scheme, in line with the recommendations of the Strategic Plan.
- Work with the Dyfed Pension Scheme to ensure that any changes to the pension scheme are affordable to the Council for the future and undertake a full review of long-term options to reduce future liabilities.
- Ensure that the Operational Plan helps us to deliver Welsh Government policies, including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

## **10 PROPERTY AND RESOURCES**

- Implement the recommendations of the review of the Council's buildings, ensuring regular investment in the building and equipment.

## **11 STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

- Continue to ensure that the Books Council's quality of leadership and management is of the highest order and follows best practice within the public sector in Wales.
- In response to the annual appraisal scheme, the Council will continue to identify opportunities to train and develop members of staff in order for them to gain flexible and transferable skills that will enable them to respond to any new opportunities.

## **12 ADMINISTRATION**

- Continue to archive minutes of the Executive Committee meetings and the Council's meetings electronically, ensuring easy access to the public.
- Arrange to archive the Council's websites in cooperation with the National Library of Wales.

## **13 GOVERNANCE**

- Following the Strategic Review, ensure that any changes to the existing management structure are implemented, and that the new structure is suitable for an organisation that can respond quickly to new opportunities and business challenges.
- Ensure that the Books Council complies with Welsh Language standards and report annually on compliance with the standards in an Annual Report.
- Ensure that the Books Council is governed by a body that reflects diversity in Wales and carries out its scrutiny function that identifies the challenges and risks facing them.
- Encourage further discussion on academic publishing in Wales and explore financing structures together with the various responsibilities of different organisations to maintain and develop the field (i.e. the situation of the University of Wales Press).

## 9 What resources will be available

The sums allocated by the Welsh Government for 2020/21 are shown below.

	<b>2020/21</b>
<b>Core Funding</b>	<b>£</b>
Towards Specialist Departments	770,895
General Overheads and Running Costs	358,383
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>
	<b>1,129,278</b>
Capital Grant	780,000
<b>Grants for Distribution</b>	
Publishing Grants	2,600,722
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>
	<b>4,510,000</b>
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>

The pages that follow present detailed estimates for 2020/21.

Project funding is also available in 2020/21 from the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills:

Reader Development Schemes	£140,000
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It will be possible to undertake all the work described in this Plan in accordance with the funding allocated by the Welsh Government for 2020/21.

**10 Key Targets**

	<b>2020/21 Target</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>Quarterly targets</b>		<b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>
Manuscripts – Editorial Department	170	44	44	40	42
Titles – Design Department	110	30	30	25	25
Distribution Centre	£4.05m gross £2.7m net	£830,250 gross £553,500 net	£1,012,500 gross £675,000 net	£1,275,750 gross £850,500 net	£931,500 gross £621,000 net
Promote the use of gwales. Targets for online sales to bookshops and individual customers	Shops: £2,981,420 Individuals: £60,000 gwales users: (-30%) 15,000	Shops: £596,284 Individuals: £14,000 gwales users: 12,000	Shops: £715,541 Individuals: £14,000 gwales users: 13,000	Shops: £1,132,940 Individuals: £23,000 gwales users: 14,000	Shops: £536,655 Individuals: £9,000 gwales users: 15,000
Outreach Scheme	Events: 350 Sales: £150k	60 £25,000	80 £40,000	130 £55,000	80 £30,000
<b>Targets per school term</b>		<b>1<sup>st</sup> Term</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Term</b>	
Schools project	Number of visits: 500 Value of sales primary/secondary: £400,000	Number of visits: 150 Value of sales primary/secondary: £140,000	Number of visits: 200 Value of sales primary/secondary: £150,000	Number of visits:150 Value of sales primary/secondary: £110,000	
<b>Annual targets</b>					
The Centre's debtors' level	No more than 2%				

	<b>2020/21 Target</b>
<b>Publishing Grants (Welsh-language)</b>	
<u>Books</u>	
Number of titles published	215
Number of Scheme A (Author) titles published	20
Number of Scheme A (Visual Material) titles published	12
Average sales	1,000 after 18 months (for new titles published by Programme Publishers in 2018/19)
Number of supported editorial posts in the publishing houses	10
<u>Magazines</u>	
Total number of magazines published	15
Average sales of magazines	2,850 – Leisure 2,220 – Journalism 1,650 – Children 600 – Literary and Cultural
Publish regularly in accordance with the timetable	98%



	2020/21 Target
<b>Publishing Grants (English-language)</b>	
<u>Books</u>	
Number of Literature Grant titles published	75
Number of Author Advance titles published	15 (to be published) (+ 10 commissioned)
Average sales of Author Advance titles	2,500
Marketing Grants	20
Average sales of Marketing Grant titles	2,500
<u>Magazines</u>	
Number of cultural magazines (or supplements) published	5
Minimum sales of cultural magazines (print and digital)	1,000 – general magazines 500 – multiple-focus literary magazines 400 – single-focus literary magazines
Publish regularly in accordance with the timetable	95%

**BUDGET 2020/21**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>£</b>
Welsh Government	
Specialist Department Direct Costs	770,895
General Overheads and Running Costs	358,383
Capital Grant	780,000
Grants to be distributed	
Publishing Grants	2,600,722
Other sources of income for projects:	
Welsh Government: Department of Education and Skills	
Reading Promotion Schemes	140,000
Museums, Archives and Libraries	15,000
Departmental Income	148,000
Distribution Centre	2,543,750
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u><u>7,356,750</u></u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Specialist Department – Direct Costs	918,895
Projects Expenditure	155,000
Central Services and Governance Costs	358,383
Capital Costs	780,000
Grants to be distributed	
Publishing Grants	2,600,722
Distribution Centre	2,543,750
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<u><u>7,356,750</u></u>

**BREAKDOWN OF COSTS 2020/21****EXPENDITURE**

	SALARIES	OTHER COSTS	INCOME	NET	TOTAL
<b>Specialist Department Direct Costs</b>					
Editorial Department	94,333	15,000	20,000	(5,000)	89,333
Design Department	93,170	7,500	21,000	(13,500)	79,670
Sales and Information Department	327,756	88,200	22,000	66,200	393,956
Department of Children's Books and Reading Promotion	71,386	25,900	8,500	17,400	88,786
Communication and Marketing Department	46,649	149,000	76,500	72,500	119,149
<b>Total Specialist Department Direct Costs</b>	<b>633,294</b>	<b>285,600</b>	<b>148,000</b>	<b>137,600</b>	<b><u>770,895</u></b>
Support Services and General Overheads	202,084	156,299	–	156,299	358,383
<b>Total Running Costs</b>	<b>835,379</b>	<b>441,899</b>	<b>148,000</b>	<b>293,899</b>	<b><u>1,129,278</u></b>
<b>Project Costs</b>					
Reading Promotion Schemes	33,091	121,909	155,000	(33,091)	
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>868,470</b>	<b>563,808</b>	<b>303,000</b>	<b>260,808</b>	<b><u>1,129,278</u></b>
<b>Capital Grant</b>					<b><u>780,000</u></b>
<b>Grants for distribution</b>					
Publishing Grants					<b><u>2,600,722</u></b>

**PUBLISHING GRANTS 2020/21****Grants for Distribution 2020/21**

£  
2,600,722

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**Welsh-language Publications**

	£
Programme Publishers	395,710
Individual Publishing Grants	60,000
Performance Payments etc.	10,000
Supported Posts and Training	218,364
Payments to Authors and Illustrators	344,650
Marketing	36,500
Booksellers	24,797
Electronic Publishing and Digital Resources	33,251
Magazines	380,500
Support for the Welsh-language Press	200,000
Vision from the Siwan Rosser Report	5,000
<b>Total Welsh-language Grants</b>	<b>1,708,772</b>

**English-language Publications**

	£
Cultural Periodicals Grant	180,000
Revenue Publishers Grant	237,102
Individual Literary Book Grant	60,000
Additional Funding	12,776
Small Magazines Grant	4,500
Training Grant	5,000
Author Advances Grant	54,000
Supported Posts Grant	88,550
Marketing Grants	* 45,177
Classics	10,000
Publishers Association	3,000
<b>Total English-language Grants</b>	<b>700,105</b>

Administration	191,845
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Total Grants	<b>2,600,722</b>
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* Marketing Grant	£45,177
Main Book Grant	£36,177
Small Grant	£9,000

## IT SYSTEM TIMETABLE

A suggested timescale of how the work will be commissioned is as follows:

Step	Timescale
Welsh Government confirms level of funding available	16 December 2019
Drafting of budget based on funding provided and how much match funding the Books Council of Wales can contribute	17 December 2019
PIN notice live on Sell2Wales to inform all bidders of the type of procurement being planned	20 December 2019
Define minimum criteria for companies planning to bid for system – Qualification Questionnaire Define technical criteria for questions to be asked and the specification of the system being procured Define how the commercial envelope will be evaluated	January 2020
Advertise for project manager	14 January 2020
Closing date for project manager role	31 January 2020
Interview for project manager	18 February 2020
All tender documents finalised and checked	1–14 March 2020
Tender live – answer any questions received via the Sell2Wales system	14 March 2020
Tender closes – firstly evaluate the number of qualified candidates	24 April 2020
Evaluation period	25–30 April 2020
Interviews /Clarification discussions with shortlisted candidates	Mid May 2020
Award of contract and contract negotiations	End of May 2020
Purchase of key hardware and services	June–August 2020
Development set up and data transfer	May 2020–January 2022
Website tender live – answer any questions received via the Sell2Wales system	September 2020
Website tender closes	November 2020
Migration from ONIX 2.1 to ONIX 3.0	November 2020
Award of website tender	December 2020
Potential transfer from Gwales Admin to new Product Manager	January 2021
Transfer of financial system	1 April 2021
Data testing stage	January 2022
Final Implementation date	February 2022