

CLWSTWR POLICY BRIEF NO 5

# ***INNOVATION FOR AN INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE MEDIA SECTOR***

THE ROLE OF R&D IN WALES: FINDINGS FROM CLWSTWR

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**clwstwr**



## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report is part of the Clwstwr programme, a five-year project that aims to put innovation at the core of media production in South Wales. Clwstwr wants to build on South Wales' success in making creative content by putting research and development (R&D) at the core of production.

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## Introduction

Inclusiveness, the need for diversity and equality of access to opportunities are global concerns. Inclusivity and fairness are built into the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, and, in Wales, are foregrounded in the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.<sup>1</sup>

The Clwstwr programme has sought to combine economic and social goals by creating genuinely diverse and inclusive growth through a series of Research and Development (R&D) initiatives within the creative industries and media sector in Wales. These goals are not incompatible: research shows that diversity in the media sector brings significant productivity gains, increasing talent retention, reach and creativity while opening potential new markets.<sup>2</sup>

This Policy Brief reviews some of the current public and private initiatives in the UK and in Wales, which foster Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and reports the results of our quantitative research on diversity in the creative industries and media sector. We provide evidence of how R&D can support EDI based on learning from the Clwstwr programme. Finally, we build on the policy landscape and our quantitative analyses to suggest directions for future work.

## Current policy and research for a more diverse and inclusive media sector

### The UK

On a UK-level, national creative and media bodies have recognised the need for greater accountability, publishing strategies and policies backed up by new research, targets for change and improving practices. This includes **UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)** and **Innovate UK**, around building a more inclusive and innovative creative sector for the UK and developing a growing resource of diversity data, toolkits, and good practice.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

<sup>2</sup> E.g. see Booyens, I. (2012, March). Creative industries, inequality and social development: developments, impacts and challenges in Cape Town. In *Urban Forum* (Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 43-60). Springer Netherlands

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

## The **APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) for Creative Diversity's** 2021

Creative Majority report focuses on workforce equity, outlining the barriers to employment and leadership opportunities and provides recommendations for various public organisations.<sup>4</sup> The report calls for greater ambition, accessibility, adaptability, and accountability.

Focusing on improving the experience of film exhibitors, film-making talent and their audiences, the UK-wide initiative **Inclusive Cinema**<sup>5</sup>, developed by the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) and led by Film Hub Wales, offers practical training, advice, and toolkits to widen participation in cinema, both for diverse audiences and talent working within the industry. Creative industries' union, **BECTU**, introduced a pilot scheme for Wellbeing Facilitators to work on set during productions to improve mental health in film and TV productions.<sup>6</sup>

The **Social Mobility Commission (SMC)**, an advisory non-departmental public body sponsored by the Cabinet Office, published a Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit for Creative Industries in 2021.<sup>7</sup> The toolkit is a resource for micro, small and medium enterprises in the creative industries looking to increase staff socio-economic diversity.<sup>8</sup>

**Ofcom** (the regulatory and competition authority for the broadcasting in the UK) is required to take appropriate steps for promoting equality of opportunity in relation to employment and training/retraining by the television and radio broadcasters it regulates (Section 27 Communications Act).<sup>9</sup> This provision requires television and radio broadcasters (including BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and S4C) to promote equality and diversity in their operations.

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4 Wreyford, N, O'Brien, D, and Dent, T (2021). Creative Majority: An APPG for Creative Diversity report on 'What Works' to support, encourage and improve diversity, equity and inclusion in the creative sector. A report for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity, p. 15.

5 <https://inclusivecinema.org/>

6 Welsh production companies encouraged to take part in WellBeing Facilitator pilot to improve mental health in film and TV - <https://bectu.org.uk/news/welsh-production-companies-encouraged-to-take-part-in-wellbeing-facilitator-pilot-to-improve-mental-health-in-film-and-tv?s=well%20being%20facilitators&f=allBectu>

7 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/socio-economic-diversity-and-inclusion-toolkit-creative-industries>

8 Social Mobility Commission, Socio-economic diversity and inclusion Employers' Toolkit: Cross-industry edition, updated July 2021, p. 8.

9 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/contents>

There is also a growing body of research about diversity in the creative sector. Since its inception in 2018, the **Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre (PEC)** has made diversity and inclusion one of its nine priorities, producing more than 20 reports about the current state of diversity and inclusion in the UK creative industries.<sup>10</sup> **Representology**<sup>11</sup> is a new academic journal (developed in collaboration between Cardiff University and Birmingham City University<sup>12</sup>), publishing research on EDI in the UK media sector.

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## Wales

A growing number of organisations and initiatives in Wales are developing good practice around EDI in the media sector. The ground-breaking Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 aligns a prosperous and resilient Wales with more equal and healthier cohesive communities.<sup>13</sup>

The **Welsh Government**—through **Creative Wales**—has made the promotion of diversity and equality across the creative sector one of its priorities.<sup>14</sup> Supported by Creative Wales, **Culture Connect Wales**<sup>15</sup> aims to develop a bespoke network for ethnically diverse communities working in film and TV.<sup>16</sup> This unique pilot project is led by Watch Africa CIC and partners with BBC Cymru Wales, ITV Wales, S4C and Channel 4.

In 2020, **Arts Council of Wales (ACW)** published its Equality Objectives, with ongoing monitoring of its progress.<sup>17</sup> Supported by Arts Council of Wales, **Disability Arts Cymru (DAC)**<sup>18</sup> works across Wales with relevant organisations and creative individuals who self-identify as disabled. DAC provides support and information for creatives and audiences to level the playing field and improve access to the arts for participants at all levels. Clwstwr worked together with DAC as part of Collective Cymru in producing the radical

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10 <https://pec.ac.uk/research/diversity-and-inclusion>

11 is Birmingham City University, Institute of Media and English, Representology: The Journal of Media and Diversity.

12 <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-culture/research>

13 <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

14 Welsh Government: Priorities for the Creative Industries Sector in Wales, p. 4.

15 <https://cultureconnect.wales/>

16 Welsh Government press release: Increasing opportunities for ethnically diverse communities in film and TV.

17 Arts Council of Wales: Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-24, p. 5.

18 Dewis.wales: Disability Arts Cymru, 3 March 2022



inclusion agenda of **GALWAD**, as part of the 2022 Unboxed festival.<sup>19</sup> In June 2021, **ITV Wales** partnered with **Mencap Cymru**<sup>20</sup> to remove barriers to disabled people seeking to work in the TV and broadcasting sector.

**Ffilm Cymru Wales**<sup>21</sup>, the development agency for Welsh film, has developed an award-winning training programme, **Foot in the Door**<sup>22</sup>, offering people from all backgrounds opportunities to develop their transferable skills into creative careers. They also launched **Mindset**, a mental health awareness training programme in partnership with **ScreenSkills**.<sup>23</sup>

The new **BBC Cymru Wales Broadcast Centre**<sup>24</sup> considered access and in particular neuro-inclusion throughout its design and construction. The ambition was to create energetic, colourful, and collaborative spaces that were also sensitive to neurodiversity. The approach was supported by the BBC's own neurodiversity initiative **BBC Cape**, building on its cognitive accessibility toolkit.

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19 <https://clwstwr.org.uk/collective-cymru-led-national-theatre-wales-selected-produce-festival-uk-2022-project>

20 <https://www.westwaleschronicle.co.uk/blog/2022/06/22/itv-cymru-wales-mencap-cymru-launch-new-partnership-to-break-down-barriers-for-people-with-a-learning-disability/>

21 <https://ffilmcymruwales.com/>

22 <https://ffilmcymruwales.com/funding-and-training/foot-door>

23 Ffilm Cymru Wales – our work: **Mindset**

24 BBC: Neurodiversity, **BBC Cymru Wales Broadcast Centre**

## An overview of organisations and initiatives in Wales and the UK

### SUPPORT, TRAINING, PROMOTION IN WALES



**Culture Connect Wales:**  
led by Watch Africa CIC with broadcast partners, supporting ethnically diverse talent in finding opportunities in the film and TV sector in Wales.



**Disability Arts Cymru:**  
provides support and information for creatives and audiences to level the playing field and improve access to the arts for participants at all levels.



**Ffilm Cymru's training initiatives:**  
Foot in the Door provides new-entrant training placements on local film and TV productions, as well as support for accessibility, transport and childcare.  
Mindset is a screen industry-specific mental health awareness training programme.



**Y Lab:**  
A partnership between Nesta, the innovation foundation and Cardiff University runs a number of EDI innovation projects like the Cardiff Capital Region Challenge Fund and the HARP project.

### INCLUSIVE SPACES



**BBC Cymru Wales**  
The new broadcast centre is a good example of inclusive interior design that considers neuro-inclusion. The design process considered how landmarks, colour and texture can assist wayfinding.

### POLICY AND TOOLKITS ON UK LEVEL



**APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) for Creative Diversity:**  
works on creating policy recommendations and brings stakeholders together.



**Inclusive Cinema:**  
publishing of regular case studies, data analysis and best practice guides alongside training and networking to widen participation in cinema.



**Social Mobility Commission (SMC):**  
published in 2021 a Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit for Creative Industries businesses.



**Ofcom:**  
Regulatory body with guidelines for diversity for broadcasters online and offline.

### RESEARCH INITIATIVES



**Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre (PEC):**  
has established itself as a UK centre of excellence for research and evidence to inform Creative Industries Policy with a focus on diversity and inclusion research.



**Representology Journal:**  
a research and best practice journal in how to make UK media more representative of all sections of society.

Table 1: Mapping of a selection of policies, organisations, and initiatives for EDI in the media sector in the UK and Wales.



## EDI as tool for media sector growth through innovation

Numerous studies document clear correlations between ethnic and racial diversity and financial performance at the level of individual firms. For instance, those publicly listed companies that were in the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in terms of ethnic and racial diversity in leadership positions were significantly more likely to “beat the market” by delivering faster growth and better profitability than their peers.<sup>25</sup> Other studies indicate that the addition of women onto governance boards significantly increased firms’ net income growth and return on equity.<sup>26</sup> Having these findings in mind, we looked at the diversity within the media sector in the Cardiff Capital Region and our Clwstwr programme with the following results.

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### Diversity within the Cardiff City Region Media Sector

The Cardiff Capital Region has a diverse population, with 5.5% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people (concentrated in Cardiff, which is 16% Black Asian and Minority Ethnic);<sup>27</sup> 24% people identifying as disabled,<sup>28</sup> 20.3% Welsh language speakers<sup>29</sup> and includes 7/10 of the most deprived areas within Wales.<sup>30</sup>

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) has produced data on the sectoral distribution of gender and ethnicity in the “Information and Communication” sector in Wales. While this is not a comprehensive list of creative sectors, it does include:

- Publishing activities (including publishing of books, newspaper, computer games and software among others);

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<sup>25</sup> David Rock and Heidi Grant: Why Diverse Teams are Smarter, Harvard Business Review, 2016

<sup>26</sup> Imran Javaid: Credit Suisse Gender 3000 report shows women hold almost a quarter of board room positions globally, Credit Suisse, 2021.

<sup>27</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Ethnicity/ethnicity-by-area-ethnicgroup>

<sup>28</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Disability/peopleofworkingagewithdisabilities-by-area-disabilitytype>

<sup>29</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language/annualpopulationsurveyestimatesofpersonsaged3andoverwhosaytheycanspeakwelsh-by-localauthority-measure>

<sup>30</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-11/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation-2019-results-report-024.pdf>

- Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities;
- Programming and broadcasting activities;
- Telecommunication activities;
- Computer programming, consultancy, and related activities; and
- Information service activities.

Figure 1 shows roughly 95% of all persons employed either on a full-time or part-time basis in the Information and Communications sector are white, a figure broadly representative of the Welsh population.

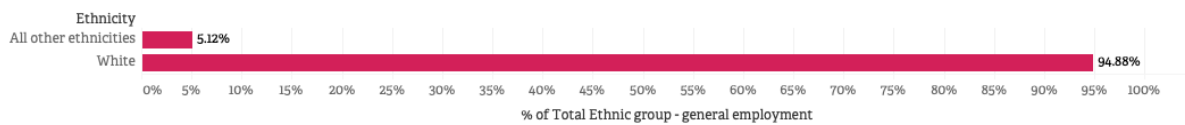


Figure 1: Ethnic composition of employment in the Welsh “Information and Communication” sectors, source: ONS.

The ethnic breakdown of chief and senior executives in these sectors (Figure 2) is less representative, with only 3.3% from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic populations.

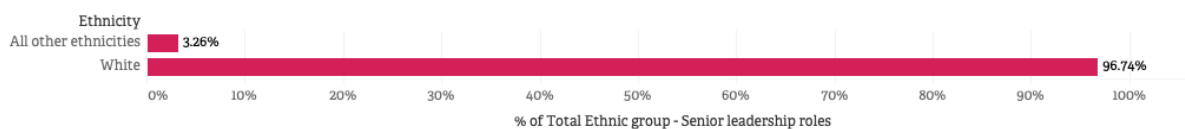


Figure 2: Ethnic composition of top executives and senior officials in the Welsh Information and Communications sector. Source: ONS.

Figure 3 shows there are broadly equal numbers of women and men working in the Welsh Information and Communication sectors, although this data is not broken down by seniority.

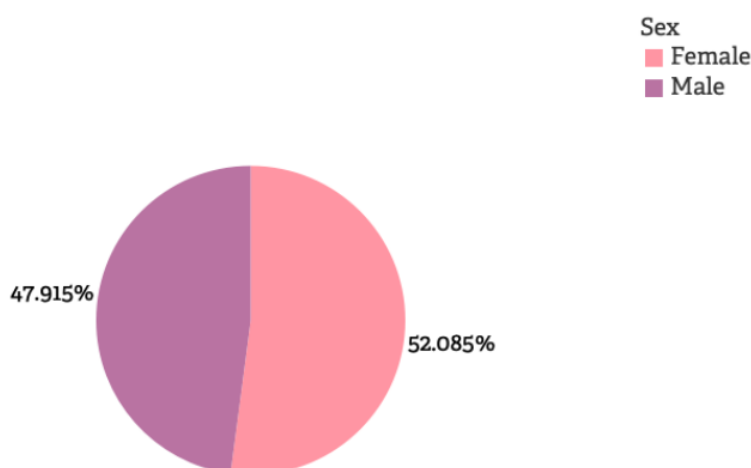


Figure 3: Men and women in the Welsh Information and Communication sector

We surveyed 388 businesses from March 2019 to December 2021 (including companies and sole traders) from the creative industries in Wales. We asked<sup>31</sup> these businesses about representation, discrimination, and exclusion in the sector.

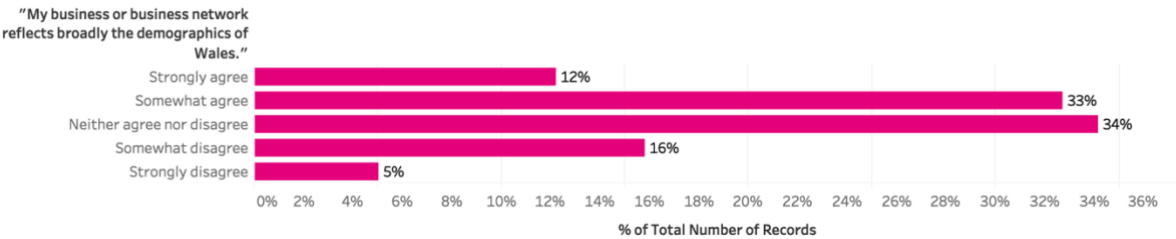


Figure 4: Breakdown of answers to the question “My business or business network reflects broadly the demographics of Wales”.

Only 45% of our respondents agree that the composition of their business or of their business network reflects the demographics of Wales (see Figure 4) suggesting a perception of a lack of diversity.

Around a third of our respondents (Figure 5) agree that minority groups face limitations or discrimination in the creative industries, with roughly the same proportion disagreeing.

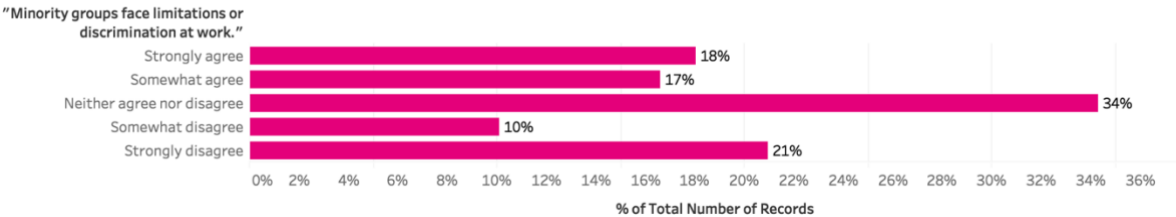


Figure 5: Breakdown of answers to the question “Minority groups face limitations or discrimination at work”.

These figures are, of course, only suggestive, depending as they do on levels of knowledge and understanding. Companies reporting a lack of diversity may be more aware of diversity as an issue, rather being less diverse.

While there is a lack of more detailed data on the composition of the creative workforce, recent research suggests that the one of the most striking areas of

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31 The questions track 6 aspects and their representation: i) women, ii) people of different races, iii) the LGBTQ2+ community, iv) people with disabilities in the creative industries; The 2 remaining questions are about v) the discrimination of minority groups and vi) the workforce broadly reflecting Welsh demographics (or not). Each respondent stated whether they agree or disagree with these 6 statements, e.g. “People with disabilities are underrepresented in my business or business network” – and the five possible answers were i) strongly disagree ii) somewhat disagree iii) neither agree not disagree iv) somewhat agree v) strongly agree.

inequality in the creative industries is its social class composition. A report by Brook, O'Brien and Taylor (2018)<sup>32</sup> suggested that every creative subsector except crafts "has an over-representation of those from upper middle class social origins, with those from working class origins making up far less of the workforce". The authors argue that this is exacerbated by a series of working practices (such as word-of-mouth, insider network recruitment and low pay at entry level) still prevalent in creative sectors.

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## Learning from the Clwstwr programme

Clwstwr funded 118 R&D innovation projects through open calls in the screen and media sector (and wider creative industries), recognising that inclusive practices bring both a commercial and social value to the economy. The programme therefore aimed to develop an R&D community which is both inclusive and representative. As the programme's understanding of good practice around EDI and innovation increased, we saw significant increase in the diversity of funded cohorts. Overall, our diversity survey results suggested our funded cohorts were at least representative of Wales and the Cardiff Capital Region in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and trans identity.<sup>33</sup> Table 2 summarises the policies and practice introduced to support EDI across the Clwstwr programme.

Clwstwr has supported projects that use innovation to render various forms of content more accessible, or to generally benefit the daily lives of people from disadvantaged groups. Table 3 provides an overview of a number of these projects, with a focus on empowerment, storytelling, accessibility, and workforce diversity.

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.a-n.co.uk/research/panic-social-class-taste-inequalities-creative-industries/>

<sup>33</sup> For more information, please consult pages 8 to 16 of our Diversity Monitoring Report, available online at [https://clwstwr.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-08/Clwstwr%20Programme%20Diversity%20Monitoring%20Report%201\\_Final\\_compressed.pdf](https://clwstwr.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-08/Clwstwr%20Programme%20Diversity%20Monitoring%20Report%201_Final_compressed.pdf)

Clwstwr EDI activity		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a more diverse team of expertise and appointing a dedicated Inclusion Officer.</li> <li>• Funding more projects led by diverse teams and with an aim of widening participation in the media</li> <li>• Publication of reports and research</li> <li>• Ensuring our structures and processes are accessible and developing practical strategies to widen participation</li> <li>• Promotion of best practice, case studies, sharing of resources and opportunities</li> <li>• Offering of training and inspiring events around developing inclusive R&amp;D practices.</li> </ul>		
Progress		
People and processes	Profiling good practice	Project support
<p><b>Employed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</b> to work with our team, our partners, our funded projects and our wider community to help shape and deliver our Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p><b>Diversifying our team by</b> matchmaking expertise with diverse lived experience with our projects.</p> <p><b>Worked with advisors on our processes</b> such as application and assessment procedures as well as our messaging.</p> <p>Introduced <b>EDI monitoring</b> for our team and any project applications or commissions and published our findings.</p> <p>Completed our Baseline Survey on the <b>perception of the diversity of the sector</b>. Results published here.</p> <p>Ongoing <b>mapping of the screen and news sector</b> in Wales in terms of relevant strategic bodies, industry, academia and third sector initiatives.</p> <p><b>Evaluation of our activity</b> with our funded projects and partners in terms of EDI.</p>	<p><b>Profiled our aims, research and inclusion-focused projects</b> on the Clwstwr website.</p> <p>Encouraged a <b>collaborative network of practitioners</b> working to create a more inclusive media sector for Wales.</p> <p><b>Profiled our inclusion-focused projects</b> at industry events including Beyond Conference (2020), Future of Journalism (2021), Media City Bergen's Future Week (2022), ClwstwrVerse (2022) and Clwstwr Cipyolygon (Insights) sessions.</p> <p><b>Offered bursaries</b> for organisations to attend international conferences such as ISE Conference (Barcelona) Minalogic (France), Future Week (Bergen), The Creativity World Forum (Stuttgart).</p> <p><b>Delivered a range of equality training sessions</b> led by partners with lived experience for our team, partners, and funded projects, with the aim of broadening understanding and encouraging ownership at every level. Sessions included Anti-racism, Compassionate Design, Disability Equality Action Training, Trauma Informed Practice, Unconscious bias, Understanding Autism.</p> <p><b>Publication of reports based on data</b> gathered by Clwstwr. Working with partners such as Creative Wales, Inclusive Journalism Cymru, Institute of Welsh Affairs, Ofcom and University of South Wales to build a coherent data set for the diversity of the media sector in Wales.</p>	<p><b>Supported companies</b> and individuals to undertake ground-breaking research and development projects which aim to make the media sector in Wales more equitable.</p> <p><b>Created accessible routes into funding</b> by offering Ideas Labs with stipends and carer support for freelancers to attend, one-to-ones with team members pre-application at venues across the Cardiff Capital Region, as well as information sessions and resources on our website. We achieved a rise in freelance applicants as well as female applicants which rose from 22% in our first funding call, to 50% in the second call, and this rise has continued into our subsequent funding calls.</p> <p><b>Worked with our wider networks</b> to raise the profile of Clwstwr and encourage applications from under-represented groups and companies addressing more diverse lines of enquiry. We saw a rise from <b>2%</b> of projects working on inclusion-related projects to <b>19%</b>.</p> <p><b>Supported existing projects to explore EDI</b> in their R&amp;D by connecting them with relevant expertise.</p> <p>Recognising many companies were new to R&amp;D, we provided <b>skills development</b> support in R&amp;D methods, business development, identifying, protecting, and exploiting Intellectual Property and legal advice.</p>

Table 2: Clwstwr’s EDI action plan and achievements to date.



















EMPOWERING USERS	THE POWER OF STORYTELLING	DIVERSIFYING THE SECTOR	ACCESSIBILITY
 <p><b>Rescape</b> develops new virtual reality technologies for healthcare; it produces content for VR headsets that can be worn by patients to help reduce their pain and anxiety.</p>	 <p>Krystal Lowe: <b>Presenting Individual Identities</b> is a set of new media tools that share authentic, accessible and relevant stories which engage currently under-served and under-represented audiences.</p>	 <p><b>Golwg</b> developed the democracy section of their Golwg360 news website, specifically targeting young people from 16 years old who are first-time voters.</p>	 <p><b>Divergent Emergent</b> is an application-based solution for recruitment, enabling all people to share their experience, skills, talents and access requirements, in an inclusive, accessible and multimedia way.</p>
 <p><b>Life Lab</b> (Martha Stone Prod.) is a socially transformative story-based game that addresses the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences in order to explore online what a trauma-informed, resilient community could look like.</p>	 <p><b>Gogaleminds</b> uses gamification in virtual reality to create fun, science-based training solutions for the healthcare sector.</p>	 <p><b>Laku Neg</b> is a sustainable audio-visual channel of archive material that gathers and shares African diaspora and indigenous stories on screen.</p>	 <p><b>Y Pod</b> is a minority language podcast service that improves podcast discoverability by gathering all Welsh language podcasts in one place.</p>
 <p><b>Agile Kinetic</b> is improving societal health by using AI to monitor patients' musculoskeletal health.</p>	 <p><b>Connect to Care</b> explores opportunities for new screen-based technology to improve the quality of and access to health and care services.</p>	 <p><b>Nimble Productions</b> researched and developed a women's football content hub that populates digital and social channels, tapping into this global growth area in an exciting way.</p>	 <p><b>Film Hub Wales</b> researched and developed the best ways to deliver a clear message for the digital generation to increase the awareness and appeal of Welsh screen content.</p>
 <p><b>Voice Wales</b> want to research and develop a ground-breaking photo agency for the Welsh news industry. We will showcase high-quality images that can be licensed or sold to other media outlets in Wales, the UK, and the world.</p>	 <p><b>Taking Flight Theatre</b> created a promenade performance using interactive and sensorily stimulating virtual theatre content, which can be accessed by the most marginalised and neglected audiences.</p>	 <p><b>The People's Newsroom Initiative</b> aims to build community power through journalism. It invests in community newsroom leaders traditionally marginalised by the media.</p>	 <p><b>Invisible Light</b> (Tiny City) is a new model of accessible digital engagement with live performance and creative digital work for blind and visually impaired people.</p>
 <p><b>Variations through Editing</b> (Jonathan Dunn) explores ways in which film can become more of an inclusive tool for deaf and visually impaired audiences to access performance, using dance as the subject.</p>	 <p><b>Dragon Digital</b> is enhancing the development of Smart Headphones, moving beyond existing noise-reduction possibilities to reach more audience needs.</p>		

Table 3: Overview of some of the Clwstwr-funded projects with EDI impacts.



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## Building a culture of inclusive innovation in the creative sector

The following are a summary of lessons learned from Clwstwr's experience supporting and funding innovation with societal and cultural change as clearly defined goals. PDR (a consortium partner of Clwstwr)<sup>34</sup> conducted a workshop with participants in the programme as part of this evaluation.

### ⇒ INCLUDING SOCIETAL BENEFITS AS AN OUTCOME OF R&D.

One of our workshop participants spoke about the **"need to rethink how we measure the success of R&D. Currently: money saved, products released, new products."** Clwstwr defined the outcomes of investment in R&D in terms of both economic and social/environmental benefits – and both were given equal weight in our assessment criteria.

While the value of R&D is widely understood in terms of economic value, we also need to measure the social value of innovation – as well as being aware of potential conflicts between the two. As one of our workshop participants pointed out: **"In measuring outcomes, Research and Development Key Performance Indicators and sustainability goals do not always align."** So, for example, certain forms of economic growth may have negative environmental impacts.

We did not require specific outputs around EDI from our funded cohort; however, this is clearly something to consider. As one project leader noted: **"It would be beneficial to include EDI and sustainability objectives in R&D projects from the start."** We worked with projects throughout their R&D to consider our equality criteria and supported projects where the definition of 'commercial sustainability' is broad, recognising, for example that an individual's development into an 'expert' role can bring long term benefits for them—sustaining their activity—and to the sector.

### ⇒ THERE IS A NEED FOR MAPPING THE MEDIA SECTOR.

As one of our workshop participants put it: **"We need a good knowledge base."** To date, we are unaware of a census-type dataset documenting

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/pdr/Pages/default.aspx>

diversity for the creative and media sector within Wales, and we are working with partners to explore how to fill this data gap.

⇒ OFFERING INCLUSIVE ROUTES TO SUPPORT FREELANCERS AND INNOVATORS FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS.

Our funding calls evolved over time to create a series of pathways to allow as wide a group as possible access to R&D. Our first entry point was the Clwstwr Ideas Lab—two-day lab sessions designed for freelancers and micro businesses working in South Wales with the potential to develop innovative ideas for a new product, service, or experience. These labs include group work, presentations and other tools that may be particularly useful to freelancers, who often find themselves working in isolation. Understanding that participation at these events may be inaccessible to some, our communications around the opportunity was as inclusive as possible, we offered childcare assistance and a stipend for participation.<sup>35</sup>

⇒ REMOVING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN FUNDING PROGRAMMES.

When Clwstwr launched, innovation funding for the creative sector in Wales had been scarce. From our first funding call, we recognised the need to broaden our reach beyond established companies with existing experience in R&D. Broadening the diversity of our cohort was a key priority as we actively welcomed bold new lines of enquiry. We recognised barriers to participating in innovation funding, notably perception of what R&D was and who it was for. We simplified the application process over successive funding rounds (while meeting statutory requirements) and offered one-to-one support for all applicants throughout the programme. We recognise, however, that there is still work to do: one participant in the workshop noted that **“the application process was definitely a barrier on its own right”** and **“there was too much of an academic feel to the application process, which did not feel accessible.”**

⇒ IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE FUNDING BOARDS AND TEAMS WORKING ON FUNDING DIVERSE AND BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE.

We also recognise the need for diversity at all levels of our programme team, to reach traditionally underserved talent, to understand the aims of the

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<sup>35</sup> <https://clwstwr.org.uk/clwstwideaslab>

project at application stage and support the project team effectively once funded. As one workshop participant stated: **“It is important to make funding boards diverse too and not just in terms of identity.”**

We know there is a way to go in terms of building a funding programme which is accessible and serves to inspire applications from individuals from all backgrounds, and we continue to listen and learn from our funded projects, consultants from third sector as well as other funding bodies who are navigating similar challenges.

# CONCLUSION

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RESEARCH SHOWS THAT COMPARED TO BASELINE DEMOGRAPHICS, THERE IS UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF CERTAIN GROUPS IN THE MEDIA SECTOR, ESPECIALLY IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS. THERE IS STILL MUCH TO BE DONE TO CREATE A MEDIA SECTOR WHICH TRULY EMBRACES AND REPRESENTS THE COMMUNITIES OF WALES.

With the well-being of our future generations as a starting point, we have an opportunity to bring together a cohesive and representative sector-leading approach, stressing that inclusiveness and diversity are creative and productive assets. In this Policy Brief, we have outlined some of the organisations and initiatives fostering diversity, complemented by quantitative analysis regarding the attitudes towards diversity in the Welsh creative and media sector. We recognise the important role that innovation plays in enhancing inclusion and diversity. At Clwstwr, we have worked with numerous research projects with these aims and understanding their innovative journey, with both the successes and difficulties, helps us to create a roadmap for the future.

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## What does the future hold?

Clwstwr encouraged long-term, sustainable, inclusive, and innovative growth. While Clwstwr significantly contributed to the recognition and uptake of R&D practices by media businesses, we know there are intrinsic challenges deriving from the narrowly perceived definition of R&D. We acknowledge there is still work to be done around measuring the added value of R&D and reassessing its specificity inside the media sector.

We invite the reader to consult our website (<https://clwstwr.org.uk/>) on projects that Clwstwr has supported and to contact us to engage with us on the Media Cymru programme (<https://media.cymru/>), which started in 2022.



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