

# CULTURAL LEARNING ALLIANCE

March 2011

For the attention of:

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**, Secretary of State for Education  
**Ed Vaizey MP**, Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries  
cc, Darren Henley, Managing Director Classic FM

## DCMS / DfE Review of Cultural Learning

The Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) warmly welcomes the government's plans to commission a review of cultural learning.

The Alliance is a collective voice working to ensure that all children and young people have meaningful access to culture in this difficult economic climate. It includes a range of organisations working across the cultural and education sectors, including non-departmental public bodies, philanthropists, umbrella organisations, cultural partners, education specialists and schools. We are supported by a wider membership of nearly 5,000 (3,552 individuals and 1,369 organisations).

The Alliance was formed as a key recommendation from *Get It: The Power of Cultural Learning*, 2009, a report published as a catalyst for the cultural and education sector to work together effectively for the benefit of children and young people.

*Get It* recommended that the CLA develop a national strategy to take this work forward, and we have been working to develop this, both through national consultation (in 2008 and 2010), and through the expertise of the Alliance steering and advisory groups. We believe that the themes and direction of our strategy – as outlined later in this letter – will be of real value to the cultural and education sectors and to the children and young people who are its focus.

The Alliance would like to take this opportunity to share the terms of reference, scope and definitions of our strategy with the government team working on the review of cultural learning.

We believe that there is considerable scope for synergy between the two projects, and feel that our framework could contribute usefully to the start of the review, so that duplication is reduced and resources are aligned.

We very much look forward to discussing this further.

Best wishes,



**Lord Puttnam**  
**Chair of the Cultural Learning Alliance**

# The Cultural Learning Alliance: A National Strategy for Cultural Learning

## 1. Principles and assumptions

- 1.1 Every child should have equality of access to a baseline of quality cultural learning opportunities.
- 1.2 Young people who have the opportunity to learn through and about culture are better equipped to achieve across the curriculum, and to take responsibility for their own learning. Attendance, attitude and wellbeing are all improved by engagement with culture.
- 1.3 Cultural learning is a key driver of the Big Society agenda, inspiring civic engagement, helping neighbourhoods to make positive changes through collective ownership of culture, leading to personal, social and community benefit, and to the growth of our creative economy.
- 1.4 Partnership, collaboration, a shared commitment and a collegiate approach from education and cultural stakeholders to cultural learning is key to its successful delivery.
- 1.5 Cultural learning practice should be informed by rigorous research and evaluation into impact and outcome.
- 1.6 Arts subjects taught in schools and other settings as part of the curriculum have depth, rigour and an established canon of knowledge. They are of equal weight, value and importance within the curriculum as other subjects.
- 1.7 Young people should be empowered and supported to engage with and drive the cultural learning agenda.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 The arts and heritage are both core strands of culture and cultural learning.
- 2.2 'The arts' is a broad term that includes a wide range of disciplines from theatre, dance, literature, music and visual arts to film, spoken word, photography and beyond.
- 2.3 The term 'heritage' encompasses an individual's understanding of themselves, their material culture and the world around them. Cultural organisations and specialists such as museums, libraries, archives, archaeological sites, historic houses and other built environment institutions safeguard and contribute towards this knowledge and understanding.
- 2.4 Young people, teachers, families and communities can create, participate in – or be audiences for – culture. Culture, in all its richness and diversity, can be experienced as listening, playing, seeing, watching and interacting, performing and composing, making, writing and doing.
- 2.5 Cultural learning involves both learning through culture, and learning about

culture. Creativity, critical thinking and the development of original ideas and action are often the results of cultural learning. Through culture, young people can learn to learn more effectively.

- 2.6 The CLA uses the term 'children and young people' to mean individuals from 0-19 years of age.

### **3. Scope**

The strategy should:

- 3.1 recognise that within the national cultural context, local communities create their own culture.
- 3.2 encompass: cultural learning in youth and early years settings and services; local authority provision; the voluntary and private sectors; services for vulnerable young people, disabled young people and those at risk; looked after children, cultural organisations and individuals; education settings; FE provision, universities and schools.
- 3.3 provide a framework and set of principles which support partners and practitioners through the current changing policy and funding landscape.
- 3.4 be inclusive and meet the needs of all children and young people regardless of gender, educational need, economic circumstance, impairment or geographical location.
- 3.5 include recommendations which promote the joining up of public, private and philanthropic priorities, funding and resources to ensure equality of access for all young people; including central and local government, NDPBs, philanthropists and local commissioners including schools and the voluntary sector.
- 3.6 focus on young people who are unable to access cultural learning independently, and the parents, carers and workforce that surround them.
- 3.7 support young people's progression into professional practice, the creative industries, and into further participation and engagement.
- 3.8 link the cultural and creative industries clearly to cultural learning.
- 3.9 act as a practical tool for stakeholders, helping them develop active confederations and consortia.
- 3.10 provide a clear route-map through – and rationalisation of – the initiatives and policy frameworks related to cultural learning.
- 3.11 support and signpost education professionals to work with their cultural colleagues to collaboratively deliver, monitor, quality assure and evaluate cultural learning.
- 3.12 help teachers to become the commissioners and facilitators of good cultural learning work, linking to the ideas set out in the Importance of Teaching to develop initial teacher training models and on-going training and support.

- 3.13 include the training, development and on-going support of cultural learning leaders, linking to existing training and exploring the joint learning between the cultural and education sectors.
- 3.14 signpost and support partners and practitioners in advocating effectively for cultural learning.
- 3.15 be developed through engagement and consultation with children and young people and the professionals that work with them.

**Cultural Learning Alliance, March 2011**

