



House of Commons

Digital, Culture, Media and
Sport Committee

Lessons from the First World War Centenary: Government Response to the Committee's Thirteenth Report

Eleventh Special Report of Session
2017–19

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The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and its associated public bodies.

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Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6188; the Committee's email address is cmscom@parliament.uk

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Eleventh Special Report

The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee published its Thirteenth Report of Session 2017–19, [Lessons from the First World War Centenary](#) on 16 July 2019. The Government's response was received on 17 September 2019 and is appended to this report.

Appendix: Government Response

Introduction

The Government is grateful to the Committee for undertaking this inquiry which, alongside the DCMS commissioned independent evaluation and other evaluations undertaken by our partners, will act as important reference documents for Government Departments and arms length bodies who are involved in the planning and delivery of future such programmes.

The Department was proud to lead the First World War Centenary (FWWC) programme on behalf of Her Majesty's Government. The First World War (FWW) was a unique and hugely significant event in both British and world history. The events and implications of the war reached across communities, counties and countries to such an extent that we are still living with the consequences of that period to this day. Therefore, it was important that the FWWC was commemorated in an appropriate way that resonated with the British public.

We are pleased that the Committee's report recognises the considerable work that was undertaken by DCMS, other departments across Government, public, civil society and local community organisations, as well as the great success that the programme achieved. Together, we ensured that the Centenary was marked in a responsible and respectful manner that engaged new audiences and honoured those who experienced the conflict and its consequences at the time.

Since the Committee's report was released, the independent evaluation of the FWWC programme by the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation (CSES), has been published. The report reviewed programme evaluations, reports and monitoring data from DCMS and our FWWC partners and undertook interviews with people from key organisations. The evaluation has found that the FWWC programme achieved its key objectives and that a high proportion of the UK population was reached through its activities. The evaluation demonstrates that one of the key factors of the programme's success was how arts and culture was used to engage those who were less likely to engage with traditional ceremonial events. The leadership role DCMS played with the broad collective of public or civic society organisations was also seen as a critical factor.

We have worked with colleagues across the Department, colleagues in the Department for Education and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as well as our FWWC partners (14–18 NOW, Imperial War Museums and The National Lottery Heritage Fund) in formulating the response to the Committee's recommendations.

It is important to note that whilst DCMS led the FWWC programme on behalf of the Government, it does not have overall responsibility within Government for the delivery of national ceremonial events apart from Remembrance Sunday. DCMS will ensure that this report and our evaluation are shared with other Government departments so that they are aware of the lessons and recommendations from the FWWC programme when they start to plan to deliver similar events in the future.

Recommendation 1

It is our intention that this report serves as a resource for future commemorations, but this is not a substitute for thorough recording and dissemination of the learnings from the UK's approach to marking the First World War centenary. In its response to this report, the DCMS should outline the steps that they are taking to document and preserve our position as an international leader in large, participatory cultural programmes. (Paragraph 15)

Government Response

We recognise the value of the lessons and successes from the FWWC and the importance of ensuring that these are shared across the Department and across Government to aid and support the delivery of future events of a similar nature. The reports and evaluations, including the CSES independent evaluation, have been shared with teams across DCMS, including the teams leading on the Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Commonwealth Games. The CSES evaluation has also been shared with all of our partners across Government as well as public organisations who contributed to the Centenary. It is available for any person or organisation to access via Gov.uk.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK continues to be home to world renowned and critically acclaimed cultural and creative events that celebrate arts and culture whilst encouraging participation by all. Large festivals such as the Edinburgh Festivals, including the Edinburgh International Festival and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, are recognised around the world and contribute to the UK's diverse cultural ecology. Arts Council England (ACE) supports cultural events and celebrations of the arts in England, including large events such as the Manchester International Festival which highlights new and original work. ACE also recently announced the launch of a Performing Arts Showcase for England-based artists that present work including theatre, dance, circus and live art within Edinburgh Festival Fringe. ACE will invest up to £2,250,000 for three showcases in 2021, 2022 and 2023. The showcase will increase international touring, and opportunities for international exchange and market development for artists and arts and cultural organisations based in England.

In addition, the Government's UK City of Culture programme is a catalyst for culture-led economic and social regeneration, helping cities expand access to arts and culture, attract investment and increase tourism. Hull's highly successful year as UK City of Culture 2017 attracted 1.3m additional visitors, generating £300m for the local economy, with 95% of all residents attending at least one cultural activity during the year. Coventry will be the next UK City of Culture in 2021, having put together a proposal that reflected a vibrant, multicultural city with a cultural scene that deserves its place in the national spotlight. They plan to reach at least 80% of the population with cultural education projects and community engagement, train 100 culture representatives and achieve a 20% increase in

BAME audiences. Coventry also expect to see an economic impact of £80M by 2021, 80 new businesses sponsoring art and culture, £30m new investment, 15% growth in creative industries and 30 young people trained for employment in the cultural sector.

Recommendation 2

The DCMS should work with the Department for Education to ensure that the resources generated by the commemorations, including the value of taking an arts-based approach to remembrance and historical interpretation are made available to primary and secondary school teachers. (Paragraph 23)

Government Response

The Government recognises the importance of preserving resources produced as part of the First World War commemorations for use by primary and secondary school teachers. As part of the Cross-Government commemoration activities the Department for Education (DfE) funded the WW1 Roadshow Debates programme which ended in March 2019, and the FWW Battlefield Tours programme, jointly funded with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government until March 2019, and by DfE alone in 2019–20. Both programmes generated a large number of teaching resources and podcasts which are available for teachers to download at www.centenarybattlefieldtours.org. World War One teaching resources created as part of the Historic England Heritage Schools Programme, also funded by DfE, are available to download at www.historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/. All three programmes make links to other related subjects in the school curriculum helping to ensure an enduring commemorative legacy for schools.

In addition, DCMS is providing £100,000 of funding to support IWM's Digital Legacy programme. This will help to create a publicly-accessible online portal that will protect and retain digital and other resources, created for the centenary by heritage organisations, for future generations. The DCMS and the DfE will work together to explore ways to inform schools and teachers about the portal.

The IWM's new War and Conflict Subject Specialist Network (WCSSN) is open to all those who work for or with not-for-profit organisations on 20th and 21st century conflict. This provides an ongoing opportunity to share resources generated by centenary commemorations (including those created by 14–18 NOW) through the FWW digital portal.

This will include a range of education users including primary and secondary school teachers, university students and academics. As of August 2019, 18% of member organisations of the WCSSN defined themselves as schools, or further/higher/other education. The team leading on the network will make use of its existing relationships with the IWM's Public Engagement and Learning Team as well as key external contacts (such as the UCL Institute of Education and TES), to promote the portal to schools and ensure that it links to the widest possible range of resources.

Recommendation 3

As part of their evaluations of the First World War commemorations, the DCMS and National Heritage Lottery Fund should examine how intergenerational work can play a larger role in future commemorations. (Paragraph 24)

Government Response

The Government is pleased that the Committee's report has highlighted the reach that the programme had and how a number of projects had a strong intergenerational theme that helped attract people of all ages to engage. Whole families attended 'Pages of the Sea' events on beaches across the country together to mark the Centenary of the Armistice and some also joined existing bell ringing groups together in their local communities as part of the 'Ringing Remembers' project. The programme was developed to appeal to as many people as possible and we agree that this is something that should be explored during the planning of any commemoration events of a similar nature.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund's evaluation of FWW centenary activities found that young people under 16 and older people over 60 were particularly well represented in projects. There are a number of examples of groups from different generations coming together to take part in intergenerational work, some of which are highlighted in the Select Committee's report. The Fund will continue to support intergenerational work as part of the mix of project activities that meet the outcomes set out in their new Strategic Funding Framework which launched in January 2019. The framework sets out the Fund's priorities for funding over the next five years.

Recommendation 4

The DCMS should evaluate the measures that enabled this success, whether they were undertaken on a UK-wide or devolved basis, and assess whether they can be replicated in future UK-wide arts and heritage initiatives. (Paragraph 38)

Government Response

From the outset, DCMS did not attempt to determine how individuals, groups or the Home Nations should engage in the centenary. Through discussion with our partners we determined the key anniversaries that would be marked with national events and with our delivery partners, colleagues in the Home Nations and other government departments we facilitated and encouraged bottom up engagement. The Taking Part surveys confirm that on average over 75% of the population was supportive of the programme. The absence of central government dictat as to what engagement in the centenary should look or feel like and the high level of public and DA support and engagement were the key components of the success of the four nation approach.

Central to this approach was the ability of the devolved administrations to organise and deliver activities and events which had a particular resonance for their communities and nations, recognising their distinct cultural and historical character and their abiding significance. Replicating the success in future UK wide arts and heritage initiatives will require the same success components to be available and accessible. The Committee's report has been disseminated widely within DCMS to help ensure that future initiatives benefit from the committee's findings and recommendations.

Recommendation 5

The National Heritage Lottery Fund and the Imperial War Museums should consider how they can further nurture the networks that they have created, including facilitating dialogue between organisations working in the same localities. (Paragraph 39)

Government Response

The IWM's WCSSN will build capacity, connections and confidence in the cultural heritage sector to improve the public's understanding of 20th and 21st century war and conflict. It will create a forum for sharing good practice, knowledge and skills, providing digital resources, networking events and study days; and deliver campaigns enabling national participation in commemorations of conflict. It is funded by ACE and the Art Fund, and works across the UK and internationally. Regular regional networking meetings and study days bring together organisations to share information and collaborate. The new network will continue to facilitate the dialogue between organisations across the UK and international cultural sector enabled by the FWWCP. IWM has promoted the WCSSN to members of the FWWCP through the Partnership e-news, social media and at events, as well as through external channels.

As of August 2019, the WCSSN has 250 members, around 70% of whom are outside London and the South East, and almost 50% of whom were members of the FWWCP. IWM will work with The National Lottery Heritage Fund to ensure their regional offices are aware of these local and national resources for funded projects, and that members are aware of National Lottery funding opportunities.

The FWWC provided an excellent entry point for both heritage and non-heritage organisations to secure National Lottery Heritage Fund grants for the first time. Of the 57% of projects that were first time applicants, 22% went on to secure National Lottery heritage funding to deliver further projects. Through their grants, 90% of FWW projects felt that their capacity to develop stronger links in the community had improved and 79% felt that their capacity to develop stronger links with other organisations had improved.

The Fund's local engagement teams were instrumental in supporting many organisations to undertake heritage activities for the first time through FWW projects. The engagement teams work across the UK to deliver a range of outreach activities and build relationships with organisations, including other funders, within localities across the UK. The Fund's engagement teams are continuing to support organisations to develop partnerships and networks that support them to apply for and deliver projects through workshops, events and networking opportunities.

Recommendation 6

Diversity should be included as an explicit criterion in any future commemorations and reported on fully in the forthcoming DCMS evaluation of the First World War centenary. The DCMS, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Imperial War Museums should consider how the resources generated by projects exploring diverse participation in the First World War can continue to be disseminated to the widest possible audience and set out their approach in the response to this report. (Paragraph 44)

Government Response

The CSES evaluation notes that through projects such as Tull100, the FWWC helped increase the awareness of the role played by diverse communities during the FWW. This was an important output of the Centenary and the Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation that future national commemorations should aim, where possible, to engage with a range of different communities.

The MHCLG played a significant role in this area across the FWWC, bringing diverse stories into the mainstream. For example, the Tull100—Football Remembers project commemorated the death but importantly celebrated the life of Walter Tull, the British Army's first black-heritage infantry officer. This project engaged the support of the Premier League, English Football League and the FA. The Voice wrote an editorial on 24 January 2019 highlighting the importance of Tull's commemoration noting that "learning about key figures in black history is something that will be invaluable, not just for black children but children of all backgrounds. Black people are a key part of the fabric of this nation and in this the Tull100 project makes an important contribution, reminding us that we are a real part of British history and a culture that can unite us all." 86% of Tull100 groups reported a change in awareness of the contributions of people beyond Western Europe to the FWW.

Through the FWWC digital portal, IWM will continue to disseminate resources which explore the diverse participation in the FWW. To extend the reach of the digital portal, and ensure it is signposting to as diverse a range of resources as possible, the IWM is working with national and international partners including the University of Glasgow and Queen's University Belfast, as well as libraries and archives in England, Wales and Ireland.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund supported a number of projects which explored diverse participation in the FWW, many of which were showcased through the Fund's #OneCentury100Stories social media campaign in the run up to the Centenary of the Armistice. All of these projects have been encouraged to share their digital outputs through Historypin and archive them with the British Library. The Fund continues to work closely with the Living Legacies Engagement Centre based at Queen's University Belfast which has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to create an archive of the digital outputs created by FWWC projects. The archive will preserve digital material and make it accessible for future use. These repositories for digital outputs will feed into IWM's FWWC digital portal.

Inclusion is a primary priority in the Fund's new Strategic Funding Framework and all funded projects are required to demonstrate how they will involve a wider range of people in heritage. The way in which projects meet this outcome is proportionate to their level of funding.

Recommendation 7

The DCMS is the governmental lead on civil society and should take the opportunity in future commemorations to proactively inspire, nurture and measure social capital. (Paragraph 51)

Government Response

The government has committed to exploring options to develop an empirical and practical knowledge base for evaluating, among other things, the social capital of communities. It is evident from the level of public engagement in the centenary and from the post programme evaluations that the huge array of engagement opportunities positively influenced social capital as defined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) framework. The Committee's report has noted that the mix of 'provided opportunities' and community inspired opportunities enabled members of the public and communities to engage in the

centenary in ways that worked for them. DCMS is satisfied that this approach along with government suggestions of engagement (e.g. community vigils at war memorials on the eve of the Battle of the Somme) created the right environment to influence an increase in social capital across the UK as a whole.

One of the four domains of social capital (as defined by the ONS) is 'civic engagement' which is about making a positive contribution to the collective life of a community or society overall, e.g. volunteering for a local or national cause. Volunteers made an important contribution to the centenary and a number of them were first time volunteers. The 14–18 NOW programme mobilised 6,600 volunteers in the development and presentation of its artworks contributing 137,000 hours in total. Volunteers were involved with 90% of National Lottery Heritage Fund projects providing an estimated 241,000 days and these projects were run by a wide range of organisations including local history groups, residents' associations and community development trusts that engaged with their local communities. MHCLG's Ringing Remembers project set a target to recruit 1,400 new volunteers to become bell ringers ahead of the Centenary of the Armistice. By the end of the project 2,792 new ringers were recruited giving approximately 100,000 hours of volunteering.

Recommendation 8

The DCMS should work in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Arts and Humanities Research Council to assess what measures can be taken to maintain the links made between academic historians and local heritage groups during the centenary, and to foster future engagement in new academic findings and interpretations. (Paragraph 52)

Government Response

Throughout the FWWC, The National Lottery Heritage Fund worked with AHRC funded FWW Engagement Centres to connect academics to community groups that were funded to explore FWW heritage. The Fund supported the Engagement Centres to devise and promote their four festivals which took place in each nation of the UK during 2019. Each event explored the collaborative work that has been done around FWW subjects throughout the Centenary, potential future collaborations and how community organisations and academics can continue working together to explore all aspects of the past. A UK-wide event is planned for November 2019.

The IWM Institute is a hub to explore and experiment with new ways of deepening public understanding of war and conflict through research, public programming and digital innovation. It works across all IWM sites (and digitally) and is supported by a network of associates from within academia and associated spheres, who work to bridge the gaps between academic research and public engagement. This activity will build on the lessons learned from the FWWC and apply them to understandings of contemporary conflict.

Recommendation 9

The DCMS should take a similar approach to future 'national moments' including the Commonwealth Games and the Festival of Britain, but planning needs to commence immediately to avoid repeating the short lead-in time given to 14–18 NOW. (Paragraph 59)

Government Response

DCMS fully understands that adequate lead in times are essential for any successful large scale programme/national moment and preparation is already underway for major events in 2022.

With three years to go, the Organising Committee for the Commonwealth Games is fully established as an Arms Length Body of DCMS with responsibility for delivery of the Games, as well as a vibrant accompanying cultural programme that celebrates the youth and diversity of the city.

Preparations for the cultural programme are already underway with the appointment to the Organising Committee of Martin Green as Chief Creative Officer. Martin's previous roles include Head of Ceremonies for London 2012 and Director of Hull City of Culture in 2017, so brings a wealth of experience to the Games.

The Organising Committee is already in discussion the wider sector, taking a steer from public consultation in the city and region, as to the shape and themes of the cultural programme. As is common practice, planning will also be informed by experience and lessons from previous events. Thematic and creative decisions will retain independence from Government although oversight and assurance of planning and delivery will be maintained through a cross-partner governance structure, on which DCMS is a core member.

Recommendation 10

The DCMS should formally include the role of the Special Representative in their evaluation of the centenary and share learnings with other Departments across Whitehall. (Paragraph 60)

Government Response

The manner by which Rt Hon Dr Andrew Murrison MP discharged his responsibilities as the PM's Special Representative for the FWWC has been universally recognised as highly successful and impactful. The recently published evaluation report by the CSES reinforces our findings in this regard. As advised for previous recommendations, a copy of the CSES report has been circulated to all Government partners.

Recommendation 11

Given that the DCMS leads on digital policy, a strategic approach to preserving digital assets should form part of initial planning of any future government-funded arts or heritage programmes. (Paragraph 61)

Government Response

As stated previously, the Committee's report has been disseminated widely within DCMS to ensure other such programmes benefit from the Committee's findings and recommendations including the preservation of digital assets. Where cost effective to do so, DCMS is already encouraging organisations to make plans for the preservation of their assets and take steps to ensure that archiving efforts use recognised industry standards.

As part of its funding agreements since 2018, ACE requires that all band 2&3 National Portfolio Organisations submit a digital plan and policy that includes the management and preservation of digital assets. This is essential for museums, but is also relevant to many arts organisations who maintain archives, or who wish to collect or preserve digital art works.

Our Culture is Digital report which was published in March 2018 had a specific focus on the digitisation and preservation of cultural assets such as those held by museums, archives and libraries. In response to findings in this area, the National Archives convened a taskforce of leaders in the culture sector to take a strategic view of digitisation, identifying challenges and opportunities, and suggesting ways to address both. Supported by funding from the National Archives, the taskforce commissioned Culture24 and Collections Trust to create a series of 10 new online resources that together provide an overview of the issues professionals might need to consider before they begin digitising collections in the future. The hub is part of Culture24's Digital Pathways site, a new online resource-bank funded by ACE. It is freely available to all organisations including museums, libraries and archives and provides people with the tools and knowledge they need to build their digital skills and reach audiences.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has committed to supporting organisations to embed digital thinking in every project to ensure that they can take full advantage of new technology, to conserve heritage and make it more inclusive. The Fund has committed £1 million to a digital capacity building campaign from late 2019–2021 to encourage the development of digital skills in heritage organisations. The campaign will include funding, support and training for organisations working in heritage, underpinned by communications activity.

The previously mentioned digital portal will be a permanent space on the WCSSN pages of the IWM website which will record how the FWWC was marked. It will launch in June 2020. This will be the place where future researchers will be able to gain a snapshot of what happened during the course of the centenary, but will not be a digital repository; rather it will signpost where users can find relevant content online and in archives.

As part of the work looking at the digital legacy, IWM are commissioning a scoping report to understand the technical challenge of how to build the digital portal. This will involve discussions with stakeholders and partners including the AHRC-funded FWW Engagement Centre Living Legacies 1914–1918, the National Archives, the British Library Web Archive, People's Collection Wales, the Digital Preservation Coalition and the Digital Repository of Ireland. The IWM will also consult a diverse sample of former members of the FWWC Partnership who have content to share and conduct an audit of their content to inform the process going forward.

There will also be a communications campaign through the WCSSN to ensure that as many organisations as possible engage with the platform, and there will be a series of roadshow-style workshops across the country to engage with smaller heritage organisations and share practical advice on digital preservation.