awen Ymddiriedolaeth Ddiwylliannol Cultural Trust

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

QUARTER 4
PERFORMANCE REPORT

for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

2025–26

This report summarises activities undertaken by Awen Cultural Trust at Y Muni between January and March 2026 – **Quarter 4**.

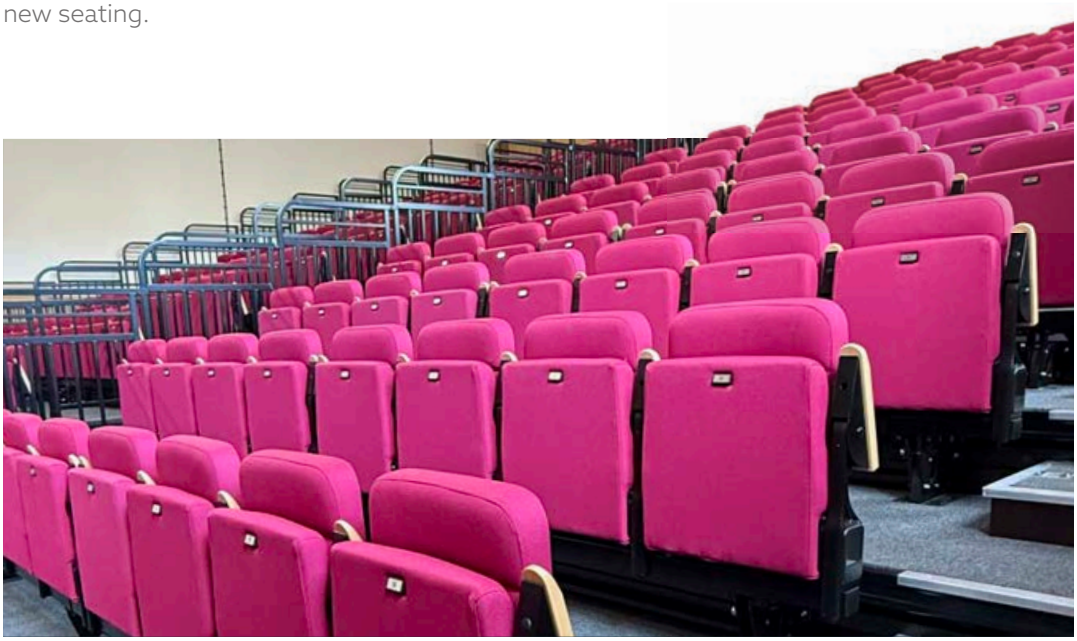
NEW SEATING INSTALLATION

Supported by funding from Arts Council of Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Major Projects Investment Fund and Awen's own capital programme, a new seating system was installed in Quarter 4. This increased the main hall's capacity from 304 to 320 seats and significantly improving audience comfort with enhanced legroom and seat design. The system offers four different seating configurations, allowing greater flexibility and enabling a wider range of performances and events to be programmed.

The new seating is easier and faster to operate, with turnaround times now almost halved, resulting in a much more efficient operation. This increased efficiency benefits performers, promoters, audiences and the Awen team alike. The enhanced flexibility has expanded programming potential, including:

- The ability to stage theatre on a flat floor, supported by retractable seating.
- Hosting event cinema, with orchestra seating accommodated on the flat floor while the cinema screen is in place.
- Offering a mix of seated and standing options for traditionally standing shows, improving accessibility and accommodating customer preferences.

Post-event audience feedback has highlighted improved comfort and enjoyment due to the new seating.



PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Over 800 people attended our family-friendly programme this quarter, with sold-out shows including Flowers and Friendship Bracelets and Amazing Animals. In February, Y Muni launched the Family Film Club, offering monthly Saturday morning screenings for just £4, alongside free arts and crafts activities. The initiative has been well received and supports early engagement with family audiences.

Another sell-out event by FM marked the band's return to Y Muni, since its redevelopment. This attracted a predominantly over 50s audience, many of whom had not visited Y Muni previously. Local businesses, including Rustico, continue to report increased bookings on show nights, demonstrating how Y Muni is supporting the local night-time economy. Audiences have responded positively to seeing more established original bands.

Y Muni's third Drag Night became its first sold out show in this series, featuring Drag Race UK finalist Catrin Feelings, from Rhondda Cynon Taf, as headline queen.

Y Muni Presents, delivered in partnership with Tiwn Media, showcases grassroot Welsh bands and original artists. The programme provides performers with professional staging, live photography, and filmed content. In Quarter 4, eight Welsh artists featured across Y Muni Presents nights, with further events planned for May, June and July.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

During Quarter 4, Y Muni hosted three events on behalf of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council:

- RCT Virtual Schools Conference (for teachers and teaching assistants)
- RCT Resilience in Education Awards
- RCT Childcare Awards 2026

These events introduced new audiences to the venue and helped strengthen relationships with departments within the local authority. Feedback was extremely positive, including the following from Lyndsey Williams, Schools Family Learning Coordinator:

> "I just wanted to say thank you so much for being incredible hosts for our event. Every member of staff, both during the planning stages and on the day, was so helpful. It was an incredible event, and families and school staff commented on how well organised it was and how the little touches made it a special evening. I hope this was the first of many Learner Resilience Award ceremonies, and we will hopefully be back next year."

Strong connections have also been established with Dementia Pontypridd and RCT Council's dementia team, who will be delivering dementia awareness training for staff and volunteers in Quarter 1 2026/27. The team is continuing to work with RCT Foster Carers on collaborative ways to support families and young people.

FUTURE PLANS

Through Y Muni's ongoing involvement with the Pontypridd Culture Network, the venue is contributing to several major events in 2026, including:

- Pontypridd Community Choirs Festival – May 2026
- Pontypridd Brass Band Festival – September 2026
- Gŵyl Morfydd Owen Festival – October 2026

Y Muni is also partnering with RCT Pride 2026 to host Cabaret Cwiar, developed through planning meetings in Quarter 4.

FOSTERING, RESIDENTIAL & INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES, RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (RCTCBC)

In Autumn 2026, a steering group between RCTCBC and Awen was established to look at how Awen and RCT Fostering team could work in partnership to provide opportunities for fostering families to attend events at Y Muni and other Awen venues. The reason for this was to improve the local offer for foster families and support our looked after children and the families who care for them to participate in more cultural events within their communities.

Following a few meetings and discussions, Y Muni was able to create a package for families to attend a selection of live shows and cinema events either free of charge or at half price. The scheme was launched in February and since then, several discounted and free tickets have been taken up by our fostering community. Feedback from the families indicates how much they appreciated the opportunity and that the children in their care thoroughly enjoyed the event.

One of our kinship families recently attended the Last Unicorn Airways show. They loved the experience and shared this review: .

> "The show was absolutely amazing and so inclusive to myself and the little one I look after. She was a little unsettled at first but as soon as it started, she put her iPad down and was really engaged! I also found it useful that on entry to the setting they provided the children with fidget toys which were good at keeping the children relaxed while waiting. I didn't take any photos as I was too busy watching the show myself!"

The fostering service has expressed their gratitude for the opportunities shared by Awen to date, and we look forward to the ongoing partnership and the impact it will have on RCT fostering families.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Customer Feedback

"Very lucky to have an inclusive venue in our town that celebrates queer culture and especially that showcases Welsh talent. We're unbelievably lucky to have Y Muni in Ponty!!"

"Two great nights out at Y Muni in a week. Well done and keep doing what you're doing."

"The venue is now an outstanding old building with a modern interior that makes it attractive and appealing. The staff were friendly and polite but more importantly superb when we needed them most. I will not hesitate to check on Y Muni events in the future."

"Please keep the facility as it is today. It is so welcoming for attendees."

Ymddiriedolaeth
Ddiwylliannol
Cultural Trust

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Awen Cultural Trust is registered in Wales as a company limited by guarantee.