



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Joan McAlpine  
Convener  
Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

1 May 2020  
IM/km

Dear Convener

**On behalf of Creative Scotland, I write in response to the Committee's *Putting Artists in the Picture: A Sustainable Arts Funding System for Scotland* report, published on Tuesday 10 of December 2019.**

We recognise the importance of this inquiry and the significant level of research and **dialogue which underpin its findings and recommendations. The Committee's** recognition of the importance of public funding for the arts and the focus on increasing the sustainability of this is welcomed. It is particularly timeous given growing pressures on public resources; the publication of a *Culture Strategy for Scotland*; and, most acutely, the prospective scale and nature of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the arts and creative sector. The prospective implications of Covid-19 are noted in this response but will be addressed separately when we provide **further detail as requested in the Committee's correspondence of Tuesday 28 of April 2020.**

Our response is structured to be consistent with the report, addressing specific recommendations across each of the three sections. We have focused on areas which relate to the role and capacity of Creative Scotland, only reflecting on the broader arts funding landscape where appropriate. This allows for the important role of Creative Scotland to be considered, whilst acknowledging that we are part of a much wider picture: one where local authorities and other public bodies make significant contributions to funding arts, culture and creativity across Scotland.

## Investment in Scotland's Artists

### *Fair Pay Practices*

We fully acknowledge the fundamental importance of individual artists to the cultural life of Scotland and welcome the Committee's attention to this. Equally, we recognise

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the pressures on artists and, as our [Understanding the Diversity in the Arts](#) research illustrates, the precarity of their employment conditions. This is a perennial and complex challenge which includes, but ultimately goes beyond, public funding for the arts. It is a structural issue and there is a significant risk that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic could further impact on already challenging terms and conditions of individuals, artists and practitioners across the sector. Ultimately, we believe, it requires a significant shift in policy in order to recognise the value and contribution of artists. On this basis, we are encouraged that the Committee has included a recommendation [para 204] that artists and cultural practitioners should be **incorporated within feasibility studies on a basic citizen's income.**

As the report highlights, we have taken steps to encourage all organisations that we fund to adopt fair pay practices [para 175]. Any applicant to Creative Scotland is expected to pay artists fairly, and across all our funding programmes we require clarity on all costs relating to the payment of people. To support this we refer prospective applicants to our [Rates of Pay Guidance](#) and alignment to this is actively considered in our assessment of applications. We also closely monitor the pay practices of our Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs). Our monitoring indicates that in 2018/19 96% of RFOs were paying in line with a relevant industry standard pay rate (for example, **National Living Wage, Equity, Scottish Artists' Union, Musicians' Union**). We are working with each of the RFOs to ensure they are all fully aligned to appropriate industry standards in the future.

This data is complemented by information on the number of artists and hours supported by each RFO. We also record the number of individual awards made within our Open Project Funding (OPF) programme and Targeted Funding. In 2018/19, RFOs supported over 9000 artists, whilst 22% of OPF and Targeted Awards were made directly to individuals.

We believe this has created an improved framework for, and subsequent understanding of, the level and conditions of support for individual artists across our funding programmes [para 176]. There is, however, more to do and we will continue to develop this further.

**The establishment of Bridging Bursaries has helped safeguard individuals' creative practice** as a short-term response to the effects of Covid-19, whilst revisions to OPF are looking toward sustaining this in the future. As we move forward, we will take further steps, **including affirming our commitment to the Scottish Government's Fair Work First programme** and embedding stronger Fair Work criteria within future funding programmes. This will prove challenging without a growth in our resources and may ultimately only be possible by funding fewer individuals and organisations. It is, however, fundamental and in order to build on the development of the *Culture Strategy for Scotland*, we believe a cross-policy review in relation to different mechanisms for supporting individual artists and practitioners would be beneficial, particularly in response to the current and potential impact of Covid-19.

### *Peer Review*

We recognise the benefits of incorporating Peer Review within our funding programmes. This includes how different perspectives can complement the significant knowledge and sector experience of our staff, many of whom remain practising artists who bring first-hand experience to our assessment and decision-making process [para 189]. We are continuing to adopt this approach and have recruited a cohort of external assessors to support OPF and specific Targeted Funding Programmes. We have recruited external panel members for newly established funds, notably the

Touring Fund and Create: Inclusion. Similarly, devolved funds such as the Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards (VACMA) and Tasgadh – Small Grants for Traditional Arts include peer review.

We will continue to consider how peer review may be further incorporated within future funding programmes, including the additional costs. Within this, we recognise the clear need for this to be diverse, ensuring a broad range of knowledge and perspectives are incorporated.

### *Competition between Individuals and Network Organisations*

The recommendation [para 190] that individual artists should not be competing with **'network organisations' for funding is noted. We would, however, offer a broader** perspective in addressing this point. Firstly, we would highlight that within our current funding programmes there are limited instances where there is direct competition. For example, individuals cannot apply for Regular Funding and there are few applications from network organisations to Open Project Funding. Our newly established Open Fund: Sustaining Creative Practice Fund also has a specific strand for individuals. In addition, a range of Targeted Funding programmes provide support to individuals. This includes Create: Inclusion and programmes delivered by partners, such as VACMA and the PPL Music Momentum Fund, which provide opportunities for individuals to be funded directly.

We would also want to acknowledge the significant contribution that network organisations make, including in support of individuals. Through the provision of information, guidance, training, advocacy, representation, networking opportunities and, in specific cases, funding, these bodies play an important role in supporting artists directly and in improving the conditions in which they operate.

Finally, given our broader remit and the significant level of demand on our resources, we would wish to underline that there will always be a significant level of competition. For example, OPF has a success rate of approximately 40%, demonstrating our inability to fund many high quality and impactful applications from both individuals and organisations. We will, however, actively consider ways to mitigate the level of **'direct' competition between individual artists and network bodies.**

### *Tiered Application Process*

We have carefully considered the recommendation [para 188] to tier the early stages **of our application processes to focus on 'artistic merit' in order to reduce the burden** on applicants. We agree with this principle.

Supporting artistic excellence is enshrined within our legislative purpose and is one of our core priorities. Currently, an assessment of artistic quality is central to decision-making across our funding programmes.

We are also conscious of our development role and the inherent need to understand that funding unlocks opportunities to develop the quality of creative practice and activity. This is consistent with the report [para 199] and we seek to establish a balance in supporting people at different stages of their professional development. This includes ensuring that we provide targeted support and that our assessments consider the specific context of each applicant.

Similarly, we understand the need to find an appropriate balance between the administrative requirements for applicants and the need to effectively manage, and demonstrate the value of, public funding for the arts. We will be fully addressing this point as part of delivering the outcomes of our Funding Review and have taken some

initial steps. For example, we have piloted a shorter application form for the Create: Inclusion programme and streamlined the assessment process for the Touring Fund, based on feedback and input from the sector.

The potential to split applications into a two or multi-stage process will ultimately be dependent on the nature of activity; the level of support; and our capacity. It will not always be practicable or desirable to adopt this approach for smaller grants and instead we will focus on making the overall process more accessible and light touch. A multi-stage model may, however, be deliverable across other types of support and it has been a common point raised for consideration within our Funding Review consultations, particularly in relation to large scale financial requests. We will actively consider this as we develop revised funding approaches.

## The Funding Landscape

### *1% Baseline Target*

**The Committee's recommendation [para 24] that a baseline target for national arts funding above one percent of the Scottish Government's overall budget is significant.** Whilst it is ultimately for the Scottish Government to consider, we would respond based on our own position as a national body which distributes public funds.

In broad terms, public funding for the arts provides a common good which, in addition to reflecting the inherent value of art and creativity, brings significant benefits to the life of people across Scotland. We believe there is a strong basis for increasing resources for arts and creativity, reflecting the significant benefits that existing funding brings and the potential to develop this further.

We will continue to advocate strongly for increased support but believe that the **specific baseline target of one percent of the Scottish Government's overall budget for 'national arts funding' may need further definition.** This includes the need to distinguish between different areas of cultural expenditure and the position of Creative Scotland relative to other bodies.

We would be supportive of mapping out existing expenditure across local and national **bodies, including disaggregating expenditure on 'arts' where possible [para 78].** This would provide an improved understanding of the current position and provide a foundation for considering both the merits, and prospective level, of a percentage expenditure target. This would form an important element in considering the focus, models and levels of ongoing public funding for the arts in responding to the immediate and longer-term changes which arise from Covid-19. Whilst different approaches will likely be needed, it is imperative that the importance of culture to the people of Scotland, and the significant cultural, social and economic benefits that public funding brings, continues to be recognised.

On this basis, we believe there is a need to build on the positive steps taken in developing a Culture Strategy for Scotland to focus attention on future models of **funding and support. There is an opportunity to reframe 'arts funding' through** removing policy silos and establishing collaborative models which better recognise shared objectives, the importance of arts and culture and their contribution to our individual and collective health and wellbeing as well as to the economy.

### *Creative Europe*

Creative Scotland is a partner with Creative Europe Desk UK and hosts the Scotland Office. This brings significant benefits to the creative sector across Scotland, providing tailored guidance and support in developing partnerships and funding applications. We

view Creative Europe and other EU funds (e.g. Erasmus Plus, Europe for Citizens, Horizon 2020 and Interreg) as essential to supporting arts and creativity across the nation, building relationships and introducing new perspectives which add richness and diversity to the cultural life of Scotland. They provide a unique opportunity which allows Scotland to be anchored internationally and supports the sector to develop its leadership and ambition.

We believe strongly that continued participation in Creative Europe would benefit the cultural sector and the people of Scotland. Given our understanding that the UK Government will not seek to negotiate ongoing participation in the Creative Europe programme, we will work collaboratively with the Scottish Government and partners to explore continued participation or input into the development of revised or complementary programmes [para 52].

### *Resetting relationships between National Agencies and Local Authorities*

We acknowledge the recommendation [para 70] that the Scottish Government, its **agencies and local authorities 'reset' their relationship and we will play our role in** taking this forward. We understand discussions are ongoing between the Scottish Government and COSLA, and we will be an active and supportive partner within any future actions.

We have a strong relationship with local authorities and understand most are in a challenging position, with competing priorities and limited specialist cultural capacity and financial resources. Notwithstanding our own limited capacity and resources, we recognise a need to do more proactively in this regard. This work has begun, and we have commissioned an extensive programme of research and consultation which will establish an understanding of the current position [para 78] and potential for closer collaboration between Creative Scotland and local authorities.

We will continue to work closely with local partners; however, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the context significantly. The unprecedented challenges facing the sector, and local authorities and associated trusts therein, adds further weight to the requirement for a focus on future models of support for arts and culture.

### Re-setting Local and National Policy Alignment

#### *Regional Arts Officers*

The reduction in the number, and changes in the remit, of regional arts officers has impacted on our ability to develop stronger local partnerships. Whilst we have been proactive in maintaining relationships, it is challenging. Our support for dedicated posts via our Creative Learning Networks and the Place Partnership Programmes brings significant benefits, particularly in acting as a conduit between artists, communities and local and national bodies, including Creative Scotland.

Any additional arts capacity on a local level would be welcome and we acknowledge **the Committee's recommendation to establish posts where Creative Scotland's** funding is below the Scottish average [para 122]. This concept is akin to the Local Authority Partnership scheme established in 1999. This programme led to the mainstreaming of Arts Officer posts whom provided support, funding and advocated for the arts at a local level. Several of the posts originally funded through this scheme still exist, however a majority have now been lost or had their remits changed significantly.

We therefore recognise this principle, and are supportive, however, this would require significant additional resources. Further, we would caution against such roles as

having an emphasis on developing applications to Creative Scotland. Our experience suggests that seeking to build capacity based on an understanding of the distinct needs and assets of individual places is more appropriate. This may ultimately result in increased applications to Creative Scotland, however, could equally lead to different types of funding or support.

#### *Place Partnership Programme*

We are pleased that the Place Partnership Programme has been positively highlighted by the Committee and note the recommendation for this to be delivered in more local authorities and to consider the sustainability of supported activity [para 123].

We are committed to developing our place working; however, the Place Partnership Programme requires a significant level of ambition, capacity and match-funding at local level, all of which are decreasing in local authorities. In order to remain relevant and effective, we plan to develop our approach, informed by the local authority research findings and impact of Covid-19. This incorporates a programme which will continue to work with partners to support regional cultural infrastructure alongside activity which empowers people to take the lead in developing the cultural life of their local community.

#### *Geographic Spread of Regularly Funded Organisations*

**We have carefully considered the Committee's reflections on the geographic** distribution of arts funding and the specific recommendation around future Regular Funding from Creative Scotland [para 124]. It is recognised that this is a common concern, and it will be an active consideration as we take forward the outcomes from our Funding Review.

It is important to recognise that, whilst Creative Scotland plays an important role in supporting the cultural life of Scotland, we are part of a much wider landscape: one where national companies, private businesses and voluntary groups, as well as other public bodies and local authorities, all make important contributions to funding arts and creativity. This breadth of support affords opportunities to participate in cultural activity which go beyond the remit and capacity of Creative Scotland.

Specific to Creative Scotland, we would outline that Regular Funding is only one route to support. Through Open Project and Targeted Funding we have consistently been able to support important and impactful activity within each of the thirty-two local authority areas. Further, it should be noted that the home location of applicants does not always reflect where activity is delivered. For example, 74% of Regularly Funded Organisations deliver activity beyond their base location, whilst our Touring Fund criteria require applicants to tour across a minimum of twelve locations (subject to the practical feasibility of different types and scale of productions). We recognise that this is distinct from supporting activity generated within a locale, however it provides an additional consideration in relation to the geographic distribution of our resources.

As we take forward the outcomes of our funding review, we will ensure that greater consideration is given to what we fund across Scotland and the specific context of each area. This will help us to determine where we can have the most impact relative to our remit and limited resources, including where the principle of regular funding may be extended. This will be particularly important in seeking to ensure that the effects of Covid-19 do not disproportionately impact on different parts of Scotland and that a strong cultural infrastructure is maintained across the country.

We would like to thank the Committee for its work on this inquiry to date. It has provided us with important insights and perspectives which we continue to utilise in our ongoing work and as we take forward the outcomes of our Funding Review. We look forward to continuing to work with the Committee and would be happy to provide further input or clarity as required.

Your sincerely

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