



Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture
Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

18th March 2021

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Extension of the Culture Recovery Fund

I am writing to you regarding the level of the extension to the Culture Recovery Fund. As you'll be aware, the initial investment, announced in July 2020 of £97m from the Cultural Recovery Fund from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, was designed to protect employment to 31st March 2021. The UK Government have now extended this and from what we can gather; the amount to cover Scotland is approximately £40m.

We welcome and appreciate the re-opening news at reduced capacities for cinemas, art galleries, libraries, museums, small scale events and non-professional performance arts (outdoors) announced yesterday.

While we understand and appreciate the caution in re-opening the wider sector, we now need to consider how to protect the fragile eco-system of the arts, heritage and creative industries in 2021/22. Large parts of the sector require significant notice and circumstance to be able to re-open successfully; particularly in a way that enables them to be financially viable.

It is now too late for much of the sector to open successfully within the period 1st April to 30th June 2021 and, as such, investment to protect the sector within the quarter 1st April to 30th June will be needed as soon as possible. Based on support from 2020/21 the level of support required for one quarter is £26million.

We intend to work alongside civil servants to understand the needs of the sector for financial quarters two, three and four. Though we can at this point already highlight some of our early concerns; which we think may be headed our way:

To open successfully in quarters two, three and four; the sector is likely to need, as a minimum:

- a no social distancing policy
- the ability to sell alcohol indoors

Or

- subsidy to open at reduced capacity to mitigate against lost ticket income
- subsidy to open without selling alcohol
- subsidy to open with increased staff to manage social distancing
- a fund to encourage people to go back out and enjoy arts, heritage and creative industries

We are concerned that the costs required to protect work in the sector goes beyond the current balance from DCMS of £40m and we ask that you assist us to consider and secure the investment required to get the sector through to March 2022.

In order to manage the sustainability, health and wellbeing of the sector we would appreciate it if firm commitments could be made as soon as possible as regards investment from the Scottish Government to cover restrictions from 1st April to 30th June.

We will continue to work closely with civil servants to understand and communicate the needs of the sector throughout 2021/22 and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Hunter

On behalf of members.