



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

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

30 March 2020
IM/km

Dear Convener,

These are extremely challenging times and I am sure we share recognition of the serious personal and professional impacts for artists, creative practitioners and organisations arising from the Covid-19 situation.

I was keen to write to you make you aware of plans we have put in place to support the creative community at this time. Our primary focus is to keep funding flowing to sustain individuals and organisations through the immediate short-term impacts, but with an eye to the medium to long term recovery required which will require significant new and additional investment which Creative Scotland's existing budgets cannot accommodate. We are working hard with the sector to make the case to the Scottish Government to that effect.

Responding to the impact of Covid-19 – current measures

We have invited existing funding recipients to explore, where possible, whether activity can be deferred until later in the year. However, if this is not possible, all funding awards already committed will continue to be honoured – regardless of whether the funded activity is cancelled, reduced or rescheduled. We have also asked all recipients to honour contracts agreed with freelancers and artists and to think about what help they can offer their communities.

We welcome the Chancellor's announcement on Thursday 26 March on the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme. However, there remains a number of freelancers and self-employed for whom the scheme will not be accessible and a need for immediate support to provide the best possible opportunity for individual artists and practitioners to sustain their creative practice in the current circumstances. Therefore, we have put in place the following measures.

Last Friday we [**announced**](#) a [**Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary**](#). This fund will help sustain creative practice by freelance artists and creative practitioners with a one-off bursary of between £500 and £2500. We have allocated £2m to this fund which will act as a financial bridge to people who are most deeply impacted by the cancellation of work.

In parallel, we launched a [**Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary**](#). This fund mirrors the support outlined above but is aimed at supporting freelance practitioners working in screen in Scotland who are most deeply impacted by the cancellation of work. We have allocated a budget of £1.5m to this fund.

In addition, Creative Scotland has repurposed our Open Project Funding (OPF). The repurposed fund, called [**Open Fund: Sustaining Creative Development**](#), with a budget of circa £7.5m, will place more emphasis on supporting people to develop and/or reimagine their practice and programmes of work. The OPF format has been refreshed to include the following revisions:

- The fund will seek to respond to the impact of COVID-19. The emphasis will be on support for people and organisations to adapt and sustain their practice and programmes of work in the challenging months ahead.
- In recognition of the different needs of individuals and organisations we have created different application routes for each. This also responds to feedback from the Creative Scotland Funding Review and the CTEEA Committee report *Putting Artists In The Picture: A Sustainable Arts Funding System For Scotland*.
- The maximum award will be capped at £50,000 for a minimum of three months. This will allow for a greater spread of support during this period and for an assessment of the impact of COVID-19.
- Currently, OPF applicants may have two live applications. In order to maximise the reach of funds, reduce administrative timelines, whilst managing staff capacity, this will be reduced to one live application at a time.

This fund will be open for applications on Friday 3 April.

Screen Scotland is also in the process of developing a streamlined Production Development Fund for producers and writers that responds to the current context and will support content development across film and television in scripted and unscripted genres, for live-action and animation. More information on this will be available week commencing 6 April.

Creative Scotland Funding Review

We are focusing effort at the moment on supporting the creative community in the best way possible during the current Covid-19 crisis. However, we will also be taking stock of current plans and timeframes around our Funding Review and will communicate further with you as soon as we have had the opportunity to reflect on the medium and long term impacts of Covid-19 on our plans.

We remain committed to responding fully to the CTEEA report *Putting Artists In The Picture: A Sustainable Arts Funding System For Scotland* and will do so as soon as possible after the Scottish Government response has been made.

We also acknowledge receipt of the CTEEA letter to Isabel Davis following the Screen Scotland evidence session on 12 March and will respond by the end of April, as requested.

Please be assured that Creative Scotland is doing everything we can to safeguard the sector's future in these extraordinary circumstances and we will continue to update the Committee on our work as we progress.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Iain Munro", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Iain Munro
Chief Executive