



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

CREATIVE SCOTLAND UPDATE – submission to the Inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on Scotland’s Culture and Tourism Sectors

Creative Scotland has been providing monthly updates to the Committee on our ongoing response to, and the impact of, the Covid-19 pandemic. For this, our update for January 2021, we also include a review of our Covid-19 response activity since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 by way of a contribution to the Committee’s ongoing inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on Scotland’s Culture and Tourism sectors.

All previous monthly updates to the Committee can be found [here](#).

1. Creative Scotland response to Covid-19

Following the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 it was immediately clear that the art and creative sector would be severely impacted by the necessary restrictions put in place to protect public health. With the support of the Scottish Government and the National Lottery, we quickly adapted our operations and resources to prioritise the delivery of emergency funding to people and organisations in the sector. This adaptation also included, like all public bodies, internal adaptations in terms of moving to the situation where all staff are working from home and delivering Creative Scotland and Screen Scotland support remotely.

1.1 Timeline of Creative Scotland’s Covid-19 response

The timeline below provides an overview of the key actions, and outcomes, as regards Creative Scotland’s Covid-19 response. It should be noted, however, that alongside this our ongoing support for the art and creative sector continues through other non-Covid specific funding programmes (for example Regular Funding, Open Funding, and a range of smaller more targeted [funding programmes](#)) and through our ongoing advocacy for, and promotion of, the work of the sector.

The following timeline focuses on key Covid-19 response actions only, in line with the scope of this update and the Committee’s inquiry:

2020

- *17 March:* [Publication of Covid-19 advice](#) to support and inform the art and creative sector.
- *20 March:* Update on [Creative Scotland action](#) and response to Covid-19 giving advance notice on forthcoming emergency funds.
- *27 March:* Announcement of [£11m emergency support package](#) through three funding programmes (Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund, Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund and re-purposed Open Fund).
- *20 April:* Announcement of [a further £2m](#) in emergency funding support for the Bridging Bursary Fund.

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- *28 April*: Announcement of [£600m National Lottery support](#) to address the impact of Covid-19, including £10m repurposed funding through Creative Scotland's Open Fund.
- *30 April*: Opening of a [£100m support package](#) for SMEs, including cultural businesses, to be delivered by the Enterprise Agencies and Creative Scotland.
- *19 May*: Update on the first 865 [recipients of Bridging Bursary support](#).
- *19 June*: Announcement of £1.3m in repurposed funding through the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) to continue music access through Covid-19.
- *03 July*: [£10m emergency funding](#) announced for Scotland's Performing Arts Venues.
- *08 July*: Further update on the 2,200 [recipients of Bridging Bursary support](#).
- *29 July*: [Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund](#) opens, including an additional £2.5m taking the fund total to £12.5m.
- *05 August*: [First recipients](#) of the Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund are announced.
- *19 August*: the £2.2m emergency support fund for [Grassroots Music Venues](#) is announced.
- *28 August*: the £15m [Culture Organisation and Venues Relief Fund](#) is announced as part of a £59m Scottish Government package for culture and heritage.
- *03 September*: Screen Scotland launches a £3.5m emergency fund to support [Independent Cinemas](#).
- *10 September*: the £15m [Culture Organisation and Venues Relief Fund](#) launches.
- *17 September*: £3m in emergency support for [Youth Arts](#) is announced.
- *12 September*: Screen Scotland announces [£700k hardship fund](#) for Screen freelancers.
- *22 September*: 68 recipients of the [Grassroots Music Venue Stabilisation Fund](#) are announced.
- *24 September*: A further [59 recipients](#) of the Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund are announced.
- *01 October*: we published a [comprehensive round up](#) of Covid-19 emergency funds in order to keep the sector as informed as possible. This became a weekly update.
- *15 October*: [Hardship Fund for Creative Freelancers](#) announced, to be partially delivered through cultural sector partners.
- *03 November*: Recipients of the [Independent Cinema Recovery Fund](#) are announced.
- *04 November*: the [£1.5m Culture Collective](#) initiative is launched.
- *05 November*: the [first tranche of recipients](#) of the Culture Organisation and Venues Recovery Fund are announced.
- *12 November*: the [first recipients](#) of the £3m emergency funding for Youth Arts are announced.
- *19 November*: the [second tranche of recipients](#) of the Culture Organisation and Venues Recovery Fund are announced.
- *03 December*: Creative Scotland's [Covid-19 sector survey](#) is opened, to assess the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the art and creative sector.
- *10 December*: New £600k [Touring Fund for Theatre and Dance](#) is opened, supported by the National Lottery.
- *15 December*: [Further recipients](#) of the £3m in emergency funding for Youth Arts are announced.
- *20 December*: a [further £4m](#) is announced to support another round of the Grassroots Music Venues Sustainability Fund.

2021

- *13 January*: we publish the findings from the second wave of our [Covid-19 population survey](#), which seeks to understand public expectations and intentions as regards culture in the light of the pandemic.
- *18 January*: [£3m in additional support](#) is announced for three pivotal performing arts organisations, Eden Court, Aberdeen Performing Arts and Capital Theatres.
- *20 January*: the second, £4m round of the [Grassroots Music Venues Stabilisation Fund](#) opens.
- *27 January*: Creative Digital Initiative announced. A £1m programme of development and support, coordinated by Creative Scotland and involving all the enterprise agencies.

1.2 Number and value of awards

In terms of the number and value of awards Creative Scotland has made through Covid-19 emergency funds in the financial year 2020/21 to date, these are:

- **6,464** Covid-19 emergency fund awards totalling **£43,528,766** (421 to organisations and 6,043 to individuals, including 1,935 Hardship Funding awards made to individuals through partners).

In addition to this, through Creative Scotland's normal, non-Covid funds (Regular Funding, Open Funding, YMI, etc.) the number and value in the financial year to date are:

- **913** funding awards totalling **£63,005,280** (557 to organisations and 356 to individuals)

This equates to a total number of awards made so far in 2020/21 of **7,377** which is more than five times the number of awards that Creative Scotland would normally make each year, pre-Covid.

It's worth noting that, by the end of the financial year 2020/21, Creative Scotland will have distributed **£64m** in emergency funds, which includes funds provided by the Scottish Government, the National Lottery, and £1m from the Freelands Foundation (for Bridging Bursaries).

1.3 Current Covid-19 response activity

Creative Scotland's top priority continues to be the delivery of emergency funding to support the art and creative sector through the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Below is an update on the live emergency funds at 01 February:

- The £5m [Hardship Fund for Creative Freelancers](#) addresses the financial hardship being felt by creative freelancers in the creative sector. We were working with sector partners to deliver this fund and we [announced who those partners were](#) on 15 October and the fund opened for applications on 26 October. On 03 November, the Scottish Government announced an additional £3m, taking the total available for this fund to £8m, and, following a pause, we re-opened for a second round of applications on 10 November. The fund will close on 01 February.

- The £5m **Sustaining Creative Practice Fund** supports artists to continue developing new creative work that will make a significant contribution to Scotland's recovery from COVID-19. There are two elements to this fund:
 - £1.5 million for the [Culture Collective](#) programme, supporting organisations employing freelance artists to work in and with communities across Scotland. Details of the Culture Collective programme were announced on [04 November](#) with a call out for notes of interest by 18 November. The Fund received 148 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) totalling £28million. 64 organisations, with proposals totalling £14million, have now been invited to make full applications. Awards will be announced at the beginning of February.
 - £3.5m which has been added to Creative Scotland's existing [open fund](#), available for applications from individuals now. The application threshold has been increased from £50,000 to £100,000 and we are progressing plans to simplify and streamline the process, starting with individuals and followed by that for organisations.
- On [10 December](#) we announced the Touring Fund for Theatre and Dance to support Covid-safe touring work from Spring 2021, supported by £600,000 National Lottery funding. The deadline for applications is 05 February 2021.
- On [12 November](#), we announced that 18 Youth Music and Youth Arts organisations have received a total of £1,053,000 to help the recovery of Youth Arts across Scotland and ensure creative opportunities for children and young people continue despite the continued impact of Covid-19. On [03 December](#) we opened for expressions of interest for the Time to Shine, Nurturing Talent Fund and on [15 December](#) we announced the recipients of the £700,000 [Small Grants Scheme](#). Further announcements will follow regarding recipients of at least £2m through the [Access to Youth Arts Fund](#).
- [Creative Scotland Crowdfunder](#) in collaboration with **Crowdfunder** - the UK's largest crowdfunding platform - offering expert coaching and match funding, to support Scotland's creatives to run successful crowdfunding campaigns with Creative Scotland contributing up to £75,000 of match funding from the National Lottery.
- [The Open Fund: Sustaining Creative Development](#), has been open for applications since April 2020. It is a rolling fund, accepting applications on an ongoing basis throughout the year supported by funding from both the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. Up until week commencing 25 January 2021, the fund had received 817 applications from individuals with a total ask of £11m and 398 applications from organisations, with a total ask of £10.8m. So far, we have made 515 awards totaling £9.5m through this fund, 343 to individuals (£4.7m) and 172 to organisations (£4.8m). Awards through the fund are announced regularly through our communications channels, with the most recent announcement being on [27 January](#).

We also continue to issue regular weekly progress updates on these Covid-19 emergency funds and promote them widely through our digital, social and media channels. These are available to read on the [News](#) section of our website.

On that note, since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, our website has experienced a 46% increase in the number of page views (against the same period in the previous year) and users spend 40% longer on the site. The top pages visited all relate to Funding, particularly the Hardship Fund for Creative Freelancers and the Bridging Bursary. All the top ten visited pages since March 2020 relate to Covid-19 emergency funds. Engagement with our social media channels has also increased by 51% across the same period. The same trends have been seen with Screen Scotland digital communications channels, demonstrating the important role that these digital comms channels play as part of our Covid-19 response.

In addition to the above, another vital part of our Covid-19 response is our [Enquiries service](#). This service offers direct advice to those seeking funding, by phone or email, and it has seen an estimated 40% increase in volumes since the onset of the pandemic, specifically on the subject of emergency and hardship funding.

1.4 Covid-19 Research and Insight

We continue to conduct research amongst the general public with the aim of understanding attitudes towards engagement with cultural activity and how these are changing in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This research is being conducted in four waves and the results from the second wave have been [published on our website](#) with the summary report [here](#). The survey provides valuable insight regarding how the Covid-19 pandemic has changed attitudes towards, and engagement with, cultural activity and also looks at public attitudes towards cultural participation in the future.

We are also, currently conducting a [Covid-19 Sector Survey](#) to understand the impact of the pandemic on Scotland's culture sector and the ongoing issues it has created as we move into 2021. The survey closed to respondents on 08 January, the findings are currently being analysed and a report will be published in February. We received 606 survey responses from 181 organisations and 435 individuals.

In terms of top-line feedback from these surveys, they clearly demonstrate the importance of cultural activity to the people of Scotland, but also the significant impact of the pandemic on both audience intentions to return to the live experience and on the ability of the people and organisations working in the sector to recover.

Findings from both these extensive surveys are helping to shape our discussions with the Scottish Government and other partners on how best we continue to respond to the ongoing pandemic and help the art and creative sector in the process of recovery and renewal.

2. Engagement with the Sector and future planning

On 27 November, our Chief Executive Iain Munro, wrote directly to all 121 Regularly Funded Organisations to provide an update on where we are with future planning and what we know in terms of budget timelines. This communication was also published on [our website](#).

This update set out a number of key points, including:

1. The delivery of Covid-19 emergency funding and support remains our priority;

2. We are committed to a fourth year of Regular Funding for the 121 Regularly Funded Organisations through to March 2022, subject to confirmation of Scottish Government budgets;
3. The Scottish Government Budget will be published on 28 January, with Creative Scotland's headline budget, including the fourth year of RFO funding, planned for discussion at the 24 February Creative Scotland Board meeting;
4. We are revisiting our work on future strategy and funding models and these will be communicated in early 2021.

We also continue to meet regularly with the Sector Development Bodies¹ and the Scottish Government to map the ongoing impacts being felt due to the pandemic, to discuss the needs of the sector to help manage the challenges, and to look to a process of recovery and renewal for Scotland's art and creative sector.

We are also working collaboratively with the sector bodies to develop a collective approach to cultural advocacy, to use our collective communications to raise awareness, appreciation and understanding of the value of participation in creativity and culture, also underlining the social, economic and value that creativity and culture deliver to us as individuals and as a society. A Programme Board, consisting of representatives from the culture sector, continues to meet to discuss this work, and we intend to roll out our new approach to advocacy from February.

Included as part of this, we are developing a series of sector led events with the aim of contributing to future policy, holding visible and open debate, and increasing understanding of the challenges faced by the sector amongst policymakers. These events are in the latter stages of development and will be held in February and March.

3. Creative Scotland response to the Scottish Government Draft Budget 2021/22

The Scottish Government announced its draft budget for 2021/22 on 28 January. At the Same time Creative Scotland was informed of our Grant-in-aid budget for the coming year which will remain broadly stable at £60m, including a stable budget for Screen Scotland of £8.5m.

We issued a [statement in response](#) the same afternoon stating that we welcome the fact that our budget from the Scottish Government will remain at the same levels as for the previous year, particularly in the context of the ongoing pandemic and the severe economic pressures that it is bringing to bear.

However, as outlined above, we must also recognise the significant levels of additional funding that the Scottish Government has made available, beyond Creative Scotland's Grant-in-aid award, in the form of emergency funds to directly address the impacts of Covid-19. This has both been vital and hugely welcome.

Following confirmation of Creative Scotland's budget settlement, the proposed breakdown of this budget for 2021/22 will be discussed at our 24 February Creative Scotland Board meeting and published as soon as possible after that.

¹ Arts and Business Scotland, Craft Scotland, Cultural Alliance, Culture Counts, Federation of Scottish Theatre, Festivals Edinburgh, Literature Alliance, Publishing Scotland, SCAN, Scottish Music Industry Association and TRACS

4. Future strategy and funding approach

At the beginning of 2020, the Creative Scotland Board agreed on the high-level recommendations from our Funding Review and a refresh of our Strategy, work which had been conducted through much of 2019. Our intention had been to proceed with sharing these recommendations and to begin to implement the recommendations from Spring 2020 onwards. The unexpected and unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic required us to delay these plans and to prioritise securing and subsequently delivering emergency funds to support the sector.

However, we are now revisiting this work, in light of the new context, and considering how we use funding in the future. This will include consideration of how we will move on from the current Regular Funding programme, from 2022/23 and beyond. This work will align with ongoing developments in our approach to supporting individuals.

All of the above will be brought together into a draft action plan which will set out our priorities and future funding models. We are working to have this framework and action plan in place for 2021/22, with an update on our thinking to be shared publicly and tested with the art and creative sector in Spring 2021.

5. Screen Scotland response to Covid-19 and Update

In addition to the above, please find below a summary of Screen Scotland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an update on the progress made by Screen Scotland across the film and television sectors during 2020/21 (to date).

5.1 Hardship, Development and Resilience Support

From March 2020, Screen Scotland worked to deliver – alongside Creative Scotland – the Screen Bridging Bursary Fund as well as two new development funding routes under the Broadcast Content Fund and Film Development and Production Fund.

The [Screen Bridging Bursary](#) opened for applications on 30 March and provided support to those working in the sector who had lost work as a result of the pandemic.

Film and TV production activity was not possible in the early months of the pandemic, however, Screen Scotland created [Single Project development routes](#) in order to support Scotland's independent production companies to develop creative and ambitious projects, across film and television, in scripted and unscripted genres, for live-action and animation during this period.

As the year progressed, the halt in production continued and as the impact on the cinema sector became acute Screen Scotland worked with the Scottish Government and colleagues in Creative Scotland to deliver the [Independent Cinema Recovery and Resilience Fund](#) and three rounds of further hardship support.

As Covid-19 and resultant restrictions on movement/work continued into the summer of 2020, £1.5m funding was provided by the Scottish Government to further support freelance screen practitioners working in all parts of Scotland's screen sector who were experiencing ongoing financial hardship due to the loss of income as a result of the pandemic. Applicants to the [Screen Hardship Fund](#) were able to apply for a hardship bursary of up to £2,000 plus additional support for those needing it to cover access costs.

5.2 Support for Festivals

Screen Scotland honoured its 2020/21 Regular Funding commitments, including where planned activity could no longer take place, due to Covid-19. This included film festival, distribution and exhibition activity. The festival sector was swift to embrace new ways of working. For example, [Alchemy Film & Moving Image Festival](#) in April 2020 delivered an online format that reflected the personality of the festival, delivered real success and [Glasgow Film Festival](#) took the decision to move its Feb/March 21 edition from hybrid to online only.

5.3 Covid-19 Safe Working Guidelines

Screen Scotland and the Screen Commission were also directly involved – working alongside the BFI, the British Screen Commission, colleagues across the TV sector and the Scottish Government – in the development and agreement of two parallel sets of [safe working guidelines](#). These ultimately enabled screen production to recommence from July 2020. One set of guidelines applied to Film and High-End TV Production (published, and updated, by the British Film Commission (BFC), while a second was applicable to more routine television production activity across unscripted genres and routine daily production activity. This second set of guidelines was organised by the broadcasters, with STV taking a lead role in coordination with Screen Scotland and the Scottish Government (again these are regularly updated in consultation with Screen Scotland and the Scottish Government).

The swift adoption of these guidelines enabled production to recommence safely as soon as the Scottish Government's overall Covid-19 guidance and route-map permitted. This helped many in the screen production sector to return to work and remain in work across the remainder of 2020/21.

5.4 Film Education during COVID-19

The closure of schools, libraries, workshops, cinemas and festivals has prevented face-to-face film education in those contexts, but Screen Scotland has continued to provide professional development in film education online, and to produce and provide new resources to support educators and learners. We are engaging with increasing numbers of teachers via the schools' intranet GLOW; and in March, our new Masters level module in Film Education for teachers and film educators will commence online at Queen Margaret University. As the use of digital tools becomes more prevalent, there are major opportunities to expand the reach of film education, and Screen Scotland will continue to exploit these opportunities thoroughly.

5.5 Other Screen Scotland developments through 2020/21

While delivering the Covid-19 related support detailed above Screen Scotland has also continued to deliver on its remit to be the dedicated agency for screen in Scotland, working with Creative Scotland's partner agencies – Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council to deliver enhanced support to companies and practitioners across all elements of film and TV and to foster sustainable growth within the Scottish screen sector.

Key recent milestones include:

5.5.1 Studios

In March 2020, First Stage Studios Limited were announced as the operators of the studio facility at Bath Road in Leith. Works continued across the summer. In November 2020 it was confirmed that the first project to film in the new studio will be [The Rig](#), a super-natural thriller filmed exclusively in Scotland by Wild Mercury Productions for Amazon Studios. It will provide a significant number of jobs for the Scotland-based crew and is being supported by Screen Scotland to expand the number of Screen NETS (New Entrant Training Scheme) trainees recruited across 2021.

Working with colleagues in Glasgow City Council (GCC) and the Scottish Government, Screen Scotland supported GCC's bid to redevelop areas within the [Kelvin Hall as a television studio](#) and drama production space. The new facility secured £11.9m of funding in January 2021 and the first drama production will shortly commence filming in the Kelvin Hall.

These facilities complement existing studio and build spaces across Scotland, such as Wardpark Studios and the Pyramids Business Park. Combined with Screen Scotland's focus on skills and talent development, arm-in-arm with the sector, this increased infrastructural footprint alongside investment in work-based skills and talent development initiatives should enable the screen sector to play a significant part in Scotland's economic and cultural recovery across 2021.

5.5.2 Skills & Talent Development

Following extensive consultation with the sector, broadcasters, training providers and public partners Screen Scotland will publish its Skills Strategy in April of 2021. This strategy will be open-ended and provide for the delivery of flexible tactical interventions devised and delivered with industry through the establishment of a series of outcome-focused working groups.

In parallel with the finalisation of the Skills Strategy and the work around new production infrastructure, Screen Scotland is working with partners to deliver a number of significant new interventions designed to develop writers, producers and directors including [Short Circuit](#), an ambitious new film talent initiative for Scotland delivered by Film City Futures in partnership with Glasgow Film, and funded by Screen Scotland and BFI NETWORK and [Little Pictures](#), an intensive programme of filmmaking training workshops to support the development of projects with mentors, in partnership with GMAC.

5.5.3 Business & Market Development

Following the appointment of the Head of Business and Market Development in late spring 2020, and as a direct response to the impacts of Covid-19 on broadcasters' commissioning budgets, Screen Scotland has initiated a number of market building initiatives with broadcasters and other partners, including:

- With BBC Three, and under the BBC/Screen Scotland MOU, we initiated the ["factual format"](#) development initiative in June of 2020.
- In October of 2020 Screen Scotland and Channel 4's Glasgow Hub launched the [Channel 4 Daytime initiative](#).

- Subsequent market-building initiatives have been launched with Channel 4's Factual team for the [prime-time 9pm slot](#) on the channel, and with Sky Documentaries. Sky Documentaries and Screen Scotland will contribute £50,000 each towards the joint initiative to increase Scottish content on the network.
- Most recently Screen Scotland worked with VisitScotland, EventScotland, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot and the National Trust for Scotland to deliver [Access:Scotland](#), a new initiative launched in January 2021 aimed at showcasing Scotland's rich heritage on television screens around the world.

5.5.4 Film/High End TV Production in Scotland

After Covid-19 essentially brought a halt to all but a few TV productions – and all drama production from March through to summer 2020, film and drama production recommenced in earnest in the final months of 2020. The Screen Commission anticipates that production spend totals will inevitably be below those achieved in recent years but remains optimistic that full year 2020/21 figures will be significantly better than we might have anticipated at the mid-point of 2020.

Due to confidentiality requirements, not all films and High-End TV produced in Scotland this year are listed here but so far in 2020/21 we can confirm *The Origin*, the debut feature of Scottish director Andrew Cumming which wrapped its Covid-19 compliant shoot in Wester Ross in December 2020 and *My Son*, from Ken Loach's Sixteen Films, starring James McAvoy and Claire Foy, which filmed in and around Lochaber in the late autumn. Returning TV dramas *Guilt*, *Shetland* and *Outlander* have all recommenced production and while new shows *Annika* (Black Camel for UK TV) and *The Rig* (Wild Mercury for Amazon Studios) are either filming or in the early stages of pre-production. Netflix has returned to Edinburgh and the Lothians for the threequel, *Princess Switch 3: Romancing the Star*, and *Peaky Blinders* are due to film in Aberdeenshire in the coming weeks.

Covid-19 has also seen Scotland's thriving animation sector hard at work, many from home. Again, confidentiality undertakings are in place that prevent details of some productions but one of the largest projects completed in Scotland's animation sector in 2020/21 is *The Brilliant World of Tom Gates*, produced by TG Entertainment (a joint venture between Scotland based production companies Black Camel and Wild Child) for Sky Kids. *Tom Gates* was supported by Screen Scotland's Broadcast Content Fund through development and into production. It was recommissioned for a second series ahead of its premiere in January 2021.

In conclusion

Finally, both Creative Scotland and Screen Scotland want to recognise the resilience, adaptability, and invention that Scotland's art and creative sector has shown through this pandemic and continues to show as Covid-19 maintains its grip. This has been helped enormously by the emergency funding support provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery, in addition to stable ongoing core funding. That continued commitment is both acknowledged and valued.

Across all parts of the culture sector and across all art forms, amongst individual creative practitioners and larger organisations, we have seen people adapt to these

unprecedented circumstances, to continue to create and to continue to reach audiences.

This has been a lifeline for many through challenging times and serves to underline the vital contribution that art and creativity in all its forms makes to life in Scotland and the crucial role it can play in our national recovery and renewal.

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