



The Effects of COVID on the Scottish Traditional Arts Report



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

On behalf of
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Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by Creative Scotland to examine the effects of the COVID pandemic and lockdowns upon the Scottish traditional arts across Scotland. The report draws upon two sources of evidence: a) an online survey of Scottish traditional arts community (May to June 2022) with 275 respondents, and; b) qualitative semi-structured interviews (May to July 2022) with 16 representative interviewees across the sector.

Chapter 7 lays out some suggested future actions for the sector to consider from this report (p.47), however the key findings of the impact of COVID on Scottish traditional arts in this report include the following:

- 1) Across the sector, people felt the pandemic had a profound impact upon their ability to participate with other people and in live events, either as an audience member or performer. The loss of regular in-person, social and performing events was a major impact of the social restrictions during COVID.
- 2) Between pre- and post-pandemic, there was a drop of almost a quarter of those people participating weekly in Scottish traditional arts and a concomitant rise in less frequent participation across the year.
- 3) There has been a very uneven impact from COVID on children and adult learners, with adult learners finding the digital pivot during the pandemic much easier than young people. Consequently, there is a strong feeling across the sector that the recruitment and retention of children to Scottish traditional arts has been more severely affected than anything else during the pandemic. This, combined with the ageing profile more broadly, makes recruitment and retention of children and young people to Scottish traditional arts the top priority for pandemic recovery across the country.
- 4) The worst financial impact of the pandemic was on freelancers in Scottish traditional arts. The average income across the sector is between £5,000 and £10,000, with 87% of respondents earning less than £20,000 pre-pandemic per annum from Scottish traditional arts, underscoring the importance of part-time and seasonal work in Scottish traditional arts. When asked how this income has been affected by the pandemic, 63% said their income had been either 'reduced somewhat' or 'been badly reduced' with 18% saying their income had 'totally disappeared'.
- 5) The impact of the COVID pandemic and the social restrictions that it brought have changed the landscape forever for digital technologies in Scottish traditional arts. Not only has the 'digital pivot' had an uneven impact (both positive and negative for different artists and learners) it has also brought forward those changes that had previously begun before the pandemic such as remote working, local digital live events for local audiences, and globalizing the reach for musicians, dancers, storytellers and teachers. 59% of survey respondents took up online learning or teaching during the pandemic (either as tutors or learners) and of those people, 73% of respondents suggested that this digital pivot to their teaching or learning was either 'essential' or 'very useful'.
- 6) 76% of survey respondents said that the pandemic had affected their wellbeing. Furthermore, 83% of respondents reported that they had used Scottish traditional music/dance/storytelling/crafts as a means to support their own personal wellbeing

during the pandemic. This underscores the therapeutic and wellbeing benefits of Scottish traditional arts, which is an area that could be developed in response to the pandemic.

- 7) The impact of the pandemic on venues and audiences for Scottish traditional arts has been substantial. At the time of writing (summer 2022) programmers and events organisers were reporting that there has been a significant rise in 'no shows' to events, a decrease in ticket sales, and different responses to live, in-person events from younger to older audiences. Older audience members appear to be slower to return to in-person events, and are buying fewer tickets, and programmers for Scottish traditional music events are taking this into account in their programming decisions.
- 8) The sense that traditional arts are very much yet to see the full impact of COVID came through many of the interviews. Many venues and festivals however are coping with simply providing the events and fulfilling obligations to artists and audiences that have been continually rescheduled over the past two years. One of the consequences of this long delay to promised events is a 'cost hangover'; many of these events were costed on 2019/2020 prices and travel, and the rising inflation and costs now mean that they are dealing with far higher overheads when providing these events in 2022 and 2023, with static ticket revenues.
- 9) Scottish traditional arts have an ageing profile of participants and audiences. The survey shows that almost half of all respondents were over the age of 55. The ageing profile of Scottish traditional arts is a significant factor both in the effects of COVID, and its recovery across the sector.
- 10) Women outnumber men at every life stage in Scottish traditional arts, and 62% of survey respondents were women. In terms of the shape of the sector, post-COVID, Scottish traditional music accounts for 66% of the sector, traditional dance 22%, traditional storytelling 9%, and traditional crafts 3%.
- 11) A number of aspects of the pandemic have accelerated digital trends and present opportunities for future growth in Scottish traditional arts for both amateur, voluntary and professional artists and learners. These include, new streams of income for professional artists and festivals and events who are enabled to reach a more global audience for teaching and performance; the emergence of 'live digital' events as meaningful practices for highly localised geographical communities, and international communities of practice; development of higher quality digital learning resources for both students and teachers of Scottish traditional arts; cross-sectoral collaboration and mutual benefits from cultural tourism and marketing involving Scottish- and heritage-aligned businesses with traditional artists, and; a diversification of the communities surrounding Scottish traditional arts through greater globalization and digital preference.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This report was commissioned by Creative Scotland to examine the effects of COVID on Scottish Traditional Arts in 2022 after all lockdown restrictions had ended. The report provides both interview and survey data and analysis of the economic, social, educational, wellbeing, equalities and (to some extent) artistic, effects of the COVID pandemic upon Scottish traditional artists and their audiences in Scotland.

In terms of core issues, the pandemic has complicated and accelerated various aspects of the traditional arts, most obviously in terms of lost revenue, educational opportunity, audiences, incomes and resilience. But it has had, and is still having, a more far-reaching and subtle longer-term effect on the transmission, learning, digital reach, cultural entrepreneurship and sustainability of live performance across the traditional arts. Key reports already in the public domain largely emphasise the immediate and devastating impact of the loss of income and events across the music and live performance sector. The House of Lords report on the impact on the UK cultural sector notes a 44% fall in GDP for the arts, and there have been a range of detailed reports that have already outlined the devastating impact of the COVID pandemic and its attendant social restrictions on the arts, and particularly live performance across the UK.

The Traditional Music Forum's own initial reporting from the summer of 2020, suggested that mental health and wellbeing were also significantly affected across their membership and our survey findings support this finding. The 2015-16 Traditional Music Census demonstrated that there were a high number of children and adults learning traditional music in groups.¹ We have built upon this information to make a special focus on transmission and learning of traditional music, storytelling, crafts and dance to ascertain how badly the passing on of our national traditions have been affected. This analysis is embedded in the survey and interviews, ensuring that we bring forward some possible future actions for the sector to consider that will help communities to pass on their traditional arts to the coming generations, and in particular, those children who will have lost out over the course of the pandemic.

Like many artistic sectors and across business and social life, there was a huge increase in digital communication for private and personal use. We found a significant rise in online learning and teaching across Scottish traditional arts and make meaningful suggested actions for funders and the whole sector to consider in this report as to how this might be supported and embedded for professional and amateur groups across the sector. The census also highlighted the increasing costs for spaces to play and learn, and bureaucracy surrounding transmission and performance. We have attempted to examine the impact of the pandemic on adult and young learners, its uneven impact, and what actions might be considered to support the grassroots infrastructure for learning traditional music, dance, crafts and storytelling.

Previous attempts to map the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Scotland have been piecemeal,² and hampered by the lack of engagement (or a signature) at UK level with the UNESCO Convention on ICH. Recent work however by Steve Byrne and Gary West,³

¹ TMF Traditional Music Forum. 2016. *Traditional Music in Scotland 2015-16 Census of Traditional Music Learning in Community Settings*. Edinburgh: Traditional Music Forum.

² McCleery, Alison, Alistair McCleery, David Hill, and Linda Gunn. 2008. *Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland: The Way Forward, Summary Report*. Edinburgh: Napier University and Museums Galleries Scotland.

³ Byrne, Steve. 2021. *Mapping Intangible Cultural Heritage Assets and Collections in Scotland*. East Lothian: Local Voices Community Interest Company.

West, Gary. 2012. *Voicing Scotland: Folk, Culture, Nation*. Luath Press Ltd.

acknowledges the potential in cultural policy for Scottish traditional arts and its social impact, and broadly proposes a state-supported and validated view of traditional arts in Scotland, that seeks greater public funding and far stronger integration with Scottish schools' curricula.

In this report however, we remain open minded on possible vehicles for future cultural policy relating to traditional arts, particularly those non-state, community-based, private and cross-sectoral initiatives that have largely gone unexplored to date. In essence, there are many possible policy routes to consider post-COVID, and the data analysis in this report provides the first Scotland-wide analysis of individual financial and sectoral income from Scottish traditional arts, as well as key data on participation and how it has been affected by the pandemic. These issues and the data analysis are the evidence that we have used to propose specific and meaningful action, and policy-related interventions for Scottish traditional arts that can be considered by many people across the sector, from private individuals, to professional artists, groups and national and regional organisations such as Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland (TRACS), Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Creative Scotland, regional local authorities, businesses, and the third sector.

Definition of Scottish traditional arts

For the purposes of this report the Scottish Traditional Arts include traditional music, dance, storytelling and crafts. This is a recognised artistic sector, often vital to local and regional identities, that crosses art forms and is well represented in professional practice across both urban and rural regions of Scotland. We define Scottish traditional arts as **practices that have grown out of oral/historical traditions in Scotland or are newly created, but shaped by characteristics derived from historical practices in Scotland, or those defined as Scottish traditional by the practitioners themselves.**

This definition is based upon previous research based upon the views of the sector itself around what constitutes 'Scottish traditional music',⁴ and previous published reports from the Traditional Arts Working Group in Scotland.⁵ The core element of this definition resides not in any racial, ethnic, geographical or time-based identities, but relies most heavily upon the artistic forms and structures that have developed out of traditional practices in music, storytelling, dance and crafts themselves that have been historically practised within Scotland. In this way, we hope that this definition allows both for some precision of artform and practices, but also makes clear it is an inclusive definition that includes any people who choose to engage with Scottish traditional arts, in Scotland, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexuality etc. It contains therefore the core structural and formal musical, narrative, somatic and artistic aspects of historical practice (contained within most previous academic and policy-related definitions in the UK) and goes further to acknowledge newly composed or invented traditions that are derived from, or shaped by, historical practices in Scotland.

Defining Scottish traditional arts is important because it acknowledges the often powerful relationship between place-based identities and practices across Scotland (and elsewhere), and provides a meaningful basis for policy and educational interventions that can be targeted at particular communities of artistic practice in Scotland, rather than open to any artistic forms. This is important also because in cultural policy, there are different balances of professional vis-à-vis community or voluntary participation across different artistic practices,

⁴ McKerrell, Simon, *Focus: Scottish Traditional Music* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016).

⁵ Francis, David, *Traditional Arts Working Group Report - January 2010* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Government, 2010). AND Francis, David. *Traditional Music in Scotland: Education, Information, Advocacy* (Scottish Arts Council, 1999).

and in attempting to suggest meaningful post-pandemic policy interventions, it is useful to be able to target them towards sectors defined by practice rather than by professional status. This is particularly important where, as in the Scottish traditional arts, there are large voluntary and regionally diverse communities of practice that are different to other artistic or creative industries such as the much more heavily professionalised and commercial sectors across film, TV, classical music, gaming, digital etc. Defining the artistic communities through practice therefore offers a means to target support for COVID-recovery, and particularly through place-based initiatives that extend beyond the central belt of Scotland, and to non-professional and voluntary communities engaged in traditional music, dance, storytelling and crafts who have been severely affected by the COVID pandemic.

Methodology

The methodology for this report involved data gathering and analysis of interviews and a public survey. The interviews capture the views of key representatives of the Scottish traditional arts, and those of younger people, to provide real world narrative data. The survey data provides a useful snapshot in 2022 of core economic, social, educational, professional and equalities data for Scottish traditional arts, and critically, captures the sentiments of the sector around the core issues that have emerged from the main body of the pandemic in Scotland.

The survey included 275 responses and was open for responses from 17th May to the 14th June 2022. The survey was purposive, using a 'sampling the river' approach whereby we used branching questions in the survey to tailor each respondent's responses and focus on relevant sections to each individual. We also importantly gathered core equalities information including gender, age, race, ethnicity, residency amongst others, and have produced valuable equalities data analysis in the report for the whole sector.

Each section also allowed for quantitative data gathering on the impact of the pandemic on traditional arts, audiences and organisations, as well as free-text responses to gather more nuanced narrative detail and case studies. The data was also analysed using standard social scientific software programme, SPSS, which has provided a more detailed analysis of how different sub-groups of respondents by age, gender, ethnicity, practice etc. have been differently affected in terms of participation, income, audiences, wellbeing etc. allowing for more sophisticated analysis of intersecting responses across the survey.

In terms of interview data, interviews were conducted with 16 interviewees in order to gain qualitative data from key and representative individuals from across music, dance and storytelling. Interviewees included volunteers, amateurs and semi-professionals, as well as those who rely on traditional arts for their full-time income. The respondents were selected to gain a range of responses from across traditional arts, from programmers, semi-professional and professional musicians, dancers and storytellers, CEOs and chairs of cultural organisations, those working in education, and festival organisers. Freelance artists were interviewed, as well as individuals from Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland, The Traditional Music Forum, Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland, Fèisean Nan Gàidheal, An Comunn Gàidhealach, Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Tìree Music Festival etc. The interviews took place on Zoom and in-person, they were semi-structured, loosely following an interview guide, but were open according to the flow of the discussion. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed, coded and thematically analysed. Interviewees were given the option for anonymity, therefore according to our responses some interviewees are named, and others are anonymous. The narrative data from these interviews provides a key insight into the impact of the COVID pandemic upon Scottish traditional arts.

In terms of geography, we know that we have had a good response from across the whole of Scotland to our survey. Of around 275 respondents, 133 volunteered their postcode. From this data we were able to geocode survey respondents to produce a visualization. The following map includes this data:

Figure 1: Geolocated map of Scottish traditional arts survey respondents.⁶



⁶ Map produced using 133 (of c. 275 respondents) postcodes voluntarily given from the survey, where only the 'outward code' of the postcode was volunteered, we have left these rather than attempt to give the 'inward code' part. In a handful of cases, we assigned some postcodes generically to areas where only towns or regions were volunteered (e.g. Inverness = IV1 etc.).

Equalities Profile for Scottish traditional arts

Scottish traditional arts have an ageing profile of participants and audiences. The survey shows that almost half of all respondents were over the age of 55. This ageing profile has an impact on the relationship and effects of COVID, and given the vulnerabilities of older people to COVID, we would have expected to see substantial impacts on Scottish traditional arts throughout and beyond the pandemic. The concern regarding ageing participants and audiences in traditional arts was echoed in the interview data, where, in terms of traditional music and dance, audience and participant numbers have taken a sharp decrease in returning to in-person events. While the ageing audience for traditional arts was an issue before the COVID restrictions, the pandemic highlighted the urgency for engaging younger audiences and participants and many interviewees are now considering strategies for engaging younger generations in their activities and events. This demographic issue becomes even more significant when placed within the wider context of Scotland's ageing society.

The Scottish Government's infrastructure commission estimated in 2021 that there would be a 71% increase in the number of people aged over 75 in the next 25 years. Moreover, that rural Scotland faces even more stark challenges with 14 rural local authorities facing population decreases over the next 10 years.⁷ Coming alongside the very significant impact of the pandemic upon children's learning and access to the arts, this makes children and young people one of the core areas to consider in our response to the pandemic. One of our key areas for action is therefore for organisations, individuals and stakeholders across the Scottish traditional arts to consider how they might recruit and retain children and young people into Scottish traditional music, dance, storytelling and crafts. Moreover, how the sector might respond also to the ageing profile of established participants in the coming years is a key issue that will emerge for the ongoing sustainability and health of Scottish traditional arts across the country. There are various ways in which the sector could respond, from opening up suitable spaces that are non-alcohol based and free-to-access in communities for children and young people to play and dance together, to enhancing digital access to remote tuition for those living in rural and island areas (see p.47 for our series of Future Actions for the Sector to Consider in full).

Even more striking however, but related, is the longevity of participants in Scottish traditional arts: Many people once they take up traditional music, dance, storytelling or crafts, will practice it for their entire lives. 74% of respondents have been practicing their tradition for more than 20 years, and many for thirty years or more.

⁷ The Scottish Government, *A NATIONAL MISSION WITH LOCAL IMPACT, Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Government, 2021), p. 17
<<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-mission-local-impact-infrastructure-investment-plan-scotland-2021-22-2025-26/documents/>> [accessed 9 August 2022].

Figure 1: Age in Scottish traditional arts profile (all respondents)

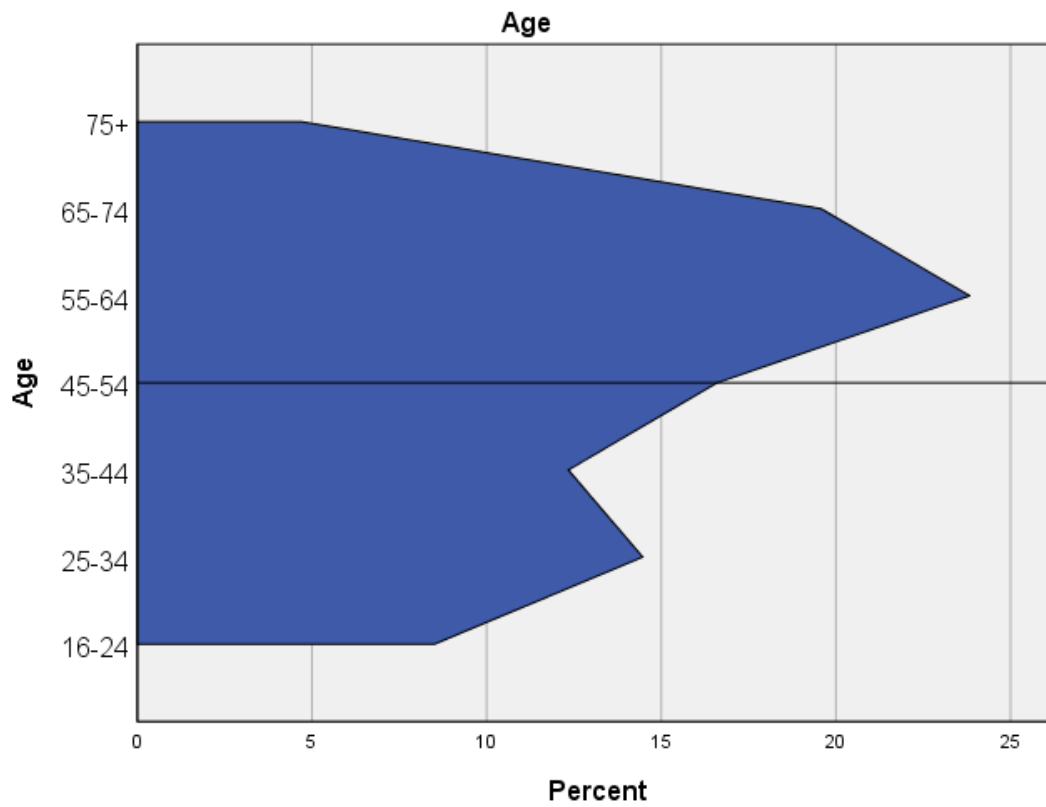
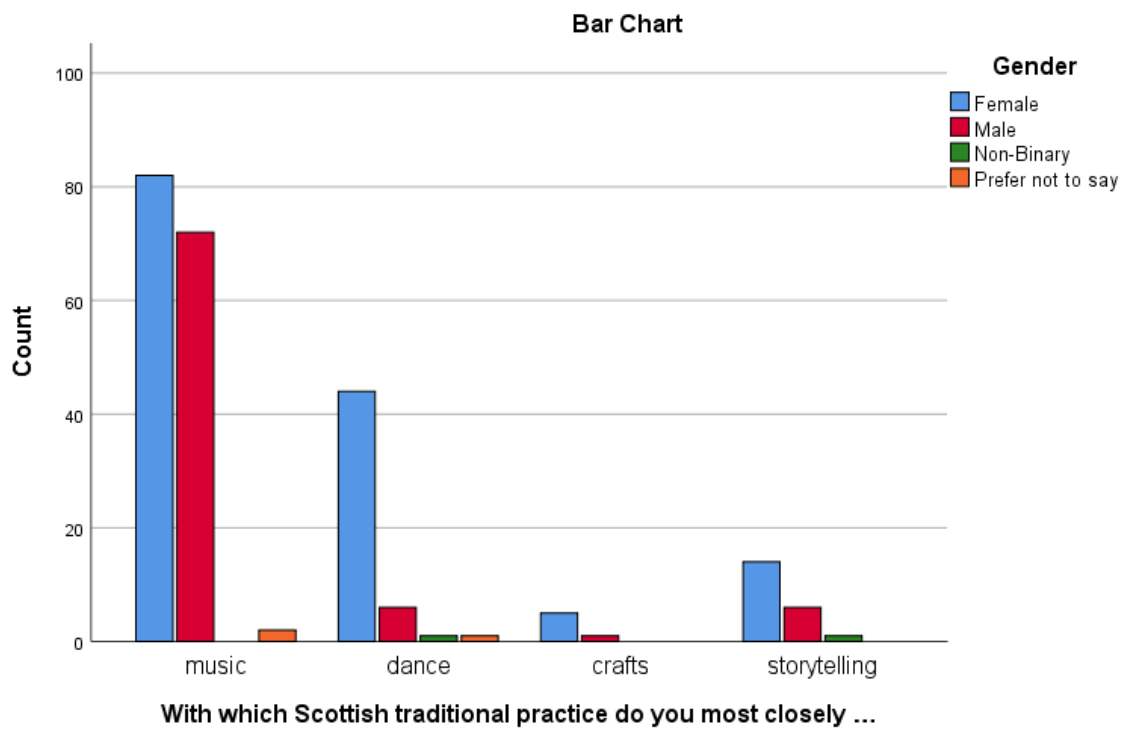


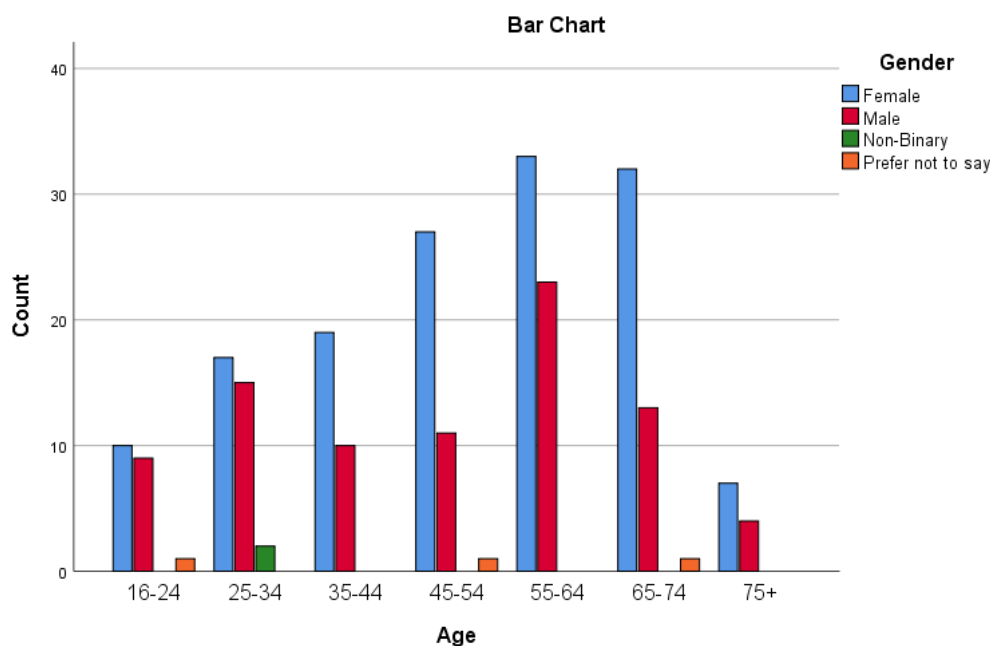
Figure 2: Gender and Scottish traditional arts



Similar to the older participant age and longevity of participation, there is a skew in the respondent data towards women (see figure 2), who made up 62% of respondents to the survey. In answer to Q5, 'Please tell us how you define your gender?', shows almost two-thirds of respondents are women.⁸ When one examines each different art form within Scottish traditional arts, we found that Scottish traditional music (as the largest respondent practice) is roughly balanced between men and women (53% female, 46% male, 1% Prefer not to say).

As can be seen in figure 3, **women outnumber men at every life stage in Scottish traditional arts:**

Figure 3: Gender across ages



Digging a little deeper into the data, through the use of crosstabulation between the 117 respondents in total who answered the question on their financial status, 65% were women and 34% men, 1% prefer not to say. Categories on financial status included self-employed freelancers, registered charity, Community interest company etc. (for the full list see p.64).

For the single largest category of Self-employed freelancers, 46 were female, 28 male and 1 prefer not to say. As one would expect therefore, the impact on freelancers was greater, and greater on women, because there are more women than men in Scottish traditional arts. However, the value of this crosstabulation is that it shows that freelancers (as the most sizeable proportion of earners) roughly maps onto the gender disparities across the whole sector.

⁸ Please see Annex 1 for the full basic data from the survey including charts and tables (excludes free-text responses).

Table 1: Financial status against Gender

Financial Status (crosstabs)		Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Totals
Self-employed freelancer	Count	46	28	1	75
	% of freelancers	61.3%	37.3%	1.3%	100.0%
	% of All Respondents to the question (N = 117)	39.3%	23.9%	0.9%	64.1%

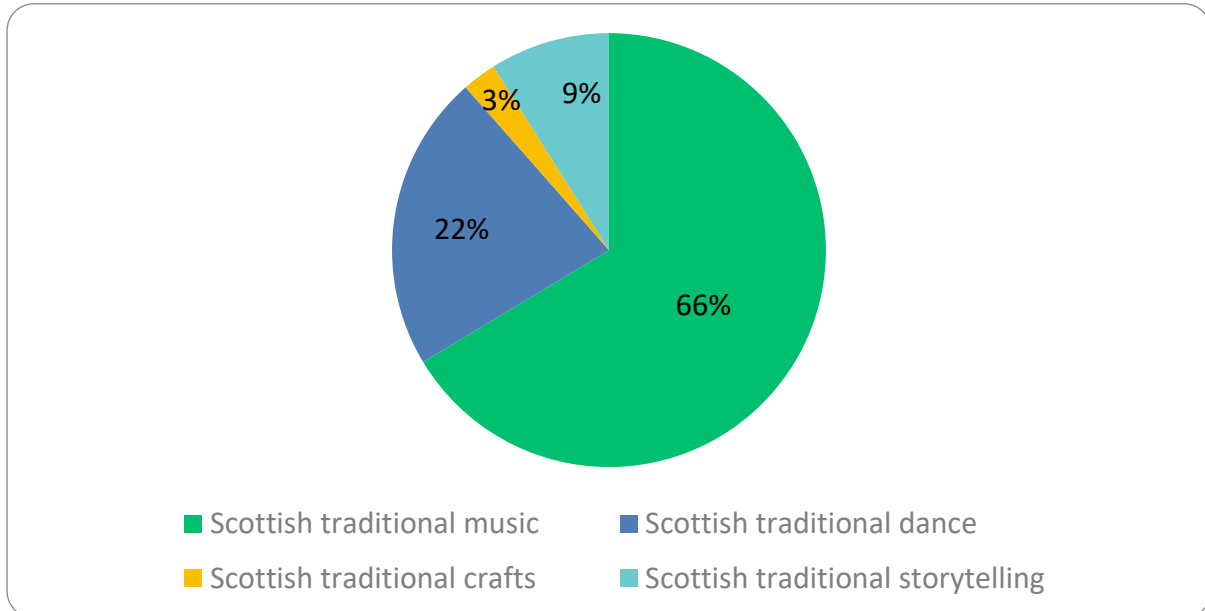
Although relatively small numbers responded across the other practices, Scottish traditional dance, crafts and storytelling all appear to have substantially more women than men in the data. Although not conclusive, it does pose questions about the long-term strategies for these practices if they are too heavily dependent upon women, and in common with traditional music, one of the key questions for the entire Scottish traditional arts sector must therefore be about how to recruit and retain more young boys in learning programmes?

Further research would demonstrate a more granular understanding of when boys/men fall out of the Scottish traditional arts, whether in common with some traditions, this happens at puberty, or the transition from school to the workplace/further and higher education, or whether the sector is failing to recruit enough boys/men across the lifecourse. Or indeed, whether this small sample size is representative of the wider gender mix across the sector. There are indications that this has shifted somewhat in the past decade, as the data published from the *Understanding Scotland Musically* research project in 2014 shows that for a similar sized sample, 54% of Scottish-resident respondents were female, where 46% were male.⁹

⁹ See the summary data published in McKerrell, Simon. (2016) *Focus: Scottish Traditional Music* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016) [particularly Chapter 5: pp. 86-95. But for more granular data on gender than is published in this book, see the downloadable summary of basic data from the 2014 *Understanding Scotland Musically* survey which only relates to Scottish traditional music, and is available here: <https://simonmckerrell.com/research/understanding-scotland-musically-project/>.

As would be expected with any anecdotal understanding of Scottish traditional arts, by far the largest proportion of the activity takes place in Scottish traditional music, accounting for 66% of the survey respondents with dance accounting for around a quarter followed by storytelling and crafts:

Figure 4: Proportion of participants by Scottish traditional art form



In terms of diversity, the constituency of respondents to the survey were overwhelmingly white: Using the Scottish Government census (2021) top level ethnicity categories, the data shows that 97% of the respondents are white, with all other ethnic groups making up 3%. This reflects the Scotland-wide population, where 96% of Scots are white at the 2011 census (The 2022 census data will be published in 2023).¹⁰

Table 2: Ethnicity in Scottish traditional arts

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White (any)	96.60%	227
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	1.28%	3
Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian	0.43%	1
African, Scottish African or British African	0%	0
Caribbean or Black	0%	0
Other Ethnic Group	1.70%	4
TOTAL		235

¹⁰ <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results/at-a-glance/ethnicity/>

Interviewees reflected a concern for the lack of diversity in terms of ethnicity that their own organisations and projects revealed to them. For instance, Martin MacLeod, the producer of the successful lockdown project, 'Tunes in the Hoose', commented that while the project was inclusive in terms of ability and incorporated participants from different parts of the world, the project highlighted the lack of diversity as the participants were overwhelmingly white Scottish and therefore reflects that work needs to be done to engage more diverse participation in Scottish traditional music. The murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and the expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement during the course of the pandemic also impacted on the re-evaluations of some cultural organisations that were taking place during the lockdowns, reflecting contemporary debates about equality, diversity and inclusion. For instance, a programme and events manager commented that:

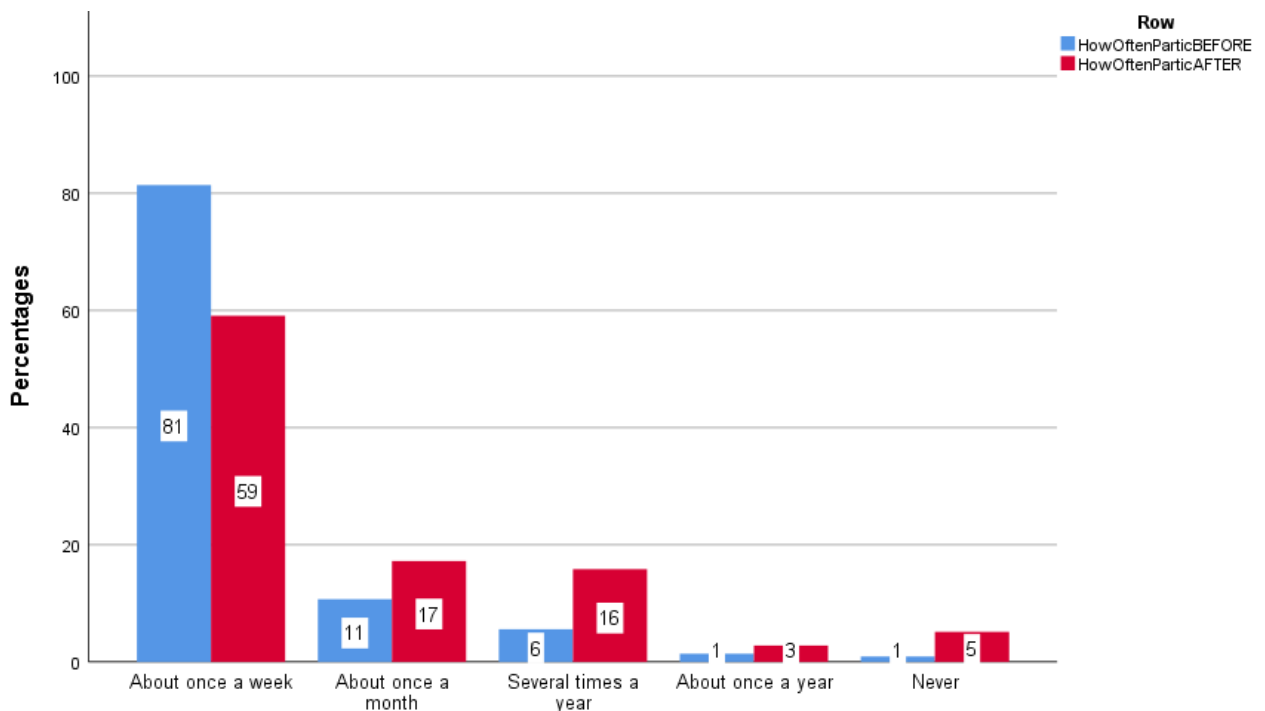
'[O]ne of the big things that impacted our programming was actually Black Lives Matter. And...as a venue and a network that prides itself on its variety and its diversity, it was a real eye opener that it wasn't enough to just say, "well, here's our policy and on this is X, Y, and Z is what we do". It was that that changed things quite quickly to say "right, well, we're not doing enough, you know"'.

In response, the organisation developed new opportunities for practice and performance, training and programmed live events, '...for performers and groups that haven't necessarily had direct support. And that way, I suppose COVID, [with] us being closed as a venue, it gave us that opportunity to try things like that'.

Similarly, 29 from 235 respondents reported they had some form of disability (12%) with 88% reporting they did not.

One of the key aspects of the impact of COVID on Scottish traditional arts (and all arts) has been the effects on participation. When examining this, we asked respondents to think about how often they participated with other people (whether that was live or in person) both before and after the pandemic. The results show that there was a significant fall in participation across the pandemic:

Figure 5: Comparison of How often people participate in Scottish traditional arts BEFORE and AFTER the pandemic shown in %



As can be seen in this comparative table, **there was a sharp drop between 2019 and 2022 in terms of those people participating weekly in Scottish traditional arts and concomitant rise in less frequent participation across the year.** Worryingly, there was a small rise in those who suggested they were completely giving up their participation. This is similarly reflected in the interview data in that older audience members and participants in Gaelic Choirs, local Fèis, and amateur dance groups are still lacking confidence in going out to participate in regular activities.

Wider Context in UK Arts

The COVID pandemic had a major impact on music, the creative sector and on almost every citizen's life in Scotland and the UK. As we have been discovering in 2022 and beyond, this was very uneven: Some families suffered bereavement(s), loss and economic precarity alongside ongoing mental health issues, others moved into and beyond the pandemic largely unaffected for many different reasons. Most analysis at the time of writing suggests that the pandemic worsened pre-existing inequalities in terms of health, economics, social capital and culture. The headline figures from reports such as the comprehensive analysis done by the Centre for Cultural Value in league with the Audience Agency and the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre suggests that the pandemic was experienced in different phases (that roughly map onto the various phases of lockdowns) and that there were massive negative impacts on audiences, staff burnout, freelancer precarity, touring and the creative economy as a whole.¹¹ Key however to their analysis, was an understanding of the impact of

¹¹ Walsmsley, Ben, Abigail Gilmore, Dave O'Brien, and Anne Torreggiani, (March 2022) *Culture in Crisis: Impacts of COVID on the UK Cultural Sector and Where We Go from Here*, <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/CVIresources/culture-in-crisis-impacts-of-covid-19/>

the pandemic on freelancers and the cultural workforce across the UK. The report stresses the scale of the challenge to working practices in the cultural sector and demonstrates how existing inequalities of socio-economic class, gender and access were amplified and remain across the sector. During the recovery, from phase 3 (summer-November 2021) onwards, audiences were ‘terrifyingly slow to book’ and many freelancers left the sector during the pandemic with music, performing and visual arts taking the biggest cuts of around a quarter of the professional workforce.¹²

A major review of music and COVID was published in a special issue of the *Journal of Music, Health and Wellbeing* in Autumn 2021 and contains numerous articles and case studies from different genres of music around the world.¹³

The evidence in this report is discussed in detail below, but it is clear that **the impact of the COVID pandemic and the social restrictions that it brought have changed the landscape forever for digital technologies in Scottish traditional arts**. Not only has the digital pivot had an uneven impact (both positive and negative for different artists and learners), it has also brought forward those changes that had previously begun before the pandemic such as remote working, local digital events for local audiences, and globalizing the reach for musicians and teachers. These changes open up new possibilities for both born digital live performances, as well as online tuition, but also for place-based digital marketing of local music, dance and storytelling for international audiences.

During the pandemic lockdowns, many arts organisations, individual freelancers, self-employed musicians and others engaged in what has now come to be understood as a ‘digital pivot’; that is, moving all or part of their artistic lives online to develop their digital presence. This variously involved a huge range of activities from the straightforwardly analogue-to-digital translation of online concerts via Zoom or Facebook live, instrumental tuition via Zoom, Skype, or other video platforms to more ‘born digital’ pivots, such as local discussion groups, group singarounds or group lessons, online curated exhibitions, music sessions and shows, to neighbourhood WhatsApp groups and other local networks that deliberately set out to take advantage of digital technology and combat the isolation and loss of in-person networks and work from various lockdowns. Although, at the time of writing, the dust has not settled on the analysis of the global digital pivot in the arts, certain aspects of digital cultural activity are becoming clearer. In this report, we examine in some detail the impact of the pandemic on the digital pivot specifically for Scottish traditional arts, the consequences of that for practice and income, and suggest possible future possible actions for organisations and individuals alike across the sector.

¹² Walsmsley, Ben, Abigail Gilmore, Dave O’Brien, and Anne Torreggiani, (2022) *Culture in Crisis*.

¹³ Williams, J., Ruddock, E., Mohseni, A., Gibson, S. J., Fleshner, N., Yeoh, P., Cusworth, A., Leong, J., Cohen, S., and Stringham, D. (Editors). (2021) Special Issue: ‘Musicking through COVID-19: Challenges, Adaptations, and New Practices’, *Journal of Music, Health and Wellbeing*, ISSN 2515-981X.
<https://www.musichealthandwellbeing.co.uk/musickingthroughcovid19>

Chapter 2: Education, Learning and Transmission

One of the central impacts of the pandemic restrictions was on learning and teaching. In this section we consider the evidence from survey respondents and interviewees around the impact the COVID pandemic had upon their learning and teaching of Scottish traditional arts.

When asked in the survey, 'Do you believe that the COVID pandemic and the response have affected your experience or participation in Scottish traditional arts?', 93% of respondents reported that it had. In some respects that is obvious, but digging a little deeper into the responses we can begin to have a more granular understanding of how it affected not just participation, but also learning and teaching.

Of the 211 respondents who answered the question, a staggering 56% responded to our survey that they were involved in teaching children or adults Scottish traditional arts. That means in some respects, that transmission and teaching are in fact central aspects of the participation in Scottish traditional arts, in and of themselves (rather than discrete practices set apart from the main traditions). This central positioning of transmission and teaching is, in this way, distinct from other art forms, where there is a clearer line between performer/artist and educator.

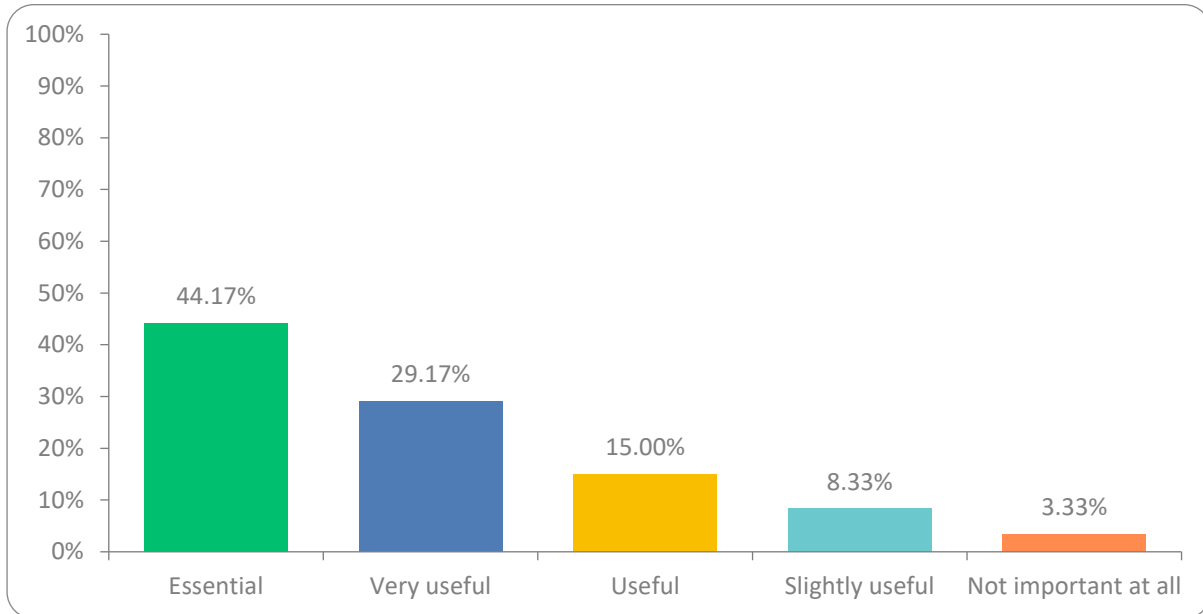
We also know from the survey that the majority of people learn from participating in Scottish traditional arts themselves, i.e. they learn through active participation, usually in a group setting. There are also a sizeable number of people who pay to learn through either solo or group lessons:

Table 3: Do you learn or take lessons in any Scottish traditional arts?

ANSWER CHOICES	% of total	Count
Yes--in a paid-for local group class in person	20.11%	38
Yes--I take paid-for individual lessons with a teacher in person	6.35%	12
Yes--I am part of a voluntary/informal group where I learn from/with others or from a friend directly	14.29%	27
Yes--I take online lessons (solo or group)	8.47%	16
Yes--I learn myself from participating in Scottish traditional arts	37.04%	70
No--I don't play, dance, perform or create, but am part of the audience	13.76%	26
TOTAL		189

When asked whether they had taken up any online teaching or learning during the pandemic (either as tutor or learner) 59% reported that they had (42% had not). And when asked how important this was to their participation in Scottish traditional arts (as either a teacher or learner) during the pandemic, **73% of those respondents suggested that this digital pivot to their teaching or learning was either 'essential' or 'very useful'**:

Figure 6: If you did take up online learning or teaching, please estimate how important this was to your participation in Scottish traditional arts (as either teacher or learner) during the pandemic?



For the majority of teachers, much of their teaching activity (across traditional music, dance, storytelling) went online. For some, it dropped away completely during the pandemic. Many people made the digital pivot from teaching in-person to teaching online via Zoom or other platforms with differing levels of success. As the pandemic went on, many teachers reported that the numbers of online students dropped significantly, with a concomitant impact on tutors' income. David Francis, the Director of TRACS suggests that across the sector, 'One of the things that a lot of the teaching organisations were finding, as the pandemic went on, numbers for digital access were actually dropping' (David Francis, Director of TRACS, interviewee). However, still others found that their international reach expanded, and they picked up new students online with whom they would previously have been unable to have a teaching relationship.

For instance, an emerging female musician who is regularly on tour outside of COVID restrictions, discussed how she 'definitely taught more' as a result of the pandemic and, '...if it wasn't for lockdown, I really wouldn't have had the time to teach a weekly classes for a group in Edinburgh or a student in Miami'. Many teachers and students found the digital pivot to their teaching and learning challenging, particularly in group contexts (the following are a selection of individual free-text comments from different respondents to the survey in the Impact of COVID on Scottish traditional arts):

'Had to move to remote lessons which the students found much more challenging and harder to engage with. Same can be said from my experience'

'Went to online classes which removed any fluid group element from teaching and impacted on the spontaneity and support offered to participants'

'Prior to COVID I ran a weekly winter class in the local hall with about 30 dancers. After the first lockdown my numbers ranged from 8 to 22 and some dancers will never return to the hobby.'

'The pandemic forced all of my teaching online. I had a high retention rate of

students and found many people used the lockdown as an opportunity to begin learning the pipes. Additionally, I found my international reach increased greatly, especially in North America.'

'Opportunities to teach disappeared and my business ended.'

'During the pandemic I lost all my teaching and performing venues and 98% of my storytelling opportunities. Whilst I did do some work online with schools towards the end of the pandemic including one school visit when restrictions eased the holiday activity gigs that were bread and butter during school holidays were severely limited - one storyteller online rather than 10 storytellers in schools. A lot of my former students did not return once classes resumed'

The pivot to online learning and teaching through local authorities and cultural organisations was, in some cases, more complex. For instance, an interviewee working in creative learning for a local authority said their educational programme was severely impacted by guidelines around education more broadly. As their traditional music programme was part of the Youth Music Initiative, it sat under national 'education' guidelines and they were not allowed to provide virtual tuition until January 2021.

'So we had to wait until then, that did cause us a lot of issues because of course, what we would have liked to have done was to move to virtual tuition very, very quickly, so that we could maintain ... the groups that we had. Certainly, for the after-school projects, because we have direct contact with parents so that we could have gained consent from parents and we could have moved on with that tuition. However, that wasn't allowed in schools, they straight away asked for us not to be delivering anything, because the focus had to be on schoolwork and also health and wellbeing of children and teachers. So it was decided very, very quickly by the schools that the music offer needed to come to a close until they knew what was going to happen' (interviewee working in creative learning).

The impact of this delay in the teaching programme was the very sharp decrease in learner numbers in their long-term traditional music offer, '...our numbers dropped and dropped hugely. And they'd been running for 13 years at the time of the pandemic and for our after school trad programme, we had a steady 40 to 50 members, and it dropped to nine' (interviewee working in creative learning).

Screen fatigue from online school learning and working and a sense of loss of social experience in online learning and participation was cited as a major factor in the decrease in numbers of learners and participants.

In addition to education guidelines, volunteer-run organisations have also been impacted in terms of decreasing learner numbers in education programmes. Arthur Cormack, CEO of Fèisean nan Gàidheal, discussed both the decrease in Fèis activity as a result of the pivot to online activity and the fluctuation of learner numbers throughout the pandemic.

'I think during the first lockdown, we were surprised at how engaged... young people were in what was being offered. I think because they genuinely were locked in at that time, and literally weren't really allowed out of the houses apart from for periods of exercise everyday, or to go to the shops. And I think parents were very keen that young people had things to do online ... and the number of people taking part in what we were offering was very healthy... But we've definitely seen a decrease in online numbers over the last year'.

The drop in learner numbers also reflects the drop in numbers of volunteer facilitation of activities, such as those associated with the Fèis:

'I think last year, we probably engaged with around about 1700 young people in actual Fèis activities, whereas normally this would probably be around the 6000

mark. So there was a very big drop... you have to remember also that only maybe a third of our membership was active in that period.'

An interviewee also reflected on the change in experience and structure of online classes as a result of practically working within the limitations of online video calling, with tutors demonstrating and learners imitating individually rather than as a group. They suggested that some students in group lessons were not confident in playing individually and that tutors were unable to provide nuanced feedback in the same way as in-person lessons: 'it became incredibly formalised, where the wonderful thing about our traditional music workshops is they're not formalised, they're very social and fun'.

However, a minority of teachers and learners used the digital pivot to rethink their personal career trajectories and digital presence, and have opened up new opportunities for professional income with a greater international reach:

'Prior to pandemic, I taught maybe 60% online... it went to 100%, but I got a huge influx of teaching requests, so much so that I now pass to 4 other teachers. Most of my in person pupils are now back, but some of them move between Skype and coming here. I also had to introduce a rolling day off every week to reduce the strain on my throat through talking online. Performance opportunities for pupils became nil of course, and this is JUST beginning to improve. I also travelled quite a bit in 2019 performing and conducting workshops. I'm now almost reluctant to do so again, at least to the same amount'.

'I've moved online with fiddle classes and online ceilidhs via Zoom. During the pandemic I began a weekly ceilidh online and continued for 16 months. Now I lead a fiddle class for adult weekly and monthly ceilidhs'.

'I was Pipe Major of local school band for 7 years, post-pandemic I decided my voluntary commitments were too large and I have scaled them back. I also run a piping summer school through a charity and regular free classes for children. We are at our lowest participation rates. We have been trying hard, but parents seem to be less minded to leave house to drop kids off at our activities and there is a lot of competition from digital media and technology. Parents saying they are having a movie night on Netflix with kids so they'd rather do that than drop [their] kid off. We are a small area but as an organisation have over 50 years of experience in the delivery of piping tuition'.

Interviewees reported this change in career trajectory and referred to the focus of content creation as a way to maintain engagement with students, participants and audiences. A great deal of online resources for learning and teaching have been produced over the pandemic through COVID relief funding and changes in contracted work, such as Fèis Rois 'Feis Time'.¹⁴

One of the key problems reported by survey respondents is the difficulty in recruiting new students when working online. Prior to the pandemic, the in-person culture in teaching of Scottish traditional music, dance, song and storytelling in particular has always been central to the tradition. The digital pivot in learning and teaching has meant that there are very few effective ways to recruit students beyond local word-of-mouth or the online marketing based upon reputation as a performer. This issue was also raised in interview, which highlighted the issue in terms of emerging musicians and emerging tutors who had not yet had the opportunity to build contacts and networks that would have enabled them to teach online, for instance, if they had just recently graduated. In this respect, sector stakeholders should consider ways in which it might support a directory of teachers across the Scottish traditional arts, that would enable newcomers and parents in particular, to access information about

¹⁴ <https://feisrois.org/learn-online/feis-time/> [accessed 18th August 2022].

teachers both geographically local to them (for in-person group and individual tuition) and online teachers who might be able to support their learning (see implications and considerations below under Chapter 7, Future Actions for the Sector to Consider on p.47).

The impact of COVID on children as learners

There has been a very uneven impact from COVID on children and adult learners, with adult learners finding the digital transition much easier than young people, and consequently, there is a strong feeling across the sector that the recruitment and retention of children to Scottish traditional arts has been more severely affected than anything else during the pandemic. As in-person teaching and learning opportunities are restarting, there has been a reflection on the fact that new learners are beginning to participate. This means, however, that more advanced learners or learners that were participating before the pandemic have not returned and that overall, **the pandemic has had a major impact on the development of young people**. Similar research with 10-18 year olds in Ireland from Michelle Finnerty demonstrated that the digital pivot for young people during lockdowns was dependent upon their access to good digital technology:

‘The research participants highlighted how their own relationship with music was influenced by their access to technology. Increased access to and development of appropriate technology for young people combined with enhanced teaching pedagogy will have the greatest impact to support young people’s ability to engage with music in the future.... [But] while some young people may have benefited from the continuation of remote learning, others were marginalised, felt disconnected and isolated’.¹⁵

Working with a local authority traditional music programme, that sees a number of its learners go on to study traditional music in higher education and/or perform semi-professionally or professionally, an interviewee voiced a concern on the impact of the pandemic in terms of the development of young musicians:

‘...There’s some children that have either missed two years of tuition or have missed completely being involved in the project. And that’s a real shame. And it’s something we’re very aware of, and the tutors are very aware of, because there’s young people that they know would be in a very different place.... If it wasn’t for COVID, that they have missed two years of tuition that was vitally important to their progression, and may have changed the direction that they’ve gone after school. And that’s something we need to look into deeply as to if any of the young people that we’re working with have decided to go down different pathways, because maybe they’ve seen that music isn’t necessarily secure. You know, they’ve seen that sort of reality’ (interviewee).

The suggestion of young and emerging artists changing their career trajectory is a significant concern for the future of the traditional arts, having witnessed the insecurity and precariousness of freelancer artists’ livelihoods during the pandemic.

Many found that adult learners were able to cope with the digital transition more comfortably than children:

‘During the pandemic all my teaching went online which created many challenges especially teaching fiddle to young children. Lots of pupils lost interest and I had to re-train and learn new skills relating to technology and teaching’.

¹⁵ Michelle Finnerty, ‘Musicking during Lockdown’ – Exploring young people’s perspectives on their engagement with music during COVID Pandemic in Ireland’, *Journal of Music, Health and Wellbeing*, Autumn 2021, p.8, <https://storage.googleapis.com/wzukusers/user-20563976/documents/fb0c1cfbfa2e4bd8a9cc0eb4ae506409/Finnerty.pdf> [date accessed, 19/08/2022].

'I gained more adult students online, but lost work with children (primary school age) as online did not suit them'.

'[I] was doing oral storytelling online, using various platforms. Most unsatisfactory although I did adapt. Doesn't really work well with young children'.

'Teaching was not possible for 18 months so this has meant that a number of young people that were learning have ceased learning traditional music completely or have missed out on 18 months tuition.'

'Our teaching was completely decimated by the pandemic. We went from 200 students to 20. It has also been impossible to recruit new learners due to the schools using COVID as an excuse to deny us access to students. The students we have kept have all suffered greatly.'

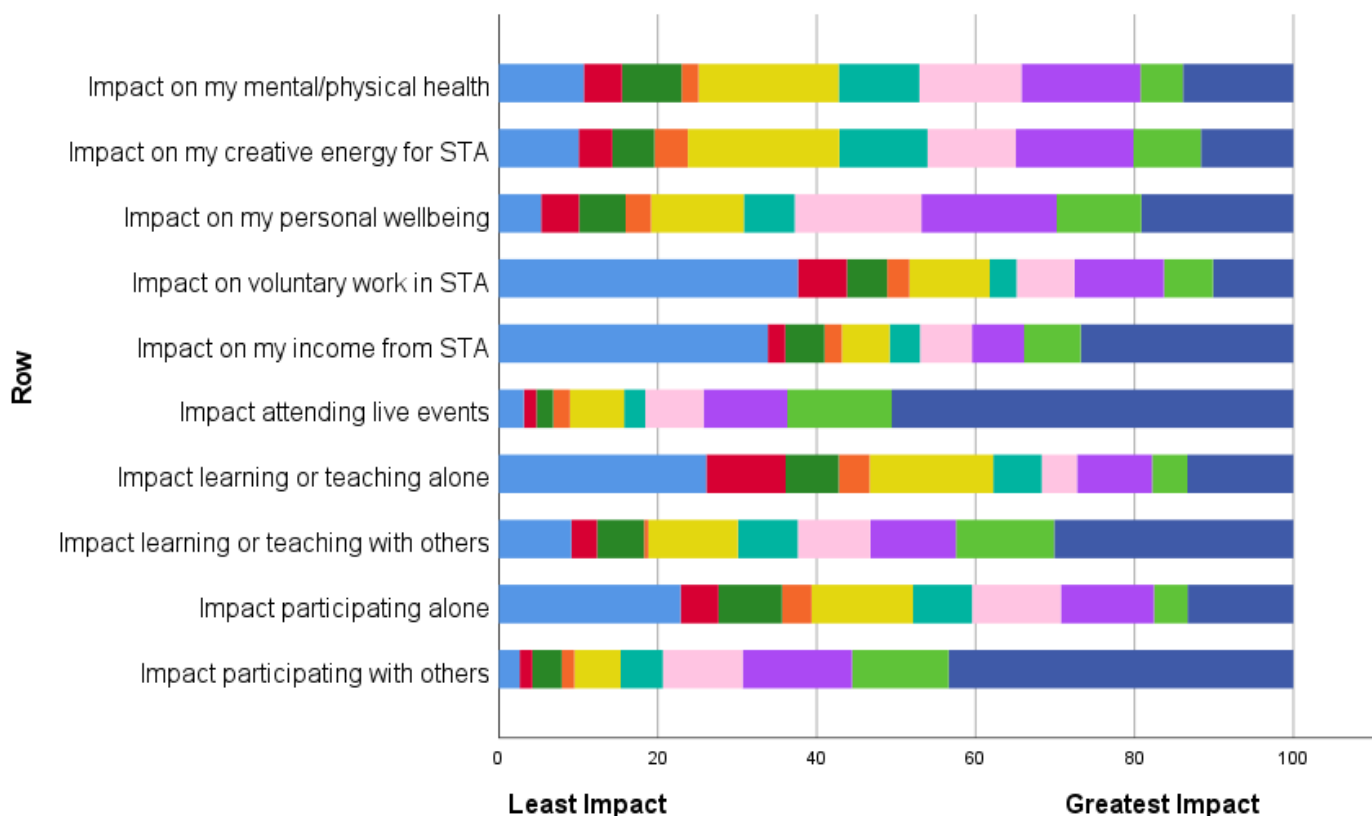
There was also concern in interviews that some young people may have missed out on a musical education altogether. For instance, Arthur Cormack from Fèisean nan Gàidheal voiced concern over a potential cohort of young musicians who may have missed out from participating in Fèisean education activities:

'If we have missed two years of getting young people started on playing music from the age of 8, then ... there's probably a whole pile of 10 year olds, 11 year olds that maybe aren't that interested or [have] moved on and take an interest in something else. So, we have lost them for good. I don't know, but we'll see' (Arthur Cormack).

Given this impact on young people beginning to learn Scottish traditional arts, and on continuity for children already learning, combined with the substantially ageing profile of participants in the Scottish traditional arts, we are recommending that one of the core responses to the pandemic across the sector has to be to re-engage and recruit children into the sector. Recruitment and re-engagement could be enacted in multiple ways, we suggest several ways in which that might happen (see Chapter 7, p.47) that will help to address this most significant impact of the pandemic on Scottish traditional arts.

One key aspect of the evidence we asked survey respondents to report on was their sense of the relative importance of different pandemic impacts upon their work, health and wellbeing. We asked all respondents to score from 1 to 10 the relative impact across a range of key areas, where 1 represented no impact at all and 10 represented the biggest impact in their lives from the pandemic and its restrictions.

Figure 7: Relative impact of the pandemic restrictions upon different core aspects of Scottish traditional arts. Colours show least impact on left of X axis to greatest impact in dark blue on right of the X axis.



Participation & Practice

The key point from this was that people felt the biggest impact had been on their ability to participate with other people and on their ability to attend live events either as an audience member or performer. The loss of in-person, social and performing events was the most significant impact of the social restrictions during COVID, however there were some other aspects which can be understood from examination of figure 7.

As can be seen from the chart, there were quite substantial impacts from the pandemic upon people's personal wellbeing and also on all teaching too. This was similarly reflected in the interview data, in which an aspect of wellbeing through traditional arts participation was reflected on in all interviews, but also with regards to teaching and learning. For instance, an interviewee working in creative learning reflected on the decrease in learner numbers for their traditional music offer and suggested that the age range of 14-16 year olds had been greatly impacted, citing the loss of social experience with other learners and with their professional musician tutors through virtual tuition:

'We did have a number of young people say... 'I'm not going to do the virtual tuition, because actually, what I love is coming along to the workshops and being part of something and being with young people who love traditional music, and I don't have that within my community'... So they completely missed the tutors, they missed being part of that world and that network with them'.

Similarly, Lorna Ogilvie, chair of RSCDS, commented that, although teachers, groups and the Society itself creatively engaged with dance tuition and participation through the digital medium, dance classes saw a decrease in participants.

Social Media and online communities

While practice and participation in traditional arts was significantly affected by social distancing measures, artists and organisations have demonstrated a great deal of creativity and collaboration in maintaining a level of participation and practice in traditional arts. As such, new online communities have developed that are centred around traditional arts. For instance, 'Tunes in the Hoose'—'an online community created to keep Scottish musicians playing together at a time when opportunities are uncertain'—is a prominent example of an online community of practice that emerged as a result of the pandemic.¹⁶ Using Facebook as a platform, Martin MacLeod and Martin MacLeod Jr combined their musical and film production skill sets to create high quality videos of remote ensembles playing sets of traditional tunes from their homes that were then streamed on Facebook. The project included musicians from around Scotland, and the world, and from across levels of experience and ability, from beginner to professional: 'There were serious amateurs, there were some beginners, there were people with disabilities who could easily join in because [they] didn't have to go physically to [a] concert ...[or] go on stage'. Via their 'Musicians/Contributors' page on Facebook (942 members), participants were invited to submit a video of themselves playing a set of traditional tunes. Other musicians could then play along and create their own video recording of the set and submit in order for all contributing videos to be edited together and released on the 'Tunes in the Hoose' Facebook page, which now has almost 12,000 followers (7th August 2022). 'Tunes in the Hoose' received so many submissions that a time window restriction for new submissions had to be introduced due to the volume they received. While musicians from a range of age groups participated in the creation of the videos, Martin MacLeod said that, according to the comments the videos received on Facebook:

'It was quite an older generation as well, who keenly follow Scottish music in particular, they're the ones who largely keep the programmes going. And the comments we received, such as, "I've been locked in the house for six months. And I look forward to this every day or every week".'

'Tunes in the Hoose', like other social media-based musical performances such as Ewan Galloway's 'Stagger Inn', were particularly significant to those experiencing isolation and as such created a new online community of participants and audience members which aided the lack of in-person social interaction and musical practice during the pandemic.

Return to in-person participation

The post-pandemic return of participants to Scottish traditional arts groups and events has been both slow and problematic. Gaelic choirs, Fèisean, amateur dance groups, as well as membership-based organisations such as RSCDS, and others have seen participant and **membership numbers sharply decrease**. Similarly, many amateur dance groups, folk clubs and annual events have not returned at all since the restrictions were put in place. While voluntary and amateur groups have maintained some form of participation online or have maintained connections through regular communication, in many cases the numbers of participants have not regained those prior to March 2020.

There are numerous and complicating factors affecting this problematic return for participants to Scottish traditional arts. For instance, wider education guidelines have reduced, or completely stopped, the return to in-person participation and teaching for groups that use schools as a venue for their traditional arts activities, because of public health

¹⁶ Tunes in the Hoose [Facebook page], accessed 5th August 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/TunesInTheHoose>

guidelines or overly-cautious management. Some guidance has suggested that venues are only to be used for their core purposes (e.g. schools) and therefore voluntary and other organisations have delayed their return to in-person participation, or completely stopped altogether. Some venues were overly-cautious in enforcing no entry to their venues, despite public health guidance permitting face-to-face activities, and have therefore created an even longer delay to the return of in-person teaching and learning. For dance, a delay to the return of in-person participation was delayed due to 'dance' being categorized as a 'contact sport', with in-person dancing not being allowed back until August 9th 2021, when all Scotland's venues moved out of 'level 0'. The further delays caused by the overly-cautious misalignment of restrictions and the placement of traditional arts within guidelines that may not be fully appropriate, suggests **more could be done to increase understanding of traditional arts practices with venues, local government and policymakers.**

Age, change in interests, physical fitness, health issues (related or unrelated to Covid), and travel have particularly impacted on participant return to Scottish traditional dance over the past two years. Caroline Brockbank, from Dunedin Dancers reflects the non-return of dancers who previously travelled to Edinburgh to participate in dancing:

'I think COVID is a sort of punctuation mark. It's actually like a sort of semicolon. And for some people, it's actually like a full stop. Some people it's been like, "right, well, I used to do A, B, and C, but now I'm looking at life differently". ... And I think people have looked at dancing and thought actually, "I'm not going to go back to it".'

She added that the group had been struggling to regain the number of participants they had pre-pandemic. Issues relating to participant return are not only related to older participants, but to younger generations. Speaking about the Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Arthur Cormack said:

'Certainly over the last few months, we've been trying to rebuild the activities and to make sure they increase and we hope that we'll be able to start to attract them against numbers we used to do, but I think it'll take time, I don't think we can automatically assume that everybody [who] was taking part in the session prior to 2020, automatically they're all going to come back to us with[out] some encouragement after two years'.

Regaining both younger and older participant and membership numbers is now an active concern for many of the groups and organisations involved in traditional arts. Lorna Ogilvie, the chair of RSCDS, reflected on the older participants in Scottish country dancing and the efforts they are making to re-engage their participants:

'So our membership, like I think many organisations went down on the floor... some of the older people... maybe choosing not to come back or they've decided they don't want to go out at night anymore. They've had two years of not doing that. So a number of branches have been running either tea dances or afternoon classes to try and keep some of these people on board, we run low impact classes at St Andrews for the people who don't want to do the high impact. So we've tried to adapt, it's been very reassuring to see that it's now building again, and dancers are gradually coming back.'

RSCDS are now aware of an upturn in both membership numbers and active dancers for their summer events. As is the case for a number of organisations, the full picture is yet to emerge as the year progresses.

Similar issues were reported by James Graham, Chief Executive of An Comunn Gàidhealach (the national Mod). In order to engage younger participants, James commented that the pandemic and its restrictions allowed time for the organisation to re-evaluate and make changes to the Mod's syllabus. They introduced various new innovations including *TikTok* competitions promoting Gaelic language and culture, a *Battle of the Bands* and 'speed-dating style' conversations with Gaelic-speaking stars:

'To be honest, I think we knew we were going to probably have quite a difficult challenge returning. Can everything go back to normal?... [T]his year, because we had the chance to reset, we undertook a kind of reinvention review of the competition's syllabus... And there's a lot of new innovative elements to the festival now aimed at youngsters.... So we have changed a lot of stuff like that... this is the first year of it happening, so it's going to be interesting to see how all that goes, because there's quite a few changes to the syllabus'.

Traditional arts organisations have been forced to rethink the routes to membership, both to encourage new members to replace those who haven't returned, and to stimulate interest amongst those who remain. Many organisations are reaching out more broadly and, in some cases, becoming more accessible and diverse. Arthur Cormack noted that Fèisean nan Gàidheal are 'reaching groups of people that we don't normally work with' through the online edition of their annual Blas festival, online Gaelic education resources, residency schemes and through local Fèis prioritising work with early years groups and groups living in areas of socio-economic deprivation through free events.

The Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland has also become more diverse in its membership and now has increased its membership, particularly through broadening out its remit to 'include traditional dance forms, not only Scottish, [but including] that's been practised in Scotland', as demonstrated in the 'Pomegranates' the first pilot dance festival that incorporated dance workshops from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Korea, Japan, Breton and Mongolia, in addition to Highland, step and ceilidh dancing (Wendy Timmons, chair of TDFS).

In order to promote the return to in-person dancing, the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland also provided small bursaries for individual dancers to plan an in-person traditional dance event as restrictions were lifted 'to get more people taking part in traditional dance in Scotland in a social setting'.¹⁷ These bursaries were for the event planning itself, without obligation for the event to go ahead, purely with the aim of the scheme being 'to get people thinking about dancing again' (Wendy Timmons, TDFS).

While cultural organisations such as An Comunn Gàidhealach, the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland, RSCDS and others, have strategies for encouraging returning or new participants and are able to support local branches in participant recruitment, this is more difficult for amateur and purely voluntary groups or individuals who do not necessarily have the professional staff, knowledge or skill sets to comprehensively seek out and engage new members. There emerged in the evidence, a lack of strategies for recruitment and in some cases, organisations and voluntary groups are struggling to maintain participation. For instance, speaking in the context of Dunedin Dancers, Caroline Brockbank reflects:

'I think that all of us who do adult Scottish dancing, I think we're all finding the same problem. And we're all trying to think of strategies that we might be able to

¹⁷ <https://tracscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Getting-People-Dancing-Covid-Recovery-Fund.pdf> [accessed 7th August 2022].

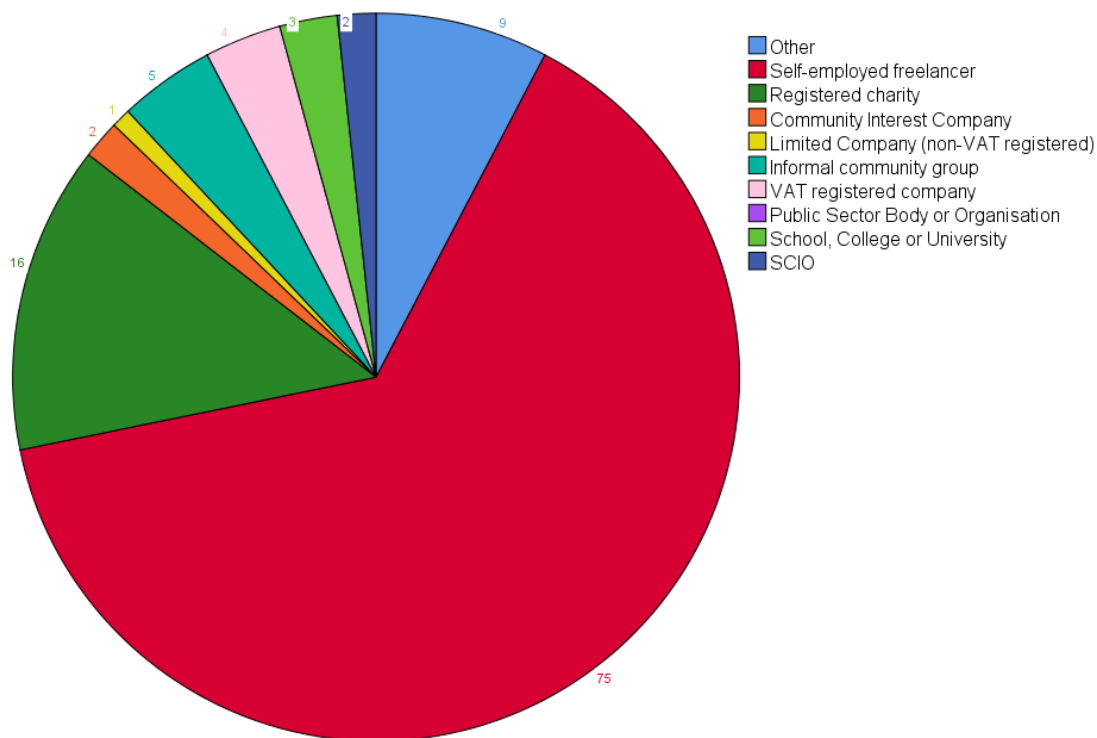
employ. Nobody's got any wonderful answers. And you know, as numbers go down, you're calling on a smaller group of people, and you're looking for more loyalty from everybody. And they maybe don't want to come every week, and they don't want to be pressurised into coming every week.'

We therefore are suggesting that the sector considers commissioning a **recruitment and retention toolkit for the Scottish traditional arts**, that makes a very clear manual for voluntary and other groups and organisations wishing to think about how to recruit new, and particularly, younger members (see p.48).

Chapter 3: Financial and Economic Impact

In this sample, and for the first time, we have a snapshot of the financial status of those working in Scottish traditional arts. In this sample, the majority of the Scottish traditional arts sector classify themselves as self-employed freelancers, and there are a fair number of charitable organisations (total = 117 respondents):

Figure 8: Count of the financial status of survey respondents



In our survey data we found that around a quarter of respondents received some form of financial assistance during the pandemic for their Scottish traditional arts activities (and around 75% did not). Of that quarter of respondents we found that 80% reported that they found it 'essential' or 'very useful' and all respondents found it useful to some degree. In fact there was a great deal of gratitude for the emergency funding put in place by *Creative Scotland* during the pandemic—across both the survey and interview evidence. Creative Scotland are to be applauded for the speed and targeting of this funding, as it often provided absolutely essential income where other national SEISS or charitable funds could not (see further detail on next page on various forms of financial support available to the sector).

Our survey suggests that prior to the pandemic around two-thirds of those working in Scottish traditional arts made some money from their music, dance, storytelling or crafts. Furthermore, the data shows that the average income of individuals and organisations earned from Scottish traditional arts was between £5,000 to £10,000. This underscores the importance of part-time work in the sector, and the ability for people to work part-time and on a freelance basis where they have other earnings and employment in addition to their traditional practices. When we take the case of self-employed freelancers specifically, 87%

of them earned less than £20,000 per annum, pre-pandemic, with the average earnings reported as £5,000 to £10,000 directly from Scottish traditional arts.

When asked how this income has been affected by the pandemic, **63% said their income had been either ‘reduced somewhat’ or ‘been badly reduced’ with 18% saying their income had ‘totally disappeared’**:

Table 4: ‘Please estimate how this income has been affected by the pandemic? My/Our income from Scottish traditional arts has...’

Increased	6%
Stayed about the same	13%
Reduced somewhat	22%
Been badly reduced	41%
Totally disappeared	18%

The loss of income has been catastrophic for the performing arts across the UK. Not just for organisations, who to some degree if they were proactive, were sheltered from **the worst sectoral effects of the pandemic which fell hardest upon self-employed freelancers**. This is a key consideration for recovery schemes, the traditional arts communities themselves, and for policy stakeholders, who must consider how best to support individual freelancers, often working part-time, alongside other jobs without the benefits of charitable or bigger structures around them and their work.

In our interviews, where respondents were semi-professional and worked other jobs and/or did not have to solely rely on their traditional arts practice for their income, there has been a hiatus of traditional arts activity. For those individuals, there has been a slow return to their activities, whether it is semi-professional storytelling, musical performance or dance tuition/calling.

Impact of financial support during the pandemic

During the pandemic, there were various UK and Scottish Government, and Creative Scotland schemes intended to support the performing arts and the creative industries sectors. These involved various approaches, but the most significant schemes for the Scottish traditional arts were the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) run by the UK Government, and the hardship and emergency funding provided by Creative Scotland.

The main source of UK government financial support came from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). Other financial aid came from local authorities (discretionary and emergency grants), and from other more diverse sources such as, the SCVO ‘Apart and Thrive Fund’, the Event Scotland Recovery Fund, TRACS Scottish Storytelling Ripple (enabling outdoor performances), The Fèis, Help Musicians, and others. The money was generally used to ‘pay food and bills’, with one survey respondent reporting that, ‘I can’t emphasise enough about how vital this support was. Thank you, thank you to all the organisations who kept me from complete ruin’.

Many artists found that the UK Government Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) had some very negative unforeseeable consequences. The money in this scheme

was available to self-employed individuals with reliable tax records in 2019-2021 with trading profits of no more than £50,000. The scheme provided differing financial support based upon a projection of how much an individual's turnover was reduced (greater or lesser than 30%) based upon pre-COVID figures.

However, this was all treated as income for the tax returns due in January 2022 and into the future. With the lack of work, there were very few overheads (travel, accommodation, fuel, etc.) for performing musicians and artists, meaning that very little of the SEISS grants could be balanced by working costs, or the cost of renewing equipment and associated costs. Consequently there were large tax bills for many performing musicians. 'We got a reasonable chunk of SEISS money [based on our previous income], but then come time for the tax return this year [2022] they took almost all of it back' (David Francis, interviewee).

Similarly, there was the perennial problem of 'nullified public funding'¹⁸ where the state gives with one scheme, and takes back with another. One respondent reported that they had had two emergency grants of £2,000 from their local council during the pandemic which were then used to pay various bills including a large council tax bill. This problem occurs in many settings in arts funding and is a function of compartmentalized views of an organisation and their many and diverse relationships across the public sector.

Some artists reported that as the pandemic wore on, they could not sustain their careers and have left the sector: '[The SEISS grant] got me through the first few months. But when it became apparent there was going to be a long term lack of gigs, I got a job' (survey respondent). Yet others weren't able to benefit from the SEISS funding because they just fell short of the required eligibility because of their portfolio career structure prior to the pandemic: 'I didn't get any funding as I have a pension and my gig earnings were less than half my overall income. I felt quite down at times but managed to find other outlets for creativity' (survey respondent).

A self-employed traditional musician interviewee described how they fell between the gap of the SEISS scheme and survived predominantly from donations of viewers of their live streamed performances, in addition to a small grant from Creative Scotland and support from Help Musicians. Having given up a salaried job a year before the COVID restrictions to become a full-time professional musician, they were ineligible for the self-employed scheme due to having worked a salaried job three years before lockdown and were also ineligible for Universal Credit due to the declaration of donations from audience members: 'those donations basically saved my life because they paid my mortgage and my electricity and my gas and my car ... So I'm really lucky, really lucky' (interviewee).

However, there were some more positive reports about the ways in which the emergency financial support was used. Some artists used the emergency financial support to develop new, innovative lines of practice that will support their future work such as one respondent who reported that:

'[The] Creative Scotland support enabled me to use my creativity to do a series of projects that were appropriate. It was a blessing to be given funds to use and to be able to just get on and do work that would be of benefit. These included: Online weekly story and music get togethers for Families living with Dementia; Online Christmas crafts; Online Burns night Ceilidh; Twice weekly Story and craft live streams for children while schools were closed; 5 Storytelling Video Visits to Highland places of interest for folk unable to go. The fund also enabled me to develop a new story, and storytelling, and donate considerable time to filming and editing a film for XXXXXX that is now used in Nursery Schools. I have also

¹⁸ A phrase we have coined for this report given its prevalence in the financial narratives of arts organisations.

developed many visual ideas for future storytelling and art projects, filing many sketch books in particular for a [future] project [details withheld to protect anonymity.]' (survey Respondent).

Another respondent suggested that:

'Creative Scotland and Awards for All enabled me personally, and a group I work with, to delay projects, to reconsider them and ultimately this has led to new inspiration and creative work that perhaps would not have been considered pre-pandemic' (survey respondent).

One significant issue that has emerged from the research has been the problems surrounding the **lack of visibility** of self-employed freelancers in the sector. In this respect, the Scottish traditional arts sector reflects wider problems with the invisibility of freelancers across the arts and creative economy. It is more time consuming and difficult to provide tailored support for individual artists, musicians and dancers across the country, and recent EKOS-conducted research suggests that of the total 2020-21 CS COVID emergency funding:

'Overall, organisational awards made up the majority of all funding, together accounting for 71%. The individual funds represent 25% of all funding and the targeted funds 4%.¹⁹

We have suggested a new, 'Freelancers Working Lives Annual Survey' in Chapter 7 of this report, that would benefit all performing arts in Scotland, and would go some distance to better understanding, and representing, the needs of the freelance artistic communities in Scotland (see p.47).

A huge volume of digital content was created by traditional artists during the lockdowns, from both amateur and professionals, in response to maintaining and developing audiences, building online communities, and to help those who were isolated and to maintain morale and interest during a very difficult time. Examples given here include 'Tunes in the Hoose', the 'Stagger Inn', along with the numerous livestreams and content created by musicians, dancers and storytellers. Reflecting on the significant amount of unpaid work artists undertook during lockdown, Arthur Cormack stated that, despite the immediate loss of income, artists provided their services for free and there should be some acknowledgement or 'payback' for that period:

'To be fair to freelance artists, in particular, despite the fact, in a lot of cases, their work completely dried up, they were still willing to go online and give their services free to entertain people and to engage people and to keep them sane. I think there's some degree of payback, at least to freelance artists for that period'.

The lockdown periods were a stark reminder of the precarious livelihoods of freelance artists and the significant amount of unpaid labour that goes into building a career across the sector, all the while providing a significant service and social value.

For some however, the financial and social restrictions have led them to reconsider the approach to their work, and particularly, the global reach of their performance and teaching through digital presence and remote working.

¹⁹ EKOS, 2022. *Evaluation of Creative Scotland COVID Emergency Funding Programmes*, Glasgow: EKOS Limited, p.33. [available at: <https://www.creativescotland.com/resources/professional-resources/research/creative-scotland-research/evaluation-covid-19-emergency-funding-august-2022>]

COVID recovery and rising costs

There was significant anxiety voiced in the interviews in terms of the long-term legacy of COVID as it emerges with challenges brought about by the steep rise in costs. As artists and audiences emerge from the pandemic, a significant concern across the interviews was the cost-of-living crisis, Brexit and the unknown future impact of global geopolitics. This concern has been consistently voiced in the interviews, from the change in ticket prices as a result of the pandemic, to the concern over the saturation of postponed and rescheduled gigs, the cost of fuel to attend in-person gigs, and the stretch on incomes to allow for interests in traditional arts.

A programmer voiced concern of engaging returning audiences at a time when spending money on arts events might not be prioritised:

'In October cost-of-living could kick in again, with the energy bills, and when you want people to come to multiple events within a festival or an events programme, and you want to encourage them to be part of it, and to come along, then we've got to realise that people have different financial priorities and maybe coming to live shows, it's something they can't afford anymore. And family events, if you're paying for a family, it's expensive. So there's a lot of thinking still going on about pricing' (programmer interviewee).

While the digital pivot developed international audiences, returning to in-person international touring is proving challenging amid practicalities around costs and Brexit. A professional musician reflected on the rising costs of international touring and the long-term impact of fewer opportunities for cultural collaboration and transmission:

'[A]fter Brexit, we need collaboration with other European countries, musicians being more cash strapped and less willing to go and spend loads of money trying to get a tour in Europe is just diminishing the cultural collaboration and cultural understanding and transmission of ideas and traditions and understanding. And that's been decimated by not only COVID but Brexit'.

Touring further afield for audiences in North America is also becoming increasingly difficult since the pandemic. Daniel Gillespie suggested:

'[Touring] was already difficult beforehand, in terms of the costs. It's now getting to the point of, particularly with North America, being unviable, and that has been us [touring] in North America for 10 years. We're now at the point where the costs of sitting on 60-70% of the gross pure turnover. And that's not viable. We're competing against Irish bands that are receiving support for international touring'.

Sector stakeholders and artists may wish to consider how best to support the internationalization of professional Scottish traditional musicians, dancers, storytellers and craftspeople. In addition to the current provision for touring schemes that have some longevity in the Scottish policy landscape, further reductions or mitigations in costs could be considered through formal partnerships with airlines, travel companies or car hire firms. These could represent significant savings for individual artists or groups to offset the increasing overheads of international touring.

Chapter 4: The Digital Pivot

One of the most striking statistics in this report was that 70% of all respondents to the survey reported that they had moved some of their Scottish traditional arts activity online during the pandemic.

Many individuals and organisations recognised in 2020 that they would have to either move their activity online in some form, or stop altogether. Although not clear in April 2020 and in the first half of that year that there would be further lockdowns, many people immediately noticed that this 'digital pivot' that began abruptly in March/April 2020 opened up a new ability to reach audiences well beyond their normal geographical reach:

'An early indication of how things were going to go, [came from] a series of live workshops scheduled for April 2020 and we shifted them online. Aimed at musicians, these were sessions on stagecraft, PRS, professional development workshops. And we discovered of course as soon as we went online, we had people from Caithness, Galloway and the Borders that would never otherwise have come [previously]' (David Francis, Director of TRACS, interviewee).

However, different artistic practices rely in different ways upon digital technology. Traditional storytellers found that their practices did not translate well to an online environment, whereas, some traditional musicians found that it allowed them new access to teach overseas pupils and thereby extend their ability to earn money through teaching online. These sentiments were echoed in the survey by several storytellers:

'[I was] extremely uncomfortable with my online performances, as storytelling online is a very different art form from storytelling to a live audience' (survey respondent)' (survey respondent).

However, an interviewee involved in programming traditional arts events suggested that the storytelling content created for the digital pivot is the first time that Scottish storytelling has been showcased in such a way, which would not have happened had it not been for the pandemic:

'If you imagine storytelling as an art form, it's much celebrated for its purity and its audience and performer experience. But there has never been a period where storytellers in Scotland have been given funding to develop pieces of work, which will be specifically filmed and presented live. And the filming process of that has allowed the storytellers to pitch it to other storytelling festivals, or even to other theatres as well, and say 'this is an art form, here's an example of it, you can view this'... we've never had the opportunity to fund these pieces of work... But that has been hugely positive, I think, for storytelling in Scotland anyway, when you look at what Celtic Connections does for music, to have a platform to present Scottish talent to the world like that. We're nowhere near the scale of that, funding or staffing or anything like that, but actually, in our own way, we've been able to develop this digital stuff. So that's definitely positive' (interviewee).

In our interviews, dancers in particular spoke about the significant challenges in teaching or participating in dance in an online setting. While online ceilidhs, dance groups, lessons and online dance tuition videos were produced, there was a consensus that dance practices were particularly difficult to pivot to the virtual space, considering the physical contact that is often required in Scottish traditional dancing. However, interviewees also spoke about holding Zoom sessions in which they themselves, and others did dance at home.

This was largely seen differently for music practices, however. An emerging female musician spoke about how her online performances for audiences particularly in the USA, meant that she could reconsider how she chooses to accept gigs going forward. In an interview, she reflected on how she liked working from home and doing live streamed performances and, in some cases, she earned more from livestreaming than performing as part of an in-person tour:

'I would do a live stream and make more money than I would in the normal touring environment, especially live streams that were in the States... So things that had state funding in America, for example... I think I would get like 200 pounds for half an hour of just... singing at a virtual [show]... after that it's like, 'why would I want to travel for hours and hours and hours and get paid the exact same when, for a year and a bit, I kind of made... relatively okay money dealing with people on Zoom' (interviewee).

In order to become more selective about what gigs to accept, the artist reflected on the need to build a strong digital presence and stand up above the saturation of social media 'noise' at the time, particularly as an emerging artist. Individuals and organisations moving ahead and hoping to build better and more sustainable digital practice, can therefore think about how they treat 'live' performances. For instance, considerations could be made in relation to marketing different offerings for performing 'live digital' and 'live in-person' which may collectively then impact the programming decisions for festivals and venues, particularly overseas, where festivals and venues may not have considered Scottish-based performers prior to the pandemic. This also has knock on effects on the type of professional profile and marketing that musicians, storytellers, bands and dancers in particular can consider. Thinking through the strategies here is an area where collective training and support might make a real difference to the ways in which professional artists use digital marketing in future.

Similar to the difficulties in recruiting students online, working digitally and building an audience as an emerging artist was also identified as a particular challenge. Reflecting on the maintenance of their audience during lockdown, Daniel Gillespie from Skerryvore commented on the band's live streaming and communication with their established international audience, developed through years of international touring:

'I think that was the repayment for us for years of touring abroad and doing so much on the road, was the people that we'd reached at those times were the ones that came and supported us and joined the live streams. I think as a new band starting out in COVID, times would have been extremely difficult. Because if you didn't have an established audience, it was actually hard to do that, unless it's something that was going to break through the social media noise, which was extremely high, the amount of content that was online, it was extremely hard to break through. So if you're a new band and new artists, it was a difficult time to try and break through at that point. So we're obviously grateful that we've been going as long as we had and with an established audience on various platforms.'

Other interviewees have managed to break through the saturation of live streamed social media content and even suggested that they had managed to develop a wider audience through their digital presence. This was, however, after a great deal of live streaming, content creation and playing to their niche in the market. For instance, Ewan Galloway went from live streaming his accordion performance every night at the start of the first lockdown, moving to twice and then once a week. He built up a significant following on social media through his 'Stagger Inn' sessions, which is now reflected in his in-person bookings: 'It's just

got really busy... Now it's good. I've always got something to do... Thankfully, if it wasn't for playing all the different styles of music, there's no way I could have done it [become full-time freelance accordionist]".

Digital Preference

While the digital pivot has certainly not worked for everyone involved in traditional arts, a new 'digital preference' has been identified among many audiences and participants both internationally and within Scotland. Building digital resources and content, and therefore a digital legacy, has overwhelmingly been seen as a positive impact of the pandemic by interviewees. Without in-person events and activities, organisation funds were available to be used to create and commission content that provided income for artists and technical and production workers at the time of the pandemic and will continue to be accessible to audiences beyond the pandemic.

A programme and events manager for a cultural organisation reflected that before the pandemic, there was little need to develop digital skills and a digital presence:

'We have done a limited amount of digital work. It's amazing actually, to think that only two and a half years ago, we didn't have a functioning YouTube page, we didn't know what Zoom was. We had no kind of digital legacy. It just wasn't something we've budgeted for or felt was that necessary. And in amongst everything else, we're a very small team. So part of the staffing and my role in particular was to learn how to use these things and what benefits they could bring... And we're really pleased we did that because we've got this bank of digital content' (interviewee).

Speaking about the organisation of the National Mod, James Graham commented on the positive change in working and the positives of the digital pivot in terms of engagement and international reach:

'We had people taking part from Argentina, from America, with viewers in Japan, it was incredible. And, if we weren't almost forced into that, we wouldn't have had that kind of engagement and reach, though we do get international engagement [in the in-person Mod], but there was definitely increase to the online element, to the point that we have retained that this year' (James Graham, An Comunn Gàidhealach).

Digital skill sets and creative modes of remote engagement have been developed throughout lockdown and the ongoing social distancing restrictions. However, maintaining a digital presence and the engagement of online audiences is becoming challenging both for organisations and individual artists. In a number of the interviews, respondents speak about the balance that has to be achieved between the digital or even hybrid offer and the return to in-person events, and the discouragement from shelving their new digital presence due to the costs and capacity of 'returning to normal'.

A programme and events manager commented on the balance for digital and in-person preference:

'I think we're seeing maybe a delicate balance now between some people wanting to continue this because they don't feel comfortable coming to shows or they can't get to XXXXX [city anonymised] or Scotland at all. And it's a way for them to feel connected. But the costs involved, the time involved. And actually, say for a live

storytelling session, we had 30 to 40 people during [the] lockdowns, we're now maybe on 15 to 20. And as you can see, it's slowly reducing. So I think certainly there's a bit of work done for us now to look forward to see what's achievable digitally' (interviewee).

Speaking with regards to managing expectations of the digital offer when returning to an in-person, conventional Mod, James Graham reflected:

'I suppose the expectation you need to manage. So for example, last year, because we didn't have the full scale physical element of the event, we were able to do far more on the kind of online digital side. So the budget allowed us to have a full professional streaming team in and we streamed all our main events really, really professionally and through an IT professional platform, and that worked so well. And it was really, really enjoyed by people. And I think there's an expectation, though, that will be carried on. The thing is our budget hasn't grown any. And now that we have to go back to the full scale ... conventional Mod, and there's no budget left to do all these innovative, digital things that we were doing last year and the year before, when we had the means to do that... I think all of us as an organisation wish to carry that streaming on and [want that] full blown online element ... to go ahead as well. But the funding doesn't allow us to do that this year. You know, it's almost one or the other, and so that's maybe frustrating that we've made really good progress last year and the year before, but we almost need to tailor that back a bit this year' (James Graham, An Comunn Gàidhealach).

Organisations and individuals are confronted with the positives of reaching a much larger audience and making their events and performances highly accessible, stretching time and budgets to cater to both their online and in-person audiences. For TRACS, they have used the lockdowns and working-from-home to reassess how they approach the physical location of their staff. David Francis, the Director of TRACS said that,

'The staffing impact is interesting because, we already had two members of staff in Glasgow who were commuting back and forward to here [Edinburgh] and we had another member of staff from Oban, who moved back to Oban and is now staying there and still working for us. Which could potentially be a future model for how TRACS might work. The advantage is as a national organisation we can say that not all our staff are based in Edinburgh, we are distributed. [Now] Fortnightly staff meetings alternate between online and in person [in Edinburgh]' (David Francis, Director of TRACS, interviewee).

The preference for digital performances, in some cases, has been counterproductive to encouraging in-person audiences back to performance events. For instance, a cultural programmer spoke about their experience of using the Performing Arts Venue Relief fund from Creative Scotland to produce high quality recorded performances that were streamed online in order to continue to pay musicians and other freelancers, such as videographers and sound and lighting technicians, during the pandemic:

'So the filming had a lot of these positive benefits for us, but I think that it got to a point then when I think we almost facilitated the non-return [to] live events by doing that. So I think we've maybe changed audience habits. We've made it really easy to watch your favourite acts from your living room rather than coming to the venues. So it was maybe counterproductive. I think there's going to be a place for it always, because there's always a way that we want to reach audiences that had

come to us, but I think certainly for the foreseeable, it's something that we're not going to do at all, that we can focus on the return to in person, live event' (cultural programmer interviewee).

Chapter 5: Impacts on Venues & Audiences

The impact of the pandemic on venues and audiences for Scottish traditional arts has been substantial. At the time of writing (summer 2022), programmers and events organisers were reporting that there has been a significant rise in no-shows to events, a decrease in ticket sales, and different responses to live, in-person events from younger to older audiences. Older audience members appear to be slower to return to in-person events, and are buying fewer tickets. A programmer interviewee reported that they are taking this into account in their programming decisions for Scottish traditional music; opting for live bands that they feel might better appeal to younger audiences, with perhaps more hybrid musical styles. When asked in the survey whether, ‘...the pandemic affected your willingness to attend live Scottish traditional arts events?’, 42% said it had, and 58% said it had not. This represents a very large proportion of potential audience members who were (presumably) less willing to attend live Scottish traditional arts events post-pandemic.

Of those respondents who have a role to play with audiences in Scottish traditional arts, they reported that the impact of the pandemic on audience attendances as follows:

Table 5: Table of counts, ‘Please estimate the impact of the pandemic on your current audience attendances?’

No impact on audience attendance	2
A modest impact on audience attendance	27
A substantial impact on audiences	57
Complete withdrawal of audience attendance	8
Total	94

The emergence of ‘live digital’ events has been one of the key developments that has emerged during the pandemic (discussed above) and venues and audiences are now also considering their participation both in-person and digitally for live events. These trends are having real effects for revenues for venues, musicians and festivals, and there are opportunities for the sector to consider how best to respond to both the differential requirements of intergenerational programming, as well as the drop off in live in-person attendance and concomitant rise in live digital participation.

Audience return and changes to traditional arts programming

Difficulties with audience return to traditional arts events has been a major issue that has emerged strongly in interviews as well as the survey data, from ticket buying behaviours to decreases in audience numbers and an increase in audience no-shows. For instance, Daniel Gillespie, organiser of the Tìree Music Festival, noted that despite the enthusiastic return of audience members to the festival in July 2022, there was still a significant rise of no-shows: ‘prior to COVID, we would have about approximately 7-8% no-shows at the festival,... it was up a lot in the sense that it was 18%, so more than double’.

Traditional music performances have also been severely impacted in terms of audience numbers and last minute ticket buying, according to a cultural programmer who programmes traditional music events:

‘there’s still a lack of belief that most things will happen as it should. And that’s quite evident in the level of audiences that have returned and also in the way that

people are buying tickets, massively. So, we still are nowhere near the audience level that we would have been pre-COVID. And the buying habits are completely different now for those that have returned. [We] would never have been a venue that had a much of a walk-in on the day, we had an audience who would very much plot out what they would come and see for the next six to twelve months. Whereas now, we're probably doing at least a third of our tickets on the day. Which is a learning curve for us. We're also still seeing quite a lot of no-shows' (cultural programmer interviewee).

As a result, numerous changes to programming and events are taking place to re-engage and reassure audience members. This particularly reflects the older age range of traditional arts audiences and amateur participants and the ongoing uncertainty and impact of the pandemic on audience return and event recovery.

A cultural programmer also reflected on the types of audiences that are returning and the influence this has on their programme. They are programming acts that appeal to the younger audiences that are returning to in-person events, particularly trad fusion bands. In the case of traditional acts which appeal particularly to older audiences, there are significant issues with regards to ticket sales:

'When you ask "is it influencing how I programme?" I probably am programming shows that will appeal to a younger audience because they're who are coming back. And so...your Elephant Sessions and your Niteworks. And these young kind of trad fusion bands that are coming through, they've got a much younger, standing, beer-drinking audience who are quite happy to jump around together and have fun in a space, ... they're selling fine. Those are the acts that are selling. Our more traditional seated relaxed kind of shows are struggling, like really struggling. And you know, musicians who have incredibly established careers and would sell out ... in a matter of weeks are not selling at even half capacity. And they would have an older audience. And I think that their audiences are still more unsure about returning' (cultural programmer interviewee).

Changes in types of event, time of day and audience capacity have been strategies used to encourage traditional arts audiences back to in-person events. For instance, low capacity, cabaret and afternoon gigs have been programmed to encourage confidence in older audiences to return.

As has been reflected on by individuals, cultural organisations, and venues, the time granted by the lockdowns resulted in the re-evaluation of traditional arts activities and events. The programming of traditional arts events has also been under evaluation according to numerous interviewees, with some programmes being stopped and new programmes developed as a result of the hiatus of live, in-person events. In some cases, programmes are becoming more relevant, particularly with regards to inclusion and diversity.

While the time afforded by lockdown has been positive in terms of programming in some ways, the unpredictability of audience return has had an ongoing impact particularly for emerging artists: In the case of a programmer, they said:

'I probably lost a lot of confidence in the way that I programme. ... I could predict, I know what this act is going to do. And I know that if I bring them in, I'm going to make this much money from that show. And that allows me to be a little bit riskier. With this other new act, I don't know how they will do. But I can balance it all out. I've lost that ability to do that. Because it's completely unpredictable as to who's

going to sell what at the moment. So it makes it very difficult for me to plan the year out and know that I'm going to finish and break even. And then affects how I choose what I'm going to do in the programme. It makes it a lot trickier to take risks on exciting new acts, of playing it safe (cultural programmer interviewee).

This was reflected by an emerging artist, who similarly said:

'Really, it's so difficult, because a lot of venues are worried about profit margins and all that... before [the pandemic] they might have had a gap to take a chance on a younger emerging musician. But now they really just want bums on seats and they want people that's going to pull so there's less opportunities for your emerging musicians.... But that's another negative [of] the pandemic, is that venues are less willing to take a chance on headlining an emerging band or even maybe adding support of an emerging band or artist' (emerging artist interviewee).

Pricing for events and activities have also been impacted by the pandemic. In our interviews, respondents have discussed attracting audience members through reduced-price tickets for new, short afternoon shows, implementing 'pay what you can' pricing structures, and pre-booking tickets with suggested rates. These changes in pricing to encourage audience return and accessibility are not without their issues, as respondents have pointed out that 'it's not that straightforward just to do that when you need to have some guaranteed income' if events are not covered by funding and that dropping pricing can mean that 'you're undervaluing a career that an artist has built to get them to a certain level of ticket pricing'. As a way to cap numbers of participants for family ceilidhs at the Edinburgh Fringe to comply with COVID precautions, Caroline Brockbank from Ceilidh Kids commented that the introduction of tickets with suggested 'pay what you can' rates during COVID, which have continued going forward, have been both positive and negative in her view.

'So instead of just turn up and put a pound in the jar, or actually don't put anything in, it's now you have to book and you have to pay... So you've got a choice of price ranges, so it is more accessible... I feel awkward, that I used to feel really good about the fact that actually people who had nothing and were using food banks would still come and dance with me. And now I feel actually, you're going to prioritise having tea over dancing... So I feel bad that people are having to pay just a small amount, because it might be a small amount they can't afford, especially as the Fringe puts a surcharge on the tickets... However, I can see that actually, I'm going to get paid better... And now I'm guaranteed a better income as a result, and the numbers are going to be more controlled, which is good' (Caroline Brockbank, Ceilidh Kids interviewee).

Concerns around pricing, costs and the sustainability of festivals have also been highlighted in the interview data. Speaking with regards to the Tíree Music Festival and ticket prices, Daniel Gillespie highlighted the issues with rescheduling the festival for two years in a row while carrying the 2020 festival tickets over to 2022 and the significance of funding to enable the festival to go ahead:

'I think at the end... 60% held on to the tickets, which at that point seemed the right choice for us, so we believed, but in the end, it became a massive problem because of costs and supplier issues and everyone else. So essentially, when we came to doing the festival in 2022, we were then in a position that the ticket money was generated on a budget based in 2020 or 2019. At that point, the reality was the costs in 2022 are very, very different. So had it not been for funding from Creative Scotland and from Event Scotland, we would have been in a very, very

difficult position. So ultimately, both open funding and COVID recovery funding enabled us to go ahead in 22. So obviously very grateful for that. The main focus was just basically making the festival happen again, that was the ultimate goal we just had to make it happen, deliver a safe and successful event, which we did after a lot of challenges' (Daniel Gillespie, Tiree Music Festival interviewee).

Future challenges of COVID recovery for venues and audiences

Among the interviewees, from individual musicians and dancers, to festival organisers, programmers, educators and cultural organisations, there is a sense that the real impact of COVID is yet to be seen in the traditional arts. 2022 is largely seen as a year of COVID recovery, in which events and activities are starting again after a two or, in the case of annual events, three year hiatus. As a result of the numerous national lockdowns and the easing and tightening of social distancing restrictions, a great deal of uncertainty and 'disbelief' have come about with regards to performances and events for organisations, venues, audiences and freelancers.

Two programmer interviewees in different parts of Scotland reported on this sense of future and ongoing anxiety about the resilience of events and audiences:

'We're still having to... caveat everything with "well, this might face some problems". And so... [we're] still programming and planning with big question marks over things'

'it was a two week closure and then a two month closure, and then it went on and on and on... And I think that that had quite an impact on people in terms of ... everyone would get their hopes up that shows were going to come back, and then it would be back to rescheduling, optimism, rescheduling, a complete circle for quite a long time. And I think that in itself had an effect on performers and audiences. To the extent that I think we're probably still feeling that now, I think that there's still a lack of belief [that] most things will happen as it should'.

The uncertainty and 'disbelief' of the smooth-running of events is also problematic for certainty in future bookings for freelancers:

'This year, I have not written anything in my diary in ink, everything's been in pencil, because so many things have been cancelled, that ... I don't feel confident to ink things in, whereas before [the pandemic] if a booking was confirmed, it would go in in ink... I think the risk is that due to people getting COVID, things they'll have to be cancelled. And so, I think maybe people think it's not worth actually putting them in in the first place, or they'll put them in, but they'll put them in in such a way that it's very, very easy to cancel it all at short notice. So they're not going to invest lots of time and money and effort in whatever the thing needs, just in case it all comes to nothing' (Caroline Brockbank).

An emerging female musician also highlighted that she now performs many more solo gigs, both as a result of the ongoing uncertainty around gigs taking place and due to the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic on promoters and venues. Having developed skills in self-accompaniment during lockdown and '[being] forced to play more', she has developed as a solo act. Other interviewees have also commented on the difficulties of hiring full bands in terms of the rise in costs, and this could mean a significant impact on ensembles and accompanying musicians. Indeed, semi-professional artists, such as Martin MacLeod, have reported that return to in-person performance has been slow since the COVID restrictions have eased.

The sense that traditional arts are very much yet to see the full impact of COVID came through many of the interviews. As COVID recovery is still in process, an interviewee commented on the ongoing effects felt across traditional arts and the need for continued funds for COVID recovery to support the sector over the coming medium-term future.

These ongoing effects can be seen in the performances that have been rescheduled over the last two years. As professional artists are now able to travel without COVID restrictions, they are able to play at rescheduled events. Many venues and festivals however, are coping with simply providing the events and fulfilling obligations to artists and audiences that have been continually rescheduled over the past three years. One of the consequences of this long delay to promised events is a **cost hangover**; many of these events were costed on 2019/2020 prices and travel, and the rising inflation and costs now mean that they are dealing with far higher overheads when providing these events in 2022 and 2023.

Chapter 6: Impacts on Wellbeing

Mental and physical wellbeing for artists during the pandemic

When asked the overarching question, 'did the pandemic affect your personal wellbeing?', 76% of respondents said it had, whilst 24% responded that overall, it had not. When asked whether they had used Scottish traditional music/dance/storytelling/crafts as a means to support their own personal wellbeing during the pandemic, 83% of those responding said they had (17% had not). This demonstrates to some general degree, that there is a groundswell of support for the therapeutic and personal wellbeing benefits to being involved in Scottish traditional arts.

When asked to respond with narrative free-text about how the COVID pandemic had affected personal wellbeing, people responded with many different descriptions. The most regularly reported effects on wellbeing from the COVID pandemic with Scottish traditional arts were feelings of loneliness and a loss of purpose or motivation. Survey respondents also reported clusters of feelings of isolation and anxiety.

The total absence of social interaction and the loss of earnings for many were a large part of what drove their loneliness and loss of purpose. Some direct quotations from the free-text responses (anonymized) give a flavour of the (often very significant) impact upon wellbeing for many across the Scottish traditional arts:

'My partner works entirely with live traditional music performance so lost all of his work overnight. This has had a huge impact on his and therefore my and our child's mental health and wellbeing. His self esteem has gone but now recovering slowly.'

'I lost my job, my whole world collapsed in 48 hours. I was gigging 6 to 9 times a week. It was horrendous'

'My mental health was impacted and I had to go onto anti-depressants to get me through the worst of it.'

'I couldn't meet people who were interested in the same things as myself. My social life was taken away. My chance to travel to competitions was taken away.'

'[I was] unable to attend and hold face to face classes both as a dancer and as a teacher [this] had an impact and the stress and worry around the uncertainty of when venues would open to allow classes to take place impacted on mental health and seeing good dancers give up as they could not attend classes was sad to see'.

'I work in traditional arts education and performance. The pandemic stopped a lot of things (gigs, sessions, festivals, opportunities to mix with people and get inspiration from them musically. It has been very hard to build any of these back up in my daily life, and has left me feeling quite stagnant in terms of my enjoyment of and motivation to play traditional music as I'm not getting enough input from others.'

'Initially was relieved and relaxed because I was in a very lucky position of being furloughed and felt no pressure to work for the first time in my life. Gradually the impact of separation from family and friends became onerous and especially missed playing in sessions and singing with my singing group, zoom was just so limited'.

'I felt demotivated in every aspect of my life'.

'I could no longer gig so lost my income and my flat and my mental health suffered'.

Anxiety and the uncertain future

While the return to in-person traditional arts activities and events have been lauded as 'joyful' by our interviewees, they are not without ongoing issues in terms of wellbeing. While many interviewees are now arranging or earning money from in-person gigs, and are overwhelmingly positive about returning to physical events, there are ongoing challenges resulting from COVID that require management in terms of wellbeing and mental health of artists. For instance, interviewees have discussed a sense of anxiety in returning to live, in-person performance. Also, the unpredictability of audience return can impact on performing artists:

'It's very difficult to... predict what our show will do. And that makes it tricky when you're dealing with artists, who are very, very excited to be back. But quite fragile, and it doesn't feel great when you're so excited to be back and your audience that you would have had previously has halved. And that's quite a tricky thing to manage to keep that motivation and self-belief in artists when their fan base appears to have halved. I'm sure it hasn't. They're still buying their music' (interviewee).

Supporting personal wellbeing with Scottish traditional arts

There were very few individuals who reported positive impacts from the pandemic, however, one respondent reported that they treated the social isolation and digital pivot in a very upbeat manner:

'In some ways [the pandemic and lockdowns] improved [my wellbeing]. Because suddenly I could take classes with anyone I'd ever wanted to learn from, anywhere in the world, as long as I could make the timezone work. I also had time to focus on doing creative therapy and participating in healing circles online with incredible teachers and facilitators. I also got a lot of perspective and validation on how well I've been coping considering I've lived like it's lockdown for over a decade without any support and being emotionally abused about "not trying hard enough to be cured". I've discovered that I was not actually the problem. On the flip-side, I'm now terrified of public transport. Which is not great as I can't drive for medical reasons, and am reliant on either it, or lifts from friends and family to get [to] things in person'.

In response to the lockdowns, social restrictions and absence of regular support and community networks, respondents to the survey were asked whether they had used Scottish traditional arts to support their own wellbeing. The overwhelming majority (83%) of respondents to this question reported that they had, and they reported using traditional music, dance, storytelling particularly to enable their personal wellbeing.

The significance of traditional music and dance, for wellbeing in particular, was a feature of our interviews. Our respondents highlighted that the pandemic and the resulting volume of activity and engagement with traditional arts, artists and organisations highlights the social value of arts and culture. It is this demonstration of the social value of traditional arts that interviewees particularly felt should be acknowledged by the government. This affirms the views and evidence found in early analysis of amateur music groups and lockdowns by Hongjuan Zhu and Stephanie E. Pitts from the University of Sheffield, who found that, '...group music-making before lockdown had beneficial effects on social bonding, mental health and wellbeing in members of music groups. The absence of these opportunities

during the COVID pandemic had detrimental effects on members and also threatened the survival of music groups'.²⁰

In our research, various interviewees felt that Scottish traditional arts should be recognised in policy and by key stakeholders for its power in improving wellbeing, as well as for its straightforwardly artistic value:

'Arts and culture have kept a lot of people going, it's been good for their mental health [and] has been good for their wellbeing and I hope that's not forgotten in the future. You know, if it wasn't for all the kind of online activities and cultural events that were happening online the period during which people were stuck in their rooms and have to deal with the kind of rules imposed upon them, it would have been much more difficult for people... I think governments need to remember that in the future and possibly invest more in arts and culture, because ... those working in arts and culture probably have known for a number of years that our wellbeing benefits from what we do, but I think that's been proven beyond any reasonable doubt now' (Arthur Cormack).

We are therefore recommending that a further scoping study be conducted into the particular affordances for personal and collective wellbeing from Scottish traditional music, dance, storytelling and crafts (see p.53). Although there is a well-founded literature on wellbeing and music, we are suggesting that the particularly place-bound nature of traditional arts in Scotland makes the case for further understanding of how community wellbeing can be embodied and nurtured through place-based traditional arts practice. Scottish traditional music and other practices have a much higher degree of place-based relevance for communities in Scotland because the orally-developed material of songs, dances, crafts, narratives and music is often tied to local events, landmarks, geographies and cultural memory.²¹

The development of online communities around traditional arts during the pandemic has been consistently discussed as a positive impact of the pandemic and a testament to the significance of arts for wellbeing in times of isolation. Ewan Galloway, a freelance accordionist, was the organiser of 'Stagger Inn', a virtual community space centred around his live streamed accordion performance of traditional music. During the course of the pandemic, hundreds of people from Scotland and internationally watched Ewan perform and participate through the comments on Facebook. He reported that there were many people who live on their own and watch his online show on Facebook Live, estimating there were 107 regular attendees that live on their own and exchange views and comments. They appreciated his responsiveness and being part of an online community where they were able to make requests, chat to other participants and feel a sense of belonging improving their sense of wellbeing during the pandemic.

The reporting and evidence of the importance of Scottish traditional music/dance/storytelling and crafts for people's wellbeing is well documented here and underscores its importance for individual and collective wellbeing. This is an area that could be prioritised for future action, and we suggest that funding bodies, charities, community groups and SCIOs across

²⁰ Zhu, Hongjuan and Stephanie E. Pitts. (2021) 'When the music stops: the effects of lockdown on amateur music groups', *Journal of Music, Health and Wellbeing*, Special Issue: Musicking through COVID-19: Challenges, Adaptations, and New Practices, Edited by Williams J. *et al.*, [available at: <https://storage.googleapis.com/wzukusers/user-20563976/documents/e0b9314912854f1ca3f1a2f443264aef/Zhu%20and%20Pitts%20October2021.pdf>].

²¹ For further discussion of these genre-based differences see: McKerrell, S. and West, G. (eds) (2018) *Understanding Scotland Musically, Folk, Tradition and Policy*. London and New York: Routledge (Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series) [esp. chapter 1].

Scotland consider the therapeutic and health benefits of Scottish traditional arts, and how these artistic practices, more than others, are deeply connected to local place and culture across Scotland. **There is therefore an opportunity to consider the place-based aspects of Scottish traditional arts for people's individual and civic wellbeing.**

Chapter 7: Future Actions for the Sector to Consider

In conducting this research, there have been various suggestions from within the sector, and from the report authors that are worth considering for the wider development of the traditional arts sector. Some of the proposed initiatives below would address the immediate impact of the COVID pandemic, but several of these deeper, substantive possible actions here are really included for discussion across the sector in order to stimulate thinking about how the traditional arts sector might develop greater coherence, sustainability and educational accessibility. In this way, the following table of possible actions is included to stimulate discussion about how the relationship of the community to professional arts networks in traditional arts might develop, and how stakeholders might address some of the underlying weaknesses and structural problems that existed pre-COVID, or that could offer substantial improvements for communities of practice in traditional music, storytelling, dance, and crafts across Scotland.

Possible Actions	Proposed Benefit	Other Considerations
Recruitment of children and young people to Scottish traditional arts	<p>To address the central impact of the pandemic the recruitment of children and young people into Scottish traditional music, dance, storytelling and crafts is the primary focus not just for national stakeholders, but also for organisations, the third sector and voluntary groups like choirs, pipe bands, fiddle groups, dance collectives across Scotland. There will be multiple benefits to this: increased uptake from children will ensure healthier long-term participation in Scottish traditional arts; the provision of artistic opportunities for those children who suffered during the pandemic; strengthened future audiences for amateur and professional artists; improvements to personal and community wellbeing for participants; and increased diversity amongst the community of practice. In the longer term, recruitment of young people will counteract the ageing profile of Scottish traditional arts participants and provide both increased opportunities and greater inclusivity in the artistic development of Scottish traditional arts.</p> <p>Various schemes could be considered here from the very local to the national, but some discussion about the place of Scottish traditional arts in both formal, and informal</p>	<p>The risk of inaction on recruitment will be felt long-term and might include: the erosion of opportunities for transmission of core aspects of Scottish cultural heritage; the flattening of artistic diversity; a reduction in audiences for, and opportunities for, Scottish traditional arts; entrenching a lack of diversity and the erosion of relevance for Scottish traditional arts in public life; and the reductions in opportunities for highly localised and place-based artistic engagement across Scotland.</p>

	<p>educational curricula could be coordinated nationally by one of the national bodies to ensure that Scottish traditional arts and the essential heritage-value of the musical, dance, narrative and craft traditions are more properly represented in children's general education. Furthermore, the visibility of traditional arts in public broadcasting could be examined as part of a wider review of how oral traditions (from both native and new Scots) are being represented and catered for in Scotland via public broadcasters.</p>	
<p>Recruitment and retention toolkit for the Scottish traditional arts</p>	<p>This toolkit will address the need found during the study for amateur and voluntary groups and organisations to have a ready-made set of actions and helpful suggestions that will help them recruit and retain new participants to the Scottish traditional arts. Tailored specifically to Scottish traditional music, dance, storytelling and crafts, this could be crowdsourced or commissioned on behalf of the sector, and involve both place-based and demographic-based recruitment strategies that will be actionable by volunteers and those interested in growing their participation. The specific action here is to assist non-professional arts groups and voluntary community groups with the intelligence and resources of the professional arts sector for recruitment and retention of members and participants. Topics should include easily digestible guidance on recruitment strategies, retention of members, public liability, working with children in Scotland, engagement with schools and community groups, and non-cost strategies to enable voluntary action where there is no professionalised budget or public funding available, tailored for the different urban and rural localities around Scotland.</p>	<p>The toolkit has the potential to be of great use for volunteers who have little experience of arts coordination, recruitment and retention and therefore there is a risk that this resource could be wrongly targeted at the professional or semi-professional sector, or fail to take account of how community and voluntary groups actually work on the ground (assuming more time, money or resources than is true in practice). A toolkit that works for the professional sector would not meet the needs of empowering local and voluntary groups across different localities in Scotland. Furthermore, the risk of poor publicization and dissemination of this resource would undermine its utility.</p>
<p>Suitable spaces for Traditional Arts for children and young adults</p>	<p>One of the key benefits of this action would be to enable non-licensed and free-to-access spaces for children, young people and intergenerational groups to use in their</p>	<p>Pre-existing community youth services and libraries and other halls could be used for these purposes providing they are free-to-</p>

	<p>communities. There has been a gradual erasure of free-to-access spaces as a consequence of many shifts in public life in Scotland and policy makers and key stakeholders in local government could facilitate and guarantee that there are suitable spaces for children and young people to access and play, sing and dance together across our communities. The sector and stakeholder groups should consider the availability of free-to-access spaces for traditional arts, and potentially the feasibility and utility of legislation for free access to public buildings in the Scottish parliament for arts participation for Scotland's young people to access weekly arts and sports run by volunteers and amateur groups.</p>	<p>access.. Furthermore, SCIOs could be encouraged to provide a minimum free-to-access spaces for young people in their venues as part of their charitable function, and returned to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator. This could be audited on an annual basis too to see where children and young people have better and worse access to free spaces for participation in music and dance and other traditional arts.</p>
<p>Vouchers for Rural and Island digital learning in Scottish traditional arts fund</p>	<p>A voucher scheme for hard-to-reach learners would enable them to select a teacher or class of their choice where they do not have access to Scottish traditional arts in the local rural or island community. Eligibility could be based upon the Scottish Government's Urban-Rural Classification system (in turn based upon population and accessibility) and take into account the availability of Scottish traditional arts in each application. The benefit would be to provide learners with top quality tuition via online access to established teachers or classes where costs would be prohibitive. It would also provide an opportunity for professional artists to expand their reach and build relationships with rural and island communities where none had previously existed.</p>	<p>Care would need to be taken in terms of the use of public funds and duplication of services. For example, providing online fiddle classes where there is already an established low-cost or free-to-access model would be wasteful, and there could be similar risks to the livelihoods of traditional musicians and other artists who are well established in rural and island communities if this scheme were to put them into unnatural competition where the playing field was unbalanced due to the investment of public funding. Liaison with established instrumental and vocal tuition with key SCIOs such as High Life Highland and who already provide remote digital music tuition for schools and island communities.</p>
<p>Inclusive community online diary for local classes, gigs and ceilidhs</p>	<p>One respondent to the survey suggested that a centrally managed, yet open and inclusive gig diary online would be a hugely beneficial development for Scottish traditional arts.</p>	<p>A more geographically searchable, and Scottish traditional arts-specific service is what is being called for here. There would</p>

	<p>This could be hosted by TRACS or another sectoral body and maintained by the community of practice. Crucially, either with no barriers to listings, or very light touch editorial control, this would enable community events across Scotland to be listed, and would also act as an ongoing repository to better understand the geography of Scottish traditional arts across the year and through time. This could be combined potentially with geographical and searchable directory of Scottish traditional arts teachers (see below).</p>	<p>be cross-sectoral benefits—particularly for Cultural Tourism and the live events sectors, as well as musical participation. Uptake would determine its success over time.</p>
<p>Directory of teachers across the Scottish traditional arts</p>	<p>This would enable easier pathways to learning for new entrants to traditional music and song, storytelling and dance. The benefit of a directory would be that it would make contact easier particularly for digital tuition both within Scotland and for international learners (as distinct from the current directory of traditional musicians). If there were an appetite, it could also function as an informal network for sharing of best practice and information for voluntary teachers, groups and networks around the country.</p>	<p>The difficult implication here is to consider the safeguarding and reputational requirements for inclusion on any publicly available register. Who qualifies as a teacher of Scottish traditional arts? Should there be a minimum standard for entry either pedagogical or performative? Or if not, how can learners actively report back on their experiences good and bad with teachers and groups listed on the register?</p> <p>There is as ever here, a risk of institutionalization and professionalization if this is seen as a means to certification and quality assurance. However, if conducted as a crowd sourced directory then it could become a valuable resource for domestic and international learners alike. The key issue of quality threshold for teachers would be a core obstacle to iron out in its development.</p>
<p>Better representation of young people on Scottish traditional</p>	<p>Raised in interview, one sector leader felt that it would be helpful to improve the representation of young people and younger artists in decision-making by including them on</p>	

<p>arts boards, committees and working groups.</p>	<p>committees, boards and working groups which have traditionally been dominated by professional classes of established artists.</p> <p>The proposed benefit of this diversification would be that decisions across charities, funders, quangos and events and festivals would be more inclusive of younger people's priorities, which might assist in the recruitment and retention of children and younger adults into Scottish traditional arts.</p>	
<p>Targeted income support relief for Self-Employed Freelancers</p>	<p>To reduce substantially, or eliminate the income tax paid on Scottish traditional arts income in Scotland. The benefit would be to provide huge stimulation to the performing arts sector in Scotland (either the Scottish traditional arts themselves or all performing arts) without sacrificing the tax take from much higher turnover businesses and VAT registered organisations/charities in Scotland mostly working in CCIs, i.e. non-self-employed businesses or charities, SCIOs etc. who account for a tiny proportion of the sector.</p> <p>Eligibility: Could rest upon various factors such as, number of years of self-employed tax returns, income tax status averages, SEISS eligibility could be used as a proxy etc., or evidence of performing arts presence, evidence plus residency or citizenship in Scotland etc.</p>	<p>Given the evidence that around two-thirds of the sector in the Scottish traditional arts work as self-employed freelancers, and that the vast majority earn less than £20K/annum, this policy would have negligible implications for tax income in Scotland and potentially huge significance and stimulating effects for the performing arts sector. It has the potential to be a net growth policy at almost zero public cost. There are international models of success here available for scrutiny such as the Artists' Exemption in Ireland.²²</p>
<p>Supported network for freelancers</p>	<p>Emerging from interviews, one interviewee suggested that the benefits of support and networking digitally that have organically emerged between freelancers working in Scottish traditional arts should be continued with sector-facilitated network for freelancers. This has already begun in the TRACS fora, however we are recommending a more substantial network focused upon freelancers across the Scottish traditional arts. The benefit would be greater</p>	<p>Freelancers as a group are now well recognised as a precarious working group across the creative industries, and any initiative in this area would have to take account of the numerous studies and research on precarity and inequalities across the Creative Economy.</p>

²² <https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/income-and-employment/artists-exemption/index.aspx> [accessed 17th August 2022].

	<p>communication and collectivization, and lobbying power for self-employed freelancers, who are almost entirely invisible in the sector at present.</p>	
<p>Winter Session Fund</p>	<p>The sector could consider an easily accessible fund for community leaders, publicans and musicians to collaborate and provide regular payments for session musicians through the winter months in key venues to support creative tourism and the grassroots of traditional music. It is important that these do not all reside in pubs given the scarcity of places for young people to come together and learn to play traditional music in a friendly, local environment. Other venues such as community halls (non-charging), bowling, tennis, sports clubs, youth halls or church halls should be considered for weekly traditional music sessions in local areas.</p>	
<p>Annual Freelancers Working Lives Survey across Scottish arts</p>	<p>This proposal is for a relevant national body to coordinate an annual survey of <i>all</i> freelancers working in the performing arts in Scotland to enable much better visibility for this underserved sector for policy makers and national and local government, and to simultaneously enable longitudinal understanding of how their working lives are changing.</p> <p>The benefit of this policy would be that for the first time we would have representative and long-term evidence of what was happening to freelancers in the arts, particularly in relation to their financial position, tax status, mental and physical health, market reach, contribution to the economy, support needs and educational roles. It would go some way towards reducing the invisibility of performing arts freelancers which has been recognised across the UK for years, and to enable more efficient and cost effective support for freelance artists in Scottish public policy.</p>	<p>There is of course a danger of survey fatigue for those working in the arts who are already face significant, and ongoing audits of their work and socio-cultural value.</p>

<p>International Touring Partnerships</p>	<p>International partnerships across sectors from arts to aviation, travel and tourism have the potential to reduce/mitigate costs for international professional touring artists whilst mutually benefitting Scottish- or heritage-aligned businesses. Exploratory talks in this direction could begin with Creative Scotland, or Arts and Business Scotland to enable a scheme for travel businesses to underwrite the flight, transport or car hire costs for touring musicians in various key markets such as North America, continental Europe and Scandinavia. Combined with touring support, this has the potential to both facilitate more international touring and raise the profile for Scottish traditional artists and groups, whilst simultaneously expanding the reach and brand value for Scottish- and heritage-aligned businesses internationally.</p>	<p>Any beneficial partnerships would require a clear understanding of the benefits and responsibilities on all sides. Memorandum of partnership recommended for both, or multiple parties.</p>
<p>Scoping study on the affordances for personal and collective wellbeing from Scottish traditional music, dance, storytelling and crafts</p>	<p>As discussed in Chapter 6, we found numerous reported benefits to mental and physical health from involvement in Scottish traditional arts during the pandemic. We are recommending that a further scoping study be conducted into the particular affordances of Scottish traditional arts for personal and collective wellbeing because of their highly place-based relevance for communities in Scotland. The attachment to localities and communities in space and time is an aspect of Scottish traditional arts that is usually absent in less geographically- and heritage-related artistic traditions, and therefore we suggest that there might be particular genre-based benefits to wellbeing that could be explored in a scoping study.</p>	

Chapter 8: Conclusions—looking ahead

In the survey, we asked all respondents to indicate, ‘what one thing might help Scottish traditional arts recover from the pandemic, or grow and change for the future?’. Responses to this question were very clearly grouped into four main categories of answer. The survey suggests that the community of practice would like to prioritise the following areas in responses to the pandemic:

1. **Access and learning for children and young people**
2. **Support for local community events**
3. **Media, digital and marketing support for the professional sector**
4. **Tailored training and support for Scottish traditional artists**

Overall, the evidence in this report suggests that post-pandemic, the **Scottish traditional arts community are most concerned about access and learning opportunities for children and young people**. Many concerns were noted in the survey and in interviews. These ranged from concern about access and ongoing activity for primary-aged kids, to financial concerns to support resources for children and to support access to schools for traditional artists. There remains a real concern about the gap in support for learners of Scottish traditional music and dance for children who have missed out not only on lessons, but even on the opportunity to take up an instrumental, vocal or dance tradition during the course of the past two years. There are calls for more support, including calls for more dance to be available in Scottish schools, but also particularly for schools to open up to the artistic community, and many comments reflected a concern about risk-averse school leaders and teachers making primary and secondary schools a hostile environment to recruit new children into the traditions. There were also calls for more digital educational resources not just for children, but for artists who may need support and expert help in producing resources for young people.

An interviewee working in creative learning speaks for many when she suggests that they would like to capitalize on the digital pivot for young people and learners by moving towards higher quality and more development of online learning resources. This would not only serve the local area, including rural communities, but also the international learners wishing to access high quality learning resources in the Scottish traditional arts:

‘What we would like to do is to offer some virtual tuition to young people who aren't able to get to some of our out-of-school programmes, as an example. Because [our district] is a large district, and there's quite a large part of that district [that] is very rural... So it would be amazing to be able to offer a virtual tuition programme. But at the moment, we just can't afford to. So that's something we need...to have a look at and work out how we fund that and just the continual development of resources. We now have these websites in production [as a result of COVID]. And it would be nice to be able to constantly add to those websites, they become a resource for anybody, in particular young people who would like to learn about...traditional music, who maybe can't come to the [in-person] workshops. And that wouldn't necessarily have to be somebody [here]... [I]t could be somebody that lives in Canada who would like to learn traditional music and traditional songs. But again, it's funding to be able to do that. Now we're back to our norm. So I think that's a wee bit frustrating, and that there's things that we

have learned and things that we'd like to continue, but we can't afford to at the moment" (interviewee).

The second large area of concern for those thinking about how best to promote and assist recovery in Scottish traditional arts were squarely located around **support for local and community events across Scotland**. Many people feel that funding should be directed at local groups and small-scale events, and there were various mentions of outdoor events, as an area where people would like to see more targeted support in the sector (e.g. guidance and support on when, how and where outdoor events can be pursued). Suggestions in this arena focused upon a desire for public money to be used to support the use of non-licensed premises for small gigs, and regular teaching—particularly where it would help young people to gain access to the tradition for the first time. The issues of finding suitable venues is a problem that is gathering pace in Scotland, given the continuing reductions in local authority budgets and the dwindling availability of public indoor spaces, which can mean fees to access formerly free community venues.

One respondent emphasised the wellbeing advantages from Scottish traditional arts events, and the importance of the social wellbeing engendered by live community events. Another respondent suggested that an 'easily accessible, inclusive gig diary for concerts, ceilidhs and music classes where everyone can input their event would be a useful addition' (see Future Actions for the Sector to Consider p.47). Overall, there is a real appetite for stakeholders across Scottish traditional arts, including charities, venues, artists, groups, learners, colleges and universities to all consider how they might support community events and small-scale events such as the 'small halls' events run by Seall in the Isle of Skye in recent years. Cost of access to venues emerged as a key concern here, and underscores the ongoing financialization of community life which has become a factor in community arts particularly since the turn of the century.

The third cluster of concern to address the impact of the pandemic in Scottish traditional arts focused around support for **professional marketing in digital and broadcast media**. There is an appetite for direct support for artists to produce digital content that takes forward the massive digital pivot during the pandemic, but leverages it for long-term, more sustainable and higher quality outputs that will support artists' careers. There was also concern about the presence of traditional arts on public broadcast stations: One respondent suggested that television in Scotland has no content to encourage Scottish traditional dancers, as this has been left off all programming. Storytellers also recognise that although much smaller in size, there has never been any focus on their traditional art on broadcast media:

'The year of stories initiative has been really good....I think that has been good to just get people reengaged in kind of setting up little projects ... close to where they live and dispersing that throughout the whole of Scotland. And that could be mixed media or just storytelling.... So some way of getting [professional] storytelling, the kind of profile of it raised and improved. And I think that we've got ...Scottish television...and Radio Scotland. I mean, there should be some little tiny corner on either of them where it could be featured a bit more like music is. So,... I think that would help' (Ruth Kirkpatrick, semi-professional storyteller).

Another suggested that foreign students studying in Scotland might be a new and fruitful market for Scottish traditional artists. The focus on this area also reveals an appetite for more diversity on our screens for Scottish traditional arts, and there was a reported desire for Scottish traditional music and dance in particular to be available across main BBC programming, and not just on BBC Alba. Others reported a desire for more formalised

support post-pandemic to encourage cultural tourism, and cross-sectoral working. This is an area that could be mutually beneficial to both traditional music, dance, storytelling, crafts, and the travel industry itself (see Chapter 7, p.47).

The final cluster of responses centred upon **training and support for Scottish traditional artists**. Various artists responded to suggest more training and support for them to develop more professional blended learning and skills-based classes or resources on how to successfully deliver online teaching. One artist said, 'The CS funding was an absolute lifesaver. And it enabled me to just get on with doing some good useful work that helped others using my talents as an artist and storyteller without having to jump through all the funding hoops. I really, really appreciated it. It would be so good if...this could continue' (survey respondent). Wendy Timmons, the Chair of Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland suggested that, like that being set up by TDFS for dancers, it would be useful to set up a COVID recovery network for freelance traditional artists in particular, to continue the collectivised sense of support amongst grassroots artists:

'I honestly think that there's a need for people, and I think people did this during COVID, they actually helped each other. And there's a need for that sense of networking, getting people to connect, and just give each other ideas on 'Oh, you know, we're doing this', 'you know, have you thought about' that type of networking, which again, can happen virtually, it doesn't have to be networking in a physical space' (Wendy Timmons, Chair of Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland).

Many people cited forms of networking, sharing ideas and collectivization as a means to combat the continuing rise in overheads and events costs as Scottish traditional arts emerge and recover from the pandemic.

Annex 1: Full Basic Survey Results

Annex 1 gives the full basic survey results without the free-text responses to the survey which have been coded and analysed above. This information is useful for both policy makers and for local charities and organisations planning responses to COVID and support for the Scottish traditional arts and we therefore have included this in the full report.

Questions 1, 2 and 3 were screening questions designed to restrict the sample to those resident in Scotland aged over 16 years with some sort of connections or engagement with Scottish traditional arts in any form.

Q4: Please tell us what age you are?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
16-24	8.51%	20
25-34	14.47%	34
35-44	12.34%	29
45-54	16.60%	39
55-64	23.83%	56
65-74	19.57%	46
75+	4.68%	11
TOTAL		235

Q5: Please tell us how you define your gender?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Female	61.70%	145
Male	36.17%	85
Non-Binary	0.85%	2
Prefer not to say	1.28%	3
TOTAL		235

Q6: With which practice in Scottish Traditional Arts do you most closely identify (if you identify with more than one, please pick the one with which you most closely identify)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Scottish traditional music	66.38%	156

Scottish traditional dance	22.13%	52
Scottish traditional crafts	2.55%	6
Scottish traditional storytelling	8.94%	21
TOTAL		235

Q7: How many years experience do you have of/in Scottish Traditional Arts? (Please remember this may be in any domain from audience member, fan, through to maker, dancer, performer or associated professional).

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
<5 years	2.13%	5
6-9 years	5.96%	14
10-19 years	18.30%	43
20-29 years	19.57%	46
30+ years	54.04%	127
TOTAL		235

Q8: Can you speak Gaelic or Scots? (Please tick yes if you are able to hold a basic verbal conversation in one of these languages or both. If you cannot, please tick no.)

	YES	NO	TOTAL
Gaelic	23.74% 52	76.26% 167	219
Scots	46.93% 107	53.07% 121	228

Q9: What is your ethnicity? These are the principle categories used in the Scottish public Census.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
White (any)	96.60%	227
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	1.28%	3
Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian	0.43%	1
African, Scottish African or British African	0%	0
Caribbean or Black	0%	0

Other Ethnic Group	1.70%	4
TOTAL		235

Q10: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	12.34%	29
No	87.66%	206
TOTAL		235

Q11: Thinking about yourself before the pandemic, how often did you actively participate in Scottish traditional arts? (We would like you to consider how often you participated with other people here—whether that was live online or in person—but in some form of collaborative event or informal group in Scottish Traditional Arts.)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
About once a week (or more)	81.40%	175
About once a month	10.70%	23
Several times a year	5.58%	12
About once a year	1.40%	3
Never	0.93%	2
TOTAL		215

Q12: Thinking about yourself now, after the main pandemic has ended, how often do you actively participate in Scottish traditional arts?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
About once a week (or more)	59.07%	127
About once a month	17.21%	37
Several times a year	15.81%	34
About once a year	2.79%	6
Never	5.12%	11
TOTAL		215

Q13: Where do you normally participate/performance/create Scottish traditional arts?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Home	12.21%	26
Pub	4.69%	10
Community Venue (e.g. School, University, Club, Folk Club, Community Centre etc.)	42.25%	90
Festival	2.82%	6
Competition	7.51%	16
Ceilidh	8.92%	19
Other (please specify)	21.60%	46
TOTAL		213

Q14: Do you believe that the COVID pandemic and the response have affected your experience or participation in Scottish traditional arts?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	92.56%	199
No	7.44%	16
TOTAL		215

Q15: Has the pandemic affected your willingness to attend live Scottish traditional arts events?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	41.86%	90
No	58.14%	125
TOTAL		215

Q16: Thinking about everything you know about the pandemic, venues, festivals and events, please rate how you feel now about attending live Scottish traditional arts events or venues.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Happy to attend	61.40%	132
Would consider with reservations	30.70%	66
Not comfortable until there is a significant reduction in risk	7.44%	16
Not comfortable until virus eradicated	0%	0
Not interested in live events	0.47%	1
TOTAL		215

Q17: Are you now, or pre-pandemic, involved in teaching children or adults Scottish Traditional Arts?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	54.50%	115
No	45.50%	96
TOTAL		211

Q19: Do you learn or take lessons in any Scottish traditional arts?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes—in a paid-for local group class in person	20.11%	38
Yes—I take paid-for individual lessons with a teacher in person	6.35%	12
Yes—I am part of a voluntary/informal group where I learn from/with others or from a friend directly	14.29%	27
Yes—I take online lessons (solo or group)	8.47%	16
Yes—I learn myself from participating in Scottish traditional arts	37.04%	70
No—I don't play, dance, perform or create, but am part of the audience	13.76%	26
TOTAL		189

Q20: Did you, or do you now, take up or begin any online teaching or learning during the pandemic (either as tutor or learner)? Here we are thinking about online lessons, groups sessions, online recordings/videos you may have used on your own, as learning material or other resources such as more formal courses or learners' support groups etc.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	58.54%	120
No	41.46%	85
TOTAL		205

Q21: If you did take up online learning or teaching, please estimate how important this was to your participation in Scottish traditional arts (as either teacher or learner) during the pandemic?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Essential	44.17%	53
Very useful	29.17%	35
Useful	15.00%	18
Slightly useful	8.33%	10
Not important at all	3.33%	4
TOTAL		120

Q22: Thinking about how the pandemic has affected your personal involvement with Scottish traditional arts: Please select a score from the following for each area of your involvement, where 10 has the biggest impact and 1 implies no impact at all.

	1 – No imp act at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – The bigg est imp act	TO TAL Cou nt
Participating/Perfor ming/Creating with others	2.65 % 5	1.5 9% 3	3.7 0% 7	1.5 9% 3	5.82 % 11	5.29 % 10	10.0 5% 19	13.7 6% 26	12.1 7% 23	43.3 9% 82	189
Participating/Perfor ming/Creating alone	22.8 7% 43	4.7 9% 9	7.9 8% 15	3.7 2% 7	12.7 7% 24	7.45 % 14	11.1 7% 21	11.7 0% 22	4.26 % 8	13.3 0% 25	188
Learning or teaching with others	9.14 % 17	3.2 3% 6	5.9 1% 11	0.5 4% 1	11.2 9% 21	7.53 % 14	9.14 % 17	10.7 5% 20	12.3 7% 23	30.1 1% 56	186
Learning or teaching alone	26.1 1% 47	10. 0% 18	6.6 7% 12	3.8 9% 7	15.5 6% 28	6.11 % 11	4.44 % 8	9.44 % 17	4.44 % 8	13.3 3% 24	180
Attending live events as audience or performer	3.16 % 6	1.5 8% 3	2.1 1% 4	2.1 1% 4	6.84 % 13	2.63 % 5	7.37 % 14	10.5 3% 20	13.1 6% 25	50.5 3% 96	190
My income from Scottish traditional arts	33.8 8% 62	2.1 9% 4	4.9 2% 9	2.1 9% 4	6.01 % 11	3.83 % 7	6.56 % 12	6.56 % 12	7.10 % 13	26.7 8% 49	183
Voluntary or unpaid work in Scottish traditional arts	37.6 4% 67	6.1 8% 11	5.0 6% 9	2.8 1% 5	10.1 1% 18	3.37 % 6	7.30 % 13	11.2 4% 20	6.18 % 11	10.1 1% 18	178
My sense of personal wellbeing	5.32 % 10	4.7 9% 9	5.8 5% 11	3.1 9% 6	11.7 0% 22	6.38 % 12	15.9 6% 30	17.0 2% 32	10.6 4% 20	19.1 5% 36	188

My creative energy for Scottish traditional arts	10.0 5% 19	4.2 3% 8	5.2 9% 10	4.2 3% 8	19.0 5% 36	11.1 1% 21	11.1 1% 21	14.8 1% 28	8.47 % 16	11.6 4% 22	189
My mental and/or physical health	10.7 0% 20	4.8 1% 9	7.4 9% 14	2.1 4% 4	17.6 5% 33	10.1 6% 19	12.8 3% 24	14.9 7% 28	5.35 % 10	13.9 0% 26	187

Q23: If you are involved in putting on audience events, please estimate the impact of the pandemic on your current audience attendances.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Not applicable to me	50.0%	94
No impact on audience attendance	1.06%	2
A modest impact on audience attendance	14.36%	27
A substantial impact on audiences	30.32%	57
Complete withdrawal of audience attendance	4.26%	8
TOTAL		188

Q24: Did the pandemic affect your personal wellbeing?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	76.41%	149
No	23.59%	46
TOTAL		195

Q25: [Free-text response on personal wellbeing]

Q26: Did you use Scottish traditional music/dance/storytelling/crafts as a means to support your own personal wellbeing during the pandemic?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	83.33%	160
No	16.67%	32
TOTAL		192

Q27: [Free-text response on personal wellbeing using Scottish traditional arts.]

Q28: Did you (or your organisation) receive any financial support for your Scottish traditional arts activities during the pandemic?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	25.26%	48
No	74.74%	142
TOTAL		190

Q29: Please indicate how useful this was to you personally, or your organisation.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Essential	55.32%	26
Very useful	25.53%	12
Useful	17.02%	8
Slightly useful	2.13%	1
Not useful at all	0%	0
TOTAL		47

Q30: [Free-text response on financial support.]

Q31: Prior to the pandemic, did you (or your organisation), normally make a part (or all) of your income from Scottish traditional arts? Please answer yes, even if only a fraction of any annual income normally comes from/or came from Scottish traditional arts and no, if you consider yourself to be involved in a non-earning or voluntary capacity, or make a negligible annual amount from Scottish traditional arts.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Yes	66.14%	125
No	33.86%	64
TOTAL		189

Q32: Please select one of the following to describe you, or your organisation's financial status in Scotland/UK.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Self-employed freelancer	64.10%	75
Registered charity	13.68%	16
Community Interest Company	1.71%	2

Limited Company (non-VAT registered)	0.85%	1
Informal community group	4.27%	5
VAT registered company	3.42%	4
Public Sector Body or Organisation	0%	0
School, College or University	2.56%	3
Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)	1.71%	2
Other (please specify)	7.69%	9
TOTAL		117

Q33: If you are comfortable, please estimate your (or your organisation's) annual earned income from Scottish traditional arts PRE-PANDEMIC

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
No Income	1.79%	2
<£1,000	13.39%	15
£1,000-£5,000	23.21%	26
£5,000-£10,000	23.21%	26
£10,000-£20,000	22.32%	25
£20,000-£30,000	9.82%	11
£30,000+	6.25%	7
TOTAL		112

Q34: Please estimate how this income has been affected by the pandemic? My/Our income from Scottish traditional arts has...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Increased	5.98%	7
Stayed about the same	12.82%	15
Reduced somewhat	22.22%	26
Been badly reduced	41.03%	48
Totally disappeared	17.95%	21
TOTAL		117

Q35: [Free-text response on how income generation plans have changed due to the pandemic.]

Q36: Have you moved any part of your activity in Scottish traditional arts online during the pandemic (or expanded it)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.14%	121
No	30.86%	54
TOTAL		175

Q37: [Free-text response on online activity.]

Q38: [Free-text response on future plans for individual/organisation post-pandemic.]

Q39: [Free-text response on suggestions for helping Scottish traditional arts recover from the pandemic.]

Q40: [Voluntary short-text responses giving postcodes for activity.]

Q41: [Voluntary short-text contact details.]
