

Angus Robertson MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

**6 September 2024**

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

We would like to thank you for your reply to our letter, and for your work on behalf of the sector in ensuring that both the £1.8 million for the Access to Making Music and Strengthening Youth Music Funds, and the £6.6 million, including £3 million for the Open Fund for Individuals, will be allocated to Creative Scotland as planned for the 2024-25 financial year. We also appreciate the continued commitment to the additional £100 million in annual cultural funding by 2028-29, and we acknowledge the £16 million increase for the current financial year.

We respectfully seek further clarity on where the additional £16 million has been distributed, and we would appreciate confirmation that the planned £25 million increase in cultural funding for 2025 will indeed be in place by 1 April 2025. It is essential that this £25 million increase is additional to the £16 million already released in this financial year, and not simply an incremental rise.

The figures provided by Creative Scotland regarding the overwhelming response to the Open Fund for Individuals demonstrate the continuing crisis within the sector. Between Monday 19 and Friday 30 August, Creative Scotland received 819 applications, with a total request of £11,893,366. This is equivalent to the total number of applications received in the previous six months combined, clearly demonstrating the immense demand and critical need for sustained and increased investment. In total, there are currently 965 Open Fund for Individuals applications pending, with an ask of £15,197,390.

281 cultural organisations across Scotland anxiously await decisions on Creative Scotland's Multi-year Funding Programme (2025–28), which are due in late October. Throughout the six-month application process, Creative Scotland consistently emphasised that their budgets remain extremely limited, and noted that they anticipate being able to fund only a portion of the organisations who have applied. The total ask from these applicants amounts to £87.5 million per year, further highlighting the scale of the challenges ahead.

The events of the past fortnight have been a stark reminder of the fragile environment in which our sector operates. While we welcome the recent announcement as a positive step forward, it does not detract from the fact that culture in Scotland remains significantly underfunded. Prior to the spending freeze, cultural funding from

the Scottish Government represented just 0.56% of total Government spending for 2024-25 – nearly 1% below the European average. The current funding level poses a serious threat to the future of Scottish culture, and without urgent and increased investment, many jobs will be lost, and organisations that are integral to our cultural landscape will likely vanish forever.

The SMIA, along with 1,900 artists and industry professionals who signed our open letter, sought clarity and reassurance beyond a return to the status quo. While we appreciate the efforts to address the immediate crisis, we must emphasise that the next crisis is already looming if culture is not adequately supported, safeguarded and sustained through essential increased investment.

Recent events have seen hope vanish and trust lost. Yesterday's announcement is a positive step forward, and it's now essential that the relationship between the Scottish Government and the cultural sector be renewed with a spirit of mutual respect. Culture funding must be deemed essential, and assurance regarding future investment is urgently required. The sector cannot wait years for the investment it desperately needs now.

We have requested a meeting with you at your earliest convenience, noting that we would like to invite a select group of Scottish artists and music industry organisations who signed our open letter to participate. Given the importance of transparency and clear communication at this time, it is crucial that you hear from some of the many voices who have been significantly impacted by recent events, and remain deeply concerned about our sector's future.

Thank you once again for your continued efforts. We look forward to continued dialogue, and confirming when – at your earliest convenience – would be suitable for our meeting.

We remain committed to working closely with you and your department to secure a sustainable future for Scotland's cultural sector.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Kilpatrick

CEO and Creative Director

**Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA)**