

Dawn Bowden

Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Chief Whip

Welsh Government

6 December 2021

Cultural Recovery Funding

Dear Dawn,

It has been brought to the Committee's attention that there are a number of cultural venues whose financial situation continues to be very vulnerable as a result of the continued impact of the pandemic. Although many venues were in receipt of public funding during the course of the pandemic, it's been brought to our attention that for many independent venues, it could take many months or years for their businesses to recover, and without intervention some may not survive.

At our meeting on 24 November 2021, we considered evidence from the Arts Council of Wales, Creu Cymru, National Theatre Wales and National Youth Arts Wales. During the course of the session with these organisations, it was noted that:

- recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was a continuing issue for the sector;
- it could take a further 12-18 months to recover, dependent on the length of the pandemic;
- that recruiting and returning freelancers, as well as other staff who were made redundant, to the sector is still a concern;
- concerns go beyond financial considerations and include participation amongst young people in the arts, which could have implications for the sector workforce in future.

Given the challenges facing the arts sector, the Committee would like to ask the following questions:

- What is the latest information the Welsh Government has about average commercial incomes in cultural venues compared with pre-pandemic levels?
- Do you have any intention on issuing a third round of Cultural Recovery Funding? Moreover, is funding available within your departmental budget to facilitate this? If so, when will you announce this to the sector? And if not, what other support can the Welsh Government provide?
- The Committee heard anecdotal evidence of the negative impact on attendance at cultural events and increased event costs (e.g. extra security staffing requirements) following the extension of the



COVID pass to these sectors. What is the latest information the Welsh Government has on the impact of the COVID pass on attendance at cultural events and its broader financial impact, please? How is the Welsh Government supporting the sector in complying with these new requirements?

As highlighted by a number of respondents to the Committee's inquiry on priorities for this Senedd term, accessing arts and cultural activities is incredibly important to tackling a number of health and social challenges in Wales. This has arguably become even more vital during the global pandemic. Given this, we would be grateful for a response to these questions as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell AS
Chair

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, International Relations and Sport Committee