SCAN Covid-19 Impact Survey: Individuals

May 11, 2020

Introduction and methodology

Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) is a member-led organisation which exists to connect, champion and cultivate contemporary visual art in Scotland.

SCAN's 180 members include national institutions, publicly-funded organisations, commercial galleries, education, voluntary collectives, production facilities, artists and individual workers. Our membership spans two thirds of Scotland's local authority areas from Shetland to the Borders.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK, SCAN's team has been gathering evidence from its membership on the impacts being felt of immediate loss of work, loss of income, closures and cancellations. SCAN has provided a range of support including digital, legal and peer-to-peer advice.

On April 15th SCAN Scottish Contemporary Art Network undertook a survey to collate information on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic from the wider visual arts community, to inform advocacy with government and funders. The survey was available online between 15th and 30th April 2020.

The survey was open to those (usually) working within the visual art sector in Scotland. A total of 108 people responded to the survey and it had a section for completion by individuals and a section for completion by representatives of organisations.

81 individuals completed the survey.

The following summary outlines responses from these 81 individuals, describing their experience of Covid-19.

About the respondents

The individuals held a wide variety of roles and across the visual arts. 86% were self-employed and 21% were employed via PAYE. Some had multiple roles, and 10% were both self-employed and PAYE.

The individuals were based in 18 of the Scottish regions, with the highest number being from Edinburgh (22%) or Glasgow (26%).

Key findings

The individuals were asked to tell us how COVID-19 had affected their working patterns.

	%
Working with hours as normal	17
Working with reduced hours	11
Working with reduced hours due to care responsibilities for children, elderly relatives or vulnerable people	9
Not working because I am self-employed and have no work coming in	28
Not working because I am on furlough	5
Not working because I have been made redundant	4
Not working due to care responsibilities for children, elderly relatives or vulnerable people	1

83% of the individuals were not currently working their usual hours as a result of Covid-19.

20% of the individuals were currently working reduced hours, and 38% were not working at all. More than a quarter of the individuals (28%) were not working because they are self-employed and have no work coming in.

76% of the individuals said that they had lost income during April 2020, with a range from 10-100% of expected income. An average of 58% of income has been lost per individual during April 2020. Nearly one third (29%) expected a 100% loss of income in April 2020.

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Most of the individuals anticipate taking measures to maintain their income, across the range of available options:

	Likely to use %
Applying for Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary	25
Applying for a Self-employment Income Support grant	21
Payment or mortgage holidays	12
Applying for Creative Scotland Open Project Funding	12
Applying for Universal Credit	12
Being personally furloughed (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme)	5
Taken out a loan / credit	1
Applying for Scottish Welfare Fund	1

The income maintaining measures most often being utilised are the Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary (25%), and the Self-employment Income Support grant (21%).

17% of individuals will not access Government backed support measures as they do not need them, and 14% will not access Government backed support measures as they are not entitled to them. This survey was launched prior to the recent Scottish Government announcement on new funds for businesses and the self-employed, therefore it does not capture this data.

The individuals were asked who or what have been the most valuable sources of advice since the start of the Covid-19 crisis.

	Most valuable %
SCAN	46
Creative Scotland	43
Scottish Government	31
Scottish Artist's Union	19
Your own accountant or lawyer	11
Local Authority	10
UK Government	9
Arts Council England	4
Arts and Business Scotland	2
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	1
Creative Industries Federation	0
None	7

The individuals felt that the most valuable sources of advice had been SCAN (46%) and Creative Scotland (43%), followed by the Scottish Government (31%) and the Scottish Artists' Union (19%).

The individuals were asked to tell us the biggest challenge that Covid-19 had caused for them.

	%
Loss of income	31
Loss of engagement with public	17
Activity cancelled	15
Uncertainty / cannot plan	12
Unable to access studio	11
Not being eligible for support	7
Anxiety	7

The individuals most often said that their biggest challenge had been loss of income.

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Many also noted that challenges had included loss of engagement with the public, activity being cancelled, and situational uncertainty meaning they cannot plan for the future.

For most that responded, a combination of these factors were cited:

Cancellation of projects; temporary halt of all major funding therefore unable to develop future activity.

Having all work postponed indefinitely, knowing a lot of work that was in negotiation will disappear, the uncertainty and difficulty of so many simultaneous challenges.

All work has stopped - all opportunities of work, projects, exhibitions, residencies are now on hold indefinitely. Having no income is a major worry and for how long??

Being in limbo with everything not sure what's going to happen. I feel really at a loss now how to go forward.

*It is hard to see what the future holds or where income will come from.*The individuals were asked what had been the most useful support / advice they had received to date.

	%
Advice given	
General reassurance	15
Information about sources of income	11
Advice to take time to adjust	2
Source of advice	
Colleagues	15
SCAN	7
Creative Scotland	4
Opinion pieces	2
Other organisations (each cited once)	9

Those that responded most often appreciated the general advice and reassurance of colleagues:

Studio colleagues have provided invaluable help and support.

My Line Manager keeps me informed and reassured about our situation

Peer support from other artists.

Information about potential sources of income was also appreciated.

Colleague sending the bridging bursary link.

Studio landlord both passed on practical grant information.

Information on the furlough scheme from my accountant.

Sources of support were most often colleagues or SCAN.

The individuals were asked what support would benefit them the most.

	%
More funding	28
Sector-wide collective support	14
Universal Basic Income	9
Support to learn new skills	5
Reduced outgoings	4
To be able to work	4

The individuals most often said that more funding would benefit them the most:

Secure funding to enable us to continue and adapt.

Short- and medium- term financial support. My greatest concern is not short-term loss of earnings but the availability of work and arts funding in the economic crisis that is to come.

As the situation unfolds and we understand the full financial impact - plus the potential for loss of income from trusts and foundations - identifying and securing additional income will be essential.

An unbureaucratic and quick relief fund for artists.

A Universal Basic Income was also mentioned several times.

Several individuals also noted that sector-wide collective support would be useful:

Mobilising the sector for collective responses and mutual support through collaboration and idea sharing; particularly thinking about sector solidarity.

Advocacy for our sector will be essential.

To feel the arts community had a voice at this time.

One respondent noted the pressure to repurpose work in the new, online context could be counter-productive:

We shouldn't feel the need to be overly productive or instantly try to shift what we are doing online. Many people won't feel like or be able to digest content as they would in 'normal' circumstances. This may however, offer the chance to slowly and kindly consider new ways of working and what an ethical return to normal might look like.

/ends