

Minister for Culture, Europe and International  
Development and Minister with special  
responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine  
Ministear airson Cultar, na Roinn-Eòrpa is Leasachadh  
Eadar-nàiseanta agus Ministear le dleastanas sònraichte  
airson Fògarraich bhon Ucràin  
Neil Gray BPA/MSP



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

T : 0300 244 4000  
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Moira Jeffrey  
moira@sca-net.org

Our Reference: 202200318611  
Your Reference: Cost Crisis

28 October 2022

Dear Moira Jeffrey,

Thank you very much for your correspondence regarding the impact of the Cost Crisis on the Contemporary Art Sector on 1 September. I would like to apologise for the delay in this response, which falls below the standard you should expect from the Scottish Government. I note that you have also written to Angus Robertson, the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture on 18 October. As visual arts fall within my portfolio remit as Minister for Culture, I would like to respond on both of our behalf and respond to points from both of your letters.

I understand this is an incredibly worrying time for the sector, and I thank you for sharing your findings from the Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) with both myself and with officials. Artists and creative practitioners make an important contribution economically, socially and culturally to our society and I deeply value the specialist skills, knowledge and expertise of artists in Scotland.

Thank you for sharing the examples of the pressures facing your members, which focuses on the rising energy costs and the impact that this is having on workshops and individuals.

The powers and resources needed to tackle this emergency on the scale required – access to borrowing, welfare, VAT on fuel, taxation of windfall profits, regulation of the energy market – lie with the UK Government. While the UK Government's Energy Bill Relief Scheme may limit the impact of the energy price crisis on some businesses, this announcement has come too late for many businesses across Scotland who are already struggling to pay bills. I am deeply concerned to hear that workshops

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are bearing the brunt of these costs.

I am looking to bring together roundtable discussions on these issues impacting the Culture sector. My officials will be in touch once a date has been decided, as I would very much like you to attend if possible.

You also mention cuts to the culture budget, I completely understand the value of the culture sector and the importance of spaces such as art galleries and museums during these difficult times. The Scottish Government has committed to an emergency budget review to assess all opportunities to redirect additional resources to those most in need, reduce the burdens on business and stimulate the Scottish economy. Unfortunately, the unnecessary delay by the UK Government creates more economic uncertainty at a time where all businesses need as much certainty as possible. This has an impact on the timing of the Scottish Government's own budget plans.

Many of the difficulties facing the sector are also the result of the UK Government prematurely cutting Covid recovery funding, despite the Scottish Government warning against that action. The Scottish Government will continue to urge the UK Government to take a different approach to public finances in order to ensure sufficient support is made available for Scotland's culture sector.

I would like to reassure you that the Scottish Government will continue to work with the sector to identify barriers to immediate and long-term recovery, and to do everything within our powers and resources to help those most affected by current economic challenges.

Thank you again for your correspondence and please do get in touch with officials if you have further information to share.

Yours sincerely



**NEIL GRAY**

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