

Peter Hall (Committee Clerk)
Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee
Room 344
Parliament Buildings
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Our ref SUB 318/2014

Your ref C418/13

16 May 2014

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 10th March 2014 to Billy Crawford via email, seeking a contribution from the Department in relation to the Inquiry into Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities.

The Department for Social Development recognises the benefits that the Arts can bring to the personal development of individuals, as well as the benefits at a community level in bringing people together and promoting cultural citizenship.

The Department does not specifically have programmes that seek to increase the inclusion in the arts of working class communities. It does however through its Volunteering Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy support a number of activities that encourage the arts in areas of disadvantage. The attached Annex provides further details and some examples of projects/initiatives supported by the Department.

I trust the Committee will find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

John Johnston

Annex

Volunteering Strategy

One of the priorities within this strategy is to “Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to volunteer and that volunteering is representative of the diversity of the community.” With specific reference to funding being directed at supporting volunteering in areas of deprivation, it promotes inclusivity for volunteers and offers access to arts based project opportunities through a number of pathways, including:

- The Volunteering Innovation Fund
- The Volunteering Small Grants Programme
- The Volunteering Infrastructure Fund

Volunteering in the arts has been evidenced through a number of DSD supported projects, with a primary example being the Londonderry/Derry UK City of Culture 2013. This was a major event which celebrated the arts across all mediums from performing to visual and media arts. The year long event had some 633 active volunteers taking part.

Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

This long term (7 – 10 year) Strategy targets those communities throughout Northern Ireland suffering the highest levels of deprivation. Neighbourhood Renewal is a cross government Strategy which aims to bring together the work of all Government Departments in partnership with local people to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in all aspects of everyday life.

Through this Strategy, funding may be considered where a priority need is identified within local Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans and where resources are available.

Examples of Art Projects supported through Neighbourhood Renewal

- a) **Andersonstown Traditional & Contemporary Music School** have been actively engaged in the Andersonstown Neighbourhood Partnership since 2006. They are committed to the delivery and development of Cultural, Arts and

Tourism activities within the Andersonstown area and throughout the City as a whole.

- b) **Arts Programme.** Various Art activities and programmes were held throughout the year in the Colin Neighbourhood Renewal Area including the pottery painting programme that the group completed, the pottery painting focussed on Cloona House, plates depicting the house, grounds, the architectural frieze etc. As you can see from the image they held a successful exhibition of this work during festival week in 2012.

- c) **USDT Arts Programme** the following are highlights of the main projects and achievements of USDT's Arts Programme: Spaces for Places - USDT Arts Unit ran the Spaces for Places public art project with groups throughout the Upper Springfield over the last few months. Newhill Out of Schools, USDT's Youth Team and Action on Disability. The project presented the groups with a creative challenge, to make a space for a place. This was a way to enable the groups to start thinking about the issue of environment and how we inhabit it.

- d) **Arts for All** The project delivers a programme of activities which will develop the community and build its capacity through the medium of arts in North Belfast. The programme has been devised to improve skills, build confidence and compliment formal education whilst encouraging local people to express themselves in a creative and positive way.

- e) **OGRAS – Disengaged Youth Programme (Ref. CLD50)** - The aim of the programme, led by OGRAS Youth Club, is to engage vulnerable young people from Coalisland in youth development and social activity. Engagement will focus on outreach street work targeting young people who are not currently participating in youth activities in the area and are currently vulnerable to involvement in anti social behaviour, and to raise awareness of drugs and alcohol misuse. The engagement model extends current provision of youth work outside of core youth education to provide support at times when young people are out on the streets.

- f) **Greater Shantallow Community Arts – Youth Intervention Co-ordinator & Running Costs** The provision of a dedicated youth arts and cultural programme and training for the benefit of the young people of the NR Area. The project delivers a wide and varied range of evolving youth arts and cultural services, programmes, training activities and events to meet local need and to engage the youth in this area in artistic and cultural experiences which encourages active community participation and regenerates the community.
- g) **North West Play Resource Centre - Learning through Arts Project** works with young people in the form of culture and arts and provides Essential Skills training focusing on providing accredited Literacy qualifications through the medium of Performance, Creative Writing and 3D Visual Arts (set design and building) to young people who have underachieved through the education system and need training to increase their chances of employment.
- a. Open College Network accredited training in Creative Writing, Drama and 3D Visual Arts
 - b. CCEA Essential Skills Literacy
 - c. Personal Development, Building self esteem and confidence
- h) **Enterprise North West – Tourism & Arts Ambassador Project** The project is an accredited programme dedicated to preparing participants for employment particularly within the hospitality, leisure, transport and tourism sectors and will use the expected opportunities as a result of the Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013 to gain employment in such areas as hotels, local tour guides, business start ups, up-skill volunteers for marshalling at festivals such as Earhart Festival, Leafair Festival and Waterside Links Festival. Through a collaborative approach with employment support agencies such as Derry Youth and Community Workshop, Customised Training Services, Rutledge and Derry 2020 businesses will be advised/assisted or created. Training will be in Edexcel, NITB and Principles First. The project will enable people to access all available opportunities to gain the education and skills to find sustainable employment and make them inclusive in economic society.