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Impact of COVID-19 on arts and culture in Northern Ireland

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This paper explores impacts on the arts and cultural sectors in Northern Ireland from the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper compares support measures in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, as well as longer term considerations for the sector's recovery.

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Key Points

- The Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) has estimated that of the 39,100 jobs in arts, culture and heritage in Northern Ireland (NI) 12,000-16,000 are vulnerable as a result of COVID-19 impacts and restrictions. More than 60% of jobs in museums, galleries and libraries are vulnerable and almost half of jobs in music, theatre and visual arts.
- According to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), of the 7,500 people employed by 102 of its annually funded organisations, over 6,000 people were employed on a temporary or freelance basis.
- 129 arts organisations surveyed by ACNI in July 2020, reported the loss of 36,000 work opportunities for NI artists and creatives between the start of lockdown and September 2020.
- Eligibility for the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) requires that more than 50% of income comes from self-employment. According to researchers in Queen's University Belfast, many creative careers include a mix of payroll and fee-based work, making them ineligible for some government supports.
- Over 300,000 households purchased tickets for cultural events in 2016/17. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's box office survey suggested an average loss of 72% of box office revenue for the 42 organisations surveyed. Expected losses included £8.3m for ticket sales and an additional £5.3m from other revenue streams.
- 90% of artists and arts organisations surveyed by ACNI were delivering online. In November 2020, 50% of 3,400 audience members had engaged with online arts and culture content, according to a *Culture Beyond Covid: Arts Survey* from Thrive, funded by the ACNI.
- A Thrive and Indigo Ltd survey of arts audiences in NI and the Republic of Ireland (RoI) suggested that clearly communicating safety measures and providing refund assurances are important aspects of rebuilding audience confidence as venues plan a return to live events.
- In 2018/19, ACNI distributed £9.8m through its Exchequer funds and £6.79m of Lottery funds. In April 2020, ACNI announced that its annual funding programme for organisations would be released to support organisations closed due to COVID-19.
- In March 2020, the Minister for Communities announced £1m of emergency funding for artists and arts organisations. This was followed with more announcements of funding, totalling over £4m. In July 2020, the UK Government announced a rescue package of £1.57bn for arts and culture. £33m was apportioned to Northern Ireland.
- The Department for Communities announced a £29m programme of supports for individuals and organisations in the arts, culture, language and heritage sectors in November 2020. Decisions will be announced in January 2021. Organisations in receipt of these funds must spend them before the end of March 2021.
- Cultural recovery task forces in the UK and Ireland have called for longer term issues to be addressed such as a universal basic income.

Executive Summary

In February 2020, the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport published a press release with the headline '*UK's Creative Industries contributes almost £13million to the UK economy every hour*'.¹ In NI, between 2017 and 2018 GVA for the Creative Industries increased by 5%, compared to a 0.1% increase for total GVA. Within weeks of the DCMS announcement, all theatres, galleries, museums and music venues had closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Eight months later, many of Northern Ireland's arts and culture venues hadn't reopened their doors to audiences.

In July 2020, Oxford Economics projected a UK-wide GVA shortfall of £29 billion for the Creative Industries, with 122,000 permanent creative workers being made redundant and 287,000 freelance roles terminated by the end of 2020. Their projections for Northern Ireland's Creative Industries predicted losses of £300,000 in GVA and 1 in 5 jobs from the sector. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's (ACNI) box office survey suggested an average loss of 72% of ticket revenue for the 42 organisations surveyed. Expected losses included £8.3m for ticket sales and an additional £5.3m for food, drink, sponsorship and other revenue streams. Between 2016 and 2019, over 300,000 households purchased tickets for a cultural activity in Northern Ireland.

The 102 organisations funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland employ approximately 7,500 people. Of those, over 6,000 work on a temporary or freelance basis. Organisations surveyed by ACNI in July 2020 reported the loss of 36,000 work opportunities for NI artists and creatives between the start of lockdown and September 2020. Many of these workers are not eligible for the UK Government's employment support schemes. Ulster University estimated a 90% decline in economic output for the arts, entertainment and recreation industry in Q2 of 2020, the highest of all industries. By August 2020, the Office for National Statistics reported 67% of people employed by the arts, entertainment and recreation industry were furloughed, compared to an average 27% of all industries².

In 2018/19, ACNI distributed £9.8m through its Exchequer funds and £6.79m of Lottery funds in Northern Ireland. The Minister for Communities announced the first £1m support package for artists in March 2020. In April 2020, ACNI announced that its annual funding programme for 97 organisations would be released to support organisations closed due to COVID-19. The UK Government released a £1.57bn rescue package for the UK's museums, galleries, theatres and music venues. £33m was earmarked for Northern Ireland.

¹ UK Government DCMS Pres release Creative Industries Economic Activity Feb 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-creative-industries-contributes-almost-13-million-to-the-uk-economy-every-hour> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

² ACNI Box Office Survey June 2020 www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-Box-Office-Survey-June2020.pdf Page last accessed 22.11.2020

By October 2020, over £8m of Exchequer funding had been released to more than 1000 of NI's artists and over 200 arts organisations. In November 2020, applications opened across NI's arts, culture and heritage arm's length bodies for COVID-19 emergency programmes of funding support, totalling over £29m. The Committee may wish to consider further research to explore the effectiveness of supports issued in January 2021.

In July 2020, ACNI published a manual of guidelines to support venues to safely reopen once restrictions are eased. Some creative professionals have voiced concern that as the lockdown restrictions are lifted and social distancing remains necessary, live events may not resume at full capacity for some time. This could lead to the widening of the income gap between self-employed artists and the rest of society. Further monitoring of the situation, particularly of subsectors most vulnerable has been recommended by the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre.

Both the Irish and UK Governments have created cultural recovery taskforces to address the bespoke issues of the cultural sector. The diversity and inclusivity of the DCMS cultural recovery taskforce was questioned as part of a DCMS Committee Inquiry held in July 2020. Membership of the Irish taskforce includes musicians and artists as well as senior leaders of Ireland's arts and cultural organisations and advocacy groups. The NI Arts Collaboration Network have called for the co-design of an NI arts and culture recovery plan with an NI cultural taskforce.

The Irish taskforce released its strategy for recovery in November 2020. This includes a call to pilot a universal basic income for artists. Social security measures like these already exist in Germany and France, each to varying degrees of success.

Researchers and sector advocates have suggested that the pandemic may lead to the emergence of a new arts and culture policy agenda, where creative practitioners play a valued role in society's recovery.

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1 Contribution of arts and culture

Cultural venues and events were among the first to be closed in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and due to social distancing requirements, may be among the last to fully reopen. Restrictions have impacted performance opportunities, festivals and concerts as well as audiences' opportunities to experience culture, affecting employment and economic activity. The impact of the pandemic on the arts and culture sector extends beyond artists. It also has affected crews and the wide range of people it takes to put on live performances in venues and at festivals.³

Section 1 of this paper includes industry definitions used by different government departments in the UK, Northern Ireland and its neighbouring jurisdictions. This analysis has been included for two reasons. First, as a means to provide evidence of the contribution of culture and arts. Second, to demonstrate the complexity of the sector⁴ and explore why so many creative professionals were not eligible for the UK Government's business and employment supports.

1.1 Economic Contribution

Data to help assess the contribution of arts and culture to the economy comes from a number of different sources and each uses a different methodology to make estimates. Section 1.1.2 sets out the definitions used by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whose remit includes the Creative Industries, as well as the Office for National Statistics, who refer to the Standardised Industrial Codes for arts, entertainment and recreation. This paper attempts to summarise information for culture, arts and heritage sectors, as these are within the remit of the Department for Communities.⁵

1.1.2 Definitions

DCMS's definition for the cultural sector is '*those industries with a cultural object at the centre of the industry*'. Other definitions refer to the Standardised Industrial Classifications (SIC) codes. These are used by the Office for National Statistics when defining Employment and Gross Value Added (GVA).

For the arts and cultural sectors. These include;

- SIC 90 - Arts and entertainment, including performing arts (theatres, concerts, live music etc) and creative arts and writers; and

³ Belfast Live We Make Events Oct 2020 <https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/whats-on/music-nightlife-news/wemakeevents-ni-it-feels-like-19172892>

⁴ HoC Library COVID-19 The Importance of Different Sectors to the Economy April 2020 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/coronavirus-the-importance-of-different-sectors-to-the-economy/> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁵ Some subsectors of the Creative Industries come under the remit of the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland.

- SIC 91 - Museums, galleries, libraries and other attractions such historical buildings, zoos, botanic gardens.

The Department for Communities (DfC) shares responsibility for the Creative Industries for Northern Ireland with the Department for the Economy. The Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and DfC lists the following as Creative Industries subsectors under their remit:

- Arts (including performing arts such as theatre, live music, and supporting activities, artists and writers);
- Film, TV, and music (recording and publishing);
- Radio;
- Photography;
- Crafts;
- Cultural education;
- Museums and galleries;
- Library and archives; and
- Historic buildings and other attractions.

1.2 Employment and Gross Value Added (GVA)

The ONS estimated that 2% of employment in Northern Ireland can be attributed to arts and entertainment. The NISRA Quarterly Employment Survey for June 2020 lists the number of employees in arts, entertainment and recreation in Northern Ireland as 15,000.⁶ However, the broad industrial group 'arts, entertainment and recreation' also includes sports, gambling and visitor attractions such as theme parks.

Figures reported by NISRA in 2020 estimated that the Creative Industries in NI comprised of 3,200 businesses and accounted for 2.9% of Northern Ireland's total Gross Value Added (contributing £1,204 million) in 2018. Also, 29,000 were employed in Creative Industries in 2019. With the music, performing and visual arts accounting for approximately 3,000 jobs.⁷ Table 1 includes the employment numbers for each sub sector of the Creative Industries in NI.

Table 1 Employment in NI Creative Industries Groups

Creative Industry Group	Employment
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⁶ NISRA Quarterly Employment Survey March 2020 <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/quarterly-employment-survey-supplementary-tables-march-2020> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁷ NISRA Creative Industries Economic Estimates 2020 <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/communities/creative-industries-economic-estimates-northern-ireland-2020.pdf>

IT, Software and Computer Services	12,000
Film, TV, Video, Radio, Photography	3,000
Museums, Libraries and Galleries	3,000
Music, Performing and Visual Arts	3,000
Publishing	2,000
Advertising and Marketing	2,000
Architecture	Rounded up to 1,000
Design and Designer Fashion	2,000
Crafts	Rounded up to 1,000
Total	29,000

Source: NISRA⁸

Researchers from Queens University, Belfast have suggested that the long term fragility of the arts and culture sector is one of the reasons its workforce have been particularly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. Figure 1 compares industry sectors in 2019, where arts and entertainment jobs earned almost £100 per week less than the average of all sectors. Also, almost a third of arts and entertainment jobs were self-employed.

Figure 1 Jobs, average weekly earnings and GVA by Industry Sector in the UK

Jobs, average weekly earnings and Gross Value Added by industry sector 2019, United Kingdom							
Industrial Sector (SIC 2007)	Total Workforce Jobs		Self Employment Jobs		Weekly Pay	Gross Value Added (GVA)	
	Level ('000s)	% of total	Level ('000s)	% of total	£	Level (Ebn)	% of total
Agriculture	411	1.1	174	3.7	479	13	0.7
Mining & quarrying	58	0.2	7	0.1	787	17	0.9
Manufacturing	2,704	7.5	198	4.2	592	191	9.6
Electricity & gas supply	154	0.4	13	0.3	767	31	1.6
Water supply & treatment	241	0.7	12	0.2	635	25	1.2
Construction	2,310	6.4	837	17.8	650	123	6.2
Retail & wholesale	4,967	13.9	338	7.2	489	212	10.7
Transportation & storage	1,799	5.0	290	6.2	594	84	4.2
Accommodation & catering	2,513	7.0	153	3.3	409	56	2.8
Information & communication	1,536	4.3	194	4.1	765	146	7.4
Financial & insurance	1,127	3.1	74	1.6	783	131	6.6
Real estate	659	1.8	94	2.0	556	259	13.0
Professional & scientific	3,225	9.0	529	11.3	709	156	7.9
Admin & support services	3,042	8.5	366	7.8	494	108	5.4
Public administration	1,531	4.3	44	0.9	648	96	4.8
Education	2,981	8.3	310	6.6	630	117	5.9
Health & care	4,477	12.5	383	8.2	553	152	7.7
Arts & entertainment	1,035	2.9	292	6.2	490	32	1.6
Other services	1,008	2.8	347	7.4	502	32	1.6
All sectors	35,832	100.0	4,692	100.0	585	1,986	100.0

Notes:
Jobs figures are for December 2019. As a person may have multiple jobs, the number of jobs is not equal to the number of employed people.
Earnings figures show gross median weekly pay for full-time employees
GVA for the real estate sector includes £179bn of 'imputed rents' - estimates of hypothetical rental value of homes that owner-occupiers live in
All sectors GVA for the UK is not the same as UK GDP, which is higher (£2,215bn) as it includes (+)taxes & (-)subsidies on products
Sources: Jobs: ONS Workforce Jobs (via Nomis), Earnings: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, GVA: ONS GDP low level aggregates

⁸ ONS Regional GVA by Industry Dec 2019

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/nominalandrealregionalgrossvalueaddedbalancedbyindustry>

Page last accessed 22.11.2020

2 Impacts

As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions introduced in March 2020, many cultural organisations closed to the public and cancelled or postponed events. According to an ACNI and Thrive survey of 42 arts organisations in NI, these closures resulted in 72% of losses to box office income for 2020.⁹ Another ACNI survey¹⁰, highlighted that 90% of the 102 arts organisations surveyed, changed their working methods and outputs by offering online content and 80% were investigating new ways to engage with audiences.

Ulster University's Economic Policy Centre has estimated that of the 39,100 jobs in arts, culture and heritage, 12,000-16,000 are vulnerable as a result of COVID-19 impacts and restrictions. Placing more than 60% of jobs in museums, galleries and libraries as vulnerable and almost half of jobs in music, theatre and visual art¹¹.

In July 2020, Oxford Economics (OE) predicted a UK-wide GVA shortfall of £29bn for the Creative Industries, with 122,000 permanent creative workers being made redundant and 287,000 freelance roles terminated by the end of 2020. OE's projections for Northern Ireland's Creative Industries predicted a loss of £300,000 in GVA by the end of 2020, which is a 24% change from 2019 and puts 1 in 5 jobs within the Creative Industries at risk.¹²

Employment support measures put in place by the UK Government may be available to some creative professionals¹³. These include the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) as well as various loans and rates and tax reliefs. However, for the SEISS eligible applicants must earn at least half of their income through self-employment.

According to researchers in Queens University, Belfast, the work of freelancers and self-employed creative professionals;

*'...blends payroll and fee-based work, running often non-profit companies without taking salary or having employees, and in some instances, their activities might even fall under the radar of declared labour. Their payroll contracts are often too short or casualised to be eligible for the 80% or 70% wage subsidy schemes.'*¹⁴

⁹ ACNI and Thrive Survey of 29 arts organisations June 2020 <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-Box-Office-Survey-June2020.pdf> Page accessed 27.11.2020

¹⁰ ACNI Coronavirus Survey June 2020 <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-Coronavirus-Survey-Findings-Summary.pdf> Page last accessed 27.11.2020

¹¹UUEPC COVID-19 and the Arts. Culture and Heritage sectors Nov. 2020

https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/683077/COVID-19-and-the-Arts-Culture-and-Heritage-sectors-16-October-2020-published-version.pdf Page last accessed 27.11.2020

¹² Oxford Economics Projected Impact of COVID-19 on UK Creative Industries June 2020

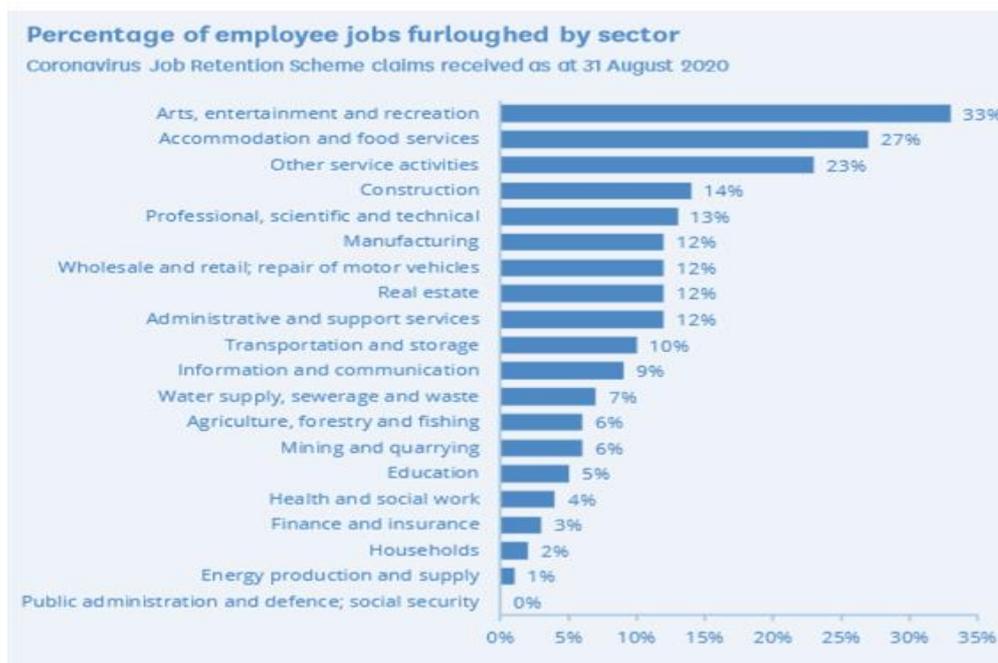
<https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/recent-releases/The-Projected-Economic-Impact-of-COVID-19-on-the-UK-Creative-Industries> Page last accessed 27.11.2020

¹³ UK Gov. COVID-19 supports for NI Businesses June 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-guidance-information-for-ni-businesses-employers> Page last accessed 26.11.2020

¹⁴ Ali Fitzgibbon and Iannis Tsouris April 2020 <http://qppl.qub.ac.uk/performing-artists-in-the-age-of-covid-19/> Page last accessed 27.11.2020

By the end of August 2020, the arts, entertainment and recreation sector had the highest percentage of furloughed employees¹⁵ in the UK.

Figure 2 Percentage of employee jobs furloughed by sector



Source: HMRC, [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: October 2020- data tables](#), 22 October 2020

Table 2 Employments furloughed in arts, entertainment and recreation services in NI

Sector	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other services	9,400	13,400	70%

Source: HMRC CJRS and PAYE Real Time Information¹⁶

As outlined in Table 2, By August 2020, of the 13,400 jobs in Northern Ireland eligible for furloughing in arts, entertainment, recreation and other services, 70% had taken up the option.

Data from the 2019 Annual Funding Survey conducted by ACNI, estimated approximately 7,500 people in Northern Ireland were employed by the 102 arts organisations supported by Exchequer and National Lottery Arts funding. Of these, over 1,000 were employed on a permanent basis and almost 6,500 on a contractual basis.

¹⁵ ONS Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK: 27 August 2020 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/businessservices/bulletins/coronavirusandtheeconomicimpactsonthek/27august2020#current-trading-status-of-businesses> Page last accessed 26.11.2020

¹⁶ HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Statistics: August 2020

2.1 Social Contribution

The social contribution of the arts is perhaps best evidenced by considering the type of arts organisation found in NI. As highlighted by ACNI in its submission to the Committee for Communities in May 2020, the sector is largely made up of charities, community interest companies and social enterprises. Charitable organisations generally carry no sizeable reserves and any profits made, tend to be reinvested to enhance delivery.¹⁷

In addition to the economic contribution of the arts and culture sector, its social value has been evident during the varying periods of lockdown. 90% of arts organisations surveyed by ACNI had an online offering for audiences. Often these organisations provide online content at no cost to the audience.

One example is Arts Care, who facilitate and co-ordinate participatory workshops in partnership with the Health and Social Care Trusts in NI. They moved their arts programme online. This enabled their creative practitioners to continue to deliver to patients, residents and staff in health and social care settings. Further examples can be found in the Further Reading section at the end of this paper.

3 Risks

As section 2 outlined, the vulnerability of the arts and culture sector in Northern Ireland can be attributed to a number of long term infrastructural issues. These systemic issues now pose some of the biggest risks to those who work within the sector, as the extent of the economic shock from the COVID-19 pandemic becomes more evident. UUEPC's study of the vulnerability of jobs in the arts, culture and heritage sector highlighted that

*'...jobs in Theatres, Crafts and Music are much more at risk and need of support. These are the areas upon which policy intervention should focus most.'*¹⁸

This observation followed an analysis of transferrable skillsets between sub sectors, noting that those working in the IT, advertising and marketing sub-sectors of the Creative Industries, had skillsets that were transferable to other sectors.

3.1 Freelance and Temporary Contracts

The Arts Professional industry journal conducts an annual 'ArtsPay' survey. In recent years this has highlighted a number of challenges with the freelance and temporary nature of employment contracts. Creative workers on freelance or temporary contracts,

¹⁷ ACNI Submission to Communities Committee May 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/news-documents/ACNI-Submission-to-the-Committee-of-the-Department-for-the-Communities-22-05-2020.pdf> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

¹⁸ UUEPC Nov 2020 https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/683077/COVID-19-and-the-Arts-Culture-and-Heritage-sectors-16-October-2020-published-version.pdf Page last accessed 27.11.2020

particularly those working for smaller organisations, often sign up for ‘set fee’ contracts, where the number of hours of work involved is unknown at the time of contract negotiations. Respondents reported a widespread practice of consequently having to work overtime for free, in order to get the job done to a satisfactory level.

Of the 224 freelance or self-employed respondents, the average annual earnings were £16,000.¹⁹ This is just one issue that perhaps contributed to many creative professionals having a lack of reserves to call upon when lockdown began and the theatres and music venues closed. Also, due to the ‘gigging’ nature of contracts²⁰, when events were cancelled, the job and subsequent fee was lost.

3.2 Free Online Content

Online platforms have seen a rise in freely available art and performances. According to a recent survey by Thrive, 50% of NI Audiences have engaged with online cultural offerings since March 2020²¹. Some of the difficulties arising from providing content online include its being offered freely. Also, where large institutions have the resources to professionally produce and stream content online, smaller organisations, perhaps without prior experience of this process, risk damaging the quality of their artistic product with recordings made with small budgets and less filming experience.

With the contractual issues raised in Section 2.1, for those performers who have not negotiated broadcast rights, their work may be reproduced without compensation to the artist. The DCMS Committee’s Inquiry into the Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors, called upon the Department to;

‘...investigate how the market for recorded music is operating in the era of streaming to ensure that music creators are receiving a fair reward.’²²

This issue could perhaps expand to include investigating reproduction rights for performers and production teams across all of the performing art forms. Ireland’s cultural recovery taskforce has also highlighted rights as an issue to be addressed, as outlined below in Table 9 of Section 6. And the Creative Industries Federation have joined with other small business representative bodies to ask the UK Government to

¹⁹ Arts Professional ArtsPay Survey 2018 <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/exploitation-rife-unpaid-work-subsidises-arts> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

²⁰ The gig economy involves the exchange of labour for money between individuals or companies via digital platforms that actively facilitate matching between providers and customers, on a short-term and payment by task basis. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/687553/The_characteristics_of_those_in_the_gig_economy.pdf Page accessed 30.11.2020

²¹ Thrive Nov 2020 Culture Beyond COVID – Insights https://wewillthrive.co.uk/audience-insights/reports/culture-beyond-covid-insights?utm_source=Thrive+Newsletter&utm_campaign=2e7bec31a9-CBC_Arts_webinar_Nov2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d72ac5be3d-2e7bec31a9-572651689

²² HoC DCMS Committee Report Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS Sectors <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2022/documents/19516/default/> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

appoint a Freelancer Commissioner and Future Work Commission, to champion some of these issues.²³

3.3 Investment prior to COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19, the ACNI saw an almost 40% reduction of its funding in real terms between 2011/12 and 2018/19.²⁴ ACNI awarded £8.62 million Exchequer funds to 104 arts organisations in 2018-19. The number of arts organisations supported by the ACNI's Annual Funding Programme in 2018/19 was reduced from 107 (2017-18) to 104 organisations (2018-19).

ACNI research with its core funded organisations identified that income from trusts and foundations represents a relatively small proportion of the overall funding mix for its core-funded arts organisations. This contributed 3.3 per cent (£1.8m) of these arts organisations' total funding in 2018/19.

3.4 Audience Confidence

The ACNI's core funded arts venues generated a combined total of £12.3m through box office income in 2018/19. In 2019/20, just under a fifth of all adults (18%) had attended an arts event at least once a month in NI.²⁵ Also, over three quarters (77%) of all adults cited "I had fun" as a benefit of engaging with the arts.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's box office survey suggested an average loss of 72% of box office revenue of the 42 organisations surveyed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Expected losses included £8.3m for ticket sales and an additional £5.3m from food, drink, sponsorship and other revenue streams between March and September 2020.

Thrive and Indigo Ltd surveyed 4,800 arts audiences in NI and RoI in June and July 2020. A majority of respondents (72%) would consider returning to venues with social distancing measures in place and 64% would not consider booking for another 3 months. These insights highlight the time lag between changes to restrictions and audiences feeling confident to book live cultural activities. Respondents suggested that clearly communicating safety measures and providing refund assurances were important aspects of rebuilding confidence as venues plan the return to live events²⁶.

²³ Creative Industries Federation Nov 2020 <https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/federation-joins-forces-industry-bodies-call-freelance-commissioner> Page last accessed 27.11.2020

²⁴ ACNI Submission to Communities Committee May 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/news-documents/ACNI-Submission-to-the-Committee-of-the-Department-for-the-Communities-22-05-2020.pdf> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

²⁵ DfC Experience of Culture and Arts by Adults in NI 2019/20 <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/communities/experience-of-culture-and-arts-by-adults-northern-ireland-201920.pdf> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

²⁶ Thrive and Indigo Ltd After the Interval Act 2 Audience Survey August 2020 <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wewillthrive/After-the-Interval-Act-2-Full-Report.pdf?mtime=20200803100331> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

3.5 Lost opportunities

Writers speaking at a Parliamentary Inquiry in Australia in November 2020²⁷, described some of the lost opportunities the COVID-19 restrictions have meant for their industry.

These included;

- Established writers often depend on public speaking engagements, university teaching and freelance writing to supplement their publishing career, all of which are curbed by the current restrictions;
- Virtual attendees buy fewer books at digital book launches, stymieing revenue streams for authors; and
- Closures of small publishing firms, writer's centres and journals, prevents new writer's from getting their first 'big break';

The opportunities lost because of the lockdowns of 2020 are difficult to capture through economic statistics, but worth acknowledging. As described in the Australian Parliamentary Inquiry, after many years of training and auditioning, 2020 may have been a 'big break' or career defining moment for some artists. But the restrictions may have prevented the chance to achieve that first starring role. For established performers, the momentum lost due to cancelled tours and diminished film releases may never be regained, once restrictions are eased.

3.6 Mental Health

In 2018, an Ulster University study²⁸ found that people working in the creative industries in NI are around three times more likely to suffer from mental ill health than the general population.

Short term contracts, financial insecurity, irregular hours and the portfolio nature of work, were cited as factors contributing to the pressure felt by creative professionals. Also, the perceived lack of value placed on their work and the inadequate financial rewards were reported as contributing to the likelihood of developing mental health problems.

3.7 Community

Included in an ACNI survey of arts organisations and artists published in April 2020, is a summary of the impacts of the COVID-19 restrictions to a range of communities in Northern Ireland²⁹. Highlighted impacts resulting from cancelled arts and cultural

²⁷ Arts Hub Nov 2020 Writers' represent the arts' fragility at Parliamentary Inquiry <https://www.artshub.com.au/news-article/opinions-and-analysis/covid-19/george-dunford/writers-represent-the-arts-fragility-at-parliamentary-inquiry-261441> Page last accessed 21.11.20

²⁸ Ulster University Survey of Health and Wellbeing in Creative Sectors 2018 <https://www.inspirewellbeing.org/media/9236/changing-arts-and-minds-creative-industries-report.pdf> Page last accessed 27.11.20

²⁹ <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-Coronavirus-Survey-Findings-Summary.pdf>

activities with groups of children, older people, minority ethnic communities, LGBTQ, and people with disabilities, included;

- Social isolation
- Mental health and well-being
- Community cohesion
- Linguistic development

In the longer term, ACNI funded creative practitioners voiced concern about audiences' willingness to engage with the arts, after connections have been lost, particularly with groups from deprived communities.

4 Supports

4.1 UK

On 5th July 2020, the UK Government announced a £1.57bn rescue package for the culture and heritage industries. The measures included³⁰ an extra £188m for the devolved administrations.

4.2 Northern Ireland

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) has the role of distributing arts funding for the Department for Communities from resources allocated by the Exchequer and the National Lottery³¹. ACNI distributes funds to both individuals and organisations in Northern Ireland. ACNI's annual funding programme (AFP) supports over 100 arts organisations in Northern Ireland each year. Acknowledging that there are many more organisations than those funded by ACNI, the data from ACNI's annual funding survey provides a snapshot of activity in the sector in Northern Ireland.

Between 2017 and 2020, three hundred and forty-six different organisations in Northern Ireland received a total of £31,600,694³². This funding was allocated by the Exchequer to DfC and distributed by the ACNI. The allocations listed in Table 3 below do not include National Lottery arts funding, which is also distributed to organisations and individuals by ACNI.

³⁰UK Government Press Release July 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions> Page last accessed 27.11.2020

³¹ Arts Council NI Annual Report and Accounts 2018 – 2019 [http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/Exchequer Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/Exchequer%20Annual%20Report%20and%20Accounts%202018-19.pdf) Page accessed 27. 10. 2020

³² Arts Council NI – Previous Funding Awards <http://artscouncil-ni.org/funding/previous-awards> Page accessed 26. 10. 2020

For context, in 2018/2019 the ACNI distributed £1.2m of National Lottery funding to 47 projects in Northern Ireland³³ as well as £9.6m of Exchequer resources, allocated to DfC for distribution by ACNI.

According to its annual report, ACNI distributed £6.8m of National Lottery funding to 455 applicants in Northern Ireland. ACNI also distributed £9.6m of Exchequer resources³⁴ to 346 individuals and organisations.

Table 3 summarises the annual totals of funding distributed to organisations by ACNI between 2017 and 2020. This funding was distributed on behalf of the Department for Communities through funds allocated by the Exchequer.

Table 3 Total annual funding distributed by ACNI on behalf of DfC before COVID-19

Year	Total Funding £	Number of different DfC / ACNI Funded Organisations
2017– 2018	10,662,920	145
2018 – 2019	9,670,137	177
2019 – 2020*	11,267,637	224

*The 2019–2020 funding totals do not include COVID-19 Emergency Funding.

4.2.1 COVID-19 Emergency Funding Supports

In April 2020, the ACNI announced it would award £8.57m of Exchequer funding³⁵ to 97 arts organisations through the AFP.³⁶ It also offered to release 50% of funding upfront.

On 27 April 2020, the Communities Minister announced £1.5m for a Creative Support Fund (CSF)³⁷ that included grants of up to £5000 to individuals who had lost their work as a result of COVID-19. Small and medium sized organisations could apply to ACNI for a maximum of £25,000 to help the development of new projects or programmes or to rearrange events, cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. The CSF was administered by ACNI and £500,000 of National Lottery funding was contributed by ACNI to the initiative.

³³ Arts Council NI – Arts Council awards £1.2million of National Lottery funding <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-awards-almost-1.2million-of-lottery-funding-to-local-projects> Page accessed 27.10. 2020

³⁴ Arts Council NI Annual Report and Accounts 2018 – 2019 Ps 39-40 http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/Exchequer_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2018-19.pdf Page accessed 27. 10. 2020

³⁵ ACNI Business Plan Oct 2020 <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-Business-Plan-2020-21.pdf> Page accessed 22.11.2020

³⁶ ACNI £12.9M in grants to arts organisations April 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/acni-awards-12.9million-in-grants-to-sustain-key-arts-organisations> Page accessed 22.11.2020

³⁷ DfC Communities Minister Launches £1.5M Support Fund for Arts Sector <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/communities-minister-launches-ps15m-support-fund-arts-sector>

On 23 July 2020, £4m of funding for the CSF was announced by the Communities Minister³⁸. The Individual Emergency Resilience Programme (IERP) fund for individuals opened from 31 July until 17 August 2020. The awards ranged from £1000 to £5000 for individuals. On 19 October 2020, the Communities Minister confirmed that a total of £3,852,000 was distributed by ACNI to 1,089 individuals³⁹.

ACNI distributed £1.9m of funds for small to medium sized organisations as part of the CSF. On 28 October 2020 a fund of £7.75m was announced by the Communities Minister. For this fund, eligible arts and cultural organisations could apply to ACNI for grants of up to £500,000⁴⁰.

In September 2020, the Department of Finance published a table that listed an allocation of £33m to culture funding in Northern Ireland⁴¹.

By September 2020, £1.9m of the original £5.5m had been allocated to small and medium sized organisations and £0.5m to individuals⁴². By October 2020, a total of £3.8m was made available to individual artists.

On 16 November 2020 the DfC released full details of almost £35m of funding for their 2020-2021 programme of COVID-19 emergency support for culture, heritage, arts and languages.⁴³

£33m of this was allocated to DfC by the Executive from COVID-19 support funds.

Table 4 includes a breakdown of the funds that have been announced through DfC and ACNI press releases between March and November 2020.⁴⁴

Table 4 DfC Arts Funding Distributed by ACNI

Announced	Amount £	Fund	Eligible Recipients	Funds Distributed
April	0.575m	Creative Support Fund Artists Emergency Programme	Individual grants of up to £5,000	May 238 awards £0.575m

³⁸ DfC Minister announces reopening of Creative Support Fund <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/minister-announces-reopening-creative-support-fund> Page accessed 27. 10. 2020

³⁹ DfC Individual artists first to benefit from £29M funding package <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/individual-artists-first-benefit-ps29m-funding-package> Page accessed 27.10.2020

⁴⁰ ACNI £7.75M programme to support arts and cultural organisations <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/7.75m-programme-to-support-arts-and-cultural-organisations> . Page accessed 28.10.2020

⁴¹ DoF COVID Funding Allocations https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/Covid-19%20funding%20allocations%20table%2022.09.20%20D9_0.pdf Page accessed 27.10.2020

⁴² NIAR COVID-19 funding Sept 2020 <https://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2020/09/30/a-snapshot-of-covid-19-funding/> Page accessed 22.11.2020

⁴³ DfC COVID-19 Culture, Languages, Arts and Heritage Support Nov 2020 <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/dfc-covid-19-culture-languages-art-heritage-support-2020-21.pdf> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁴⁴ DfC Ní Chuilín releases support for culture, languages, arts and heritage <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/ni-chuilin-releases-support-culture-languages-arts-and-heritage> Page accessed 27.10.2020

April	10,000	Bread and Butter Go Fund Me	Individual grants of up to £200	April
May	1.949m	Phase 1 Organisations Emergency Programme	Grants of up to £25,000 for small and medium sized organisations	August 150 Organisations £1.949m ⁴⁵
August	1m DfC NB 100,000 FSNI ⁴⁶	Individuals Emergency Resilience Programme	Designed to support those working in the Creative Economy including freelancers, musicians, actors, artists and craft workers during the COVID-19 crisis	19 October 1,089 awards individuals ⁴⁷ £3.852m
September	0.9m	Phase 2 ⁴⁸ Organisations Emergency Programme	Grants of up to £25,000 for small and medium sized organisations	6 November 62 organisations £900,000 ⁴⁹
September ⁵⁰	0.5m	Health and Safety Capital Fund	Organisations must demonstrate the purpose of the requested equipment or minor works to be clearly focused on the arts	Information not available
October	7.75m	Stability and Renewal Programme for Organisations	Arts and creative industries organisations, including screen industry for stability funding	January 2021
December	3.35m	Individual Artists Emergency Support	Individual/ self-employed/ freelance artists and creatives	January 2021
October ⁵¹	0.5m	Small Capital Purchases	Organisations in need of new equipment and to make improvements to their premises	Information not available
November ⁵²	0.62m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lyric will receive £174,804 • The MAC will receive £157,520 • Crescent Arts Centre will receive £25,590 • Ulster Orchestra will receive £261,850 	To help prepare and plan for reopening, following closures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic	4 flagship organisations £620,000

⁴⁵ ACNI £1.9M Awards August 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-awards-1.9million-emergency-funding-for-150-arts-organisations> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁴⁶ Future Screens Northern Ireland (FSNI) is a is one of nine UK Creative Industries Cluster Partnerships supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the UK Industrial Strategy. Future Screens NI comprises the two higher education institutions (Ulster University and QUB) and a number of key industrial partners central to NI's creative economy. <https://www.futurescreens.org/about> Page last accessed 23.11.2020

⁴⁷ ACNI £3.6M Awards Oct 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-announces-3.8m-emergency-funding-to-support-1089-individuals> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁴⁸ ACNI Reopens Emergency Fund Sept 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-reopens-emergency-fund-for-arts-and-cultural-organisations> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁴⁹ ACNI Emergency Funding to 62 Organisations Nov 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-awards-990958-emergency-funding-to-62-cultural-organisations> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁵⁰ ACNI H&S Funding Sept 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/500000-fund-to-support-the-safe-re-opening-of-the-arts-and-culture-sectors> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁵¹ ACNI Small Grant Capital Fund Oct 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/500000-fund-opens-to-support-small-capital-purchases>

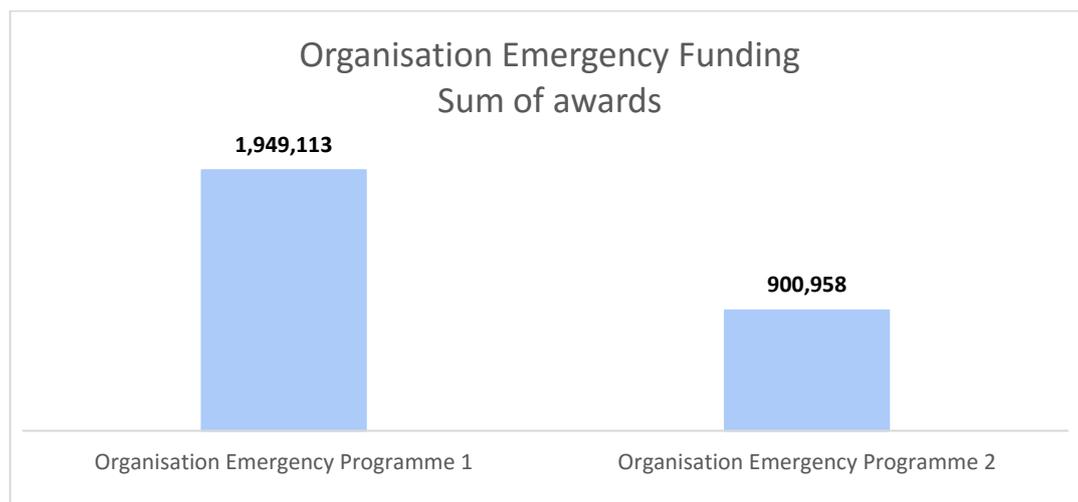
⁵² ACNI Fund Flagship Arts Organisations Nov 2020 <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/flagship-arts-organisations-set-to-receive-Funding-Lifeline> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

Feedback from audience members participating in a recent webinar about the Stability and Renewal Programme for Organisations included concerns such as;

- the financial details required for applications;
- the time to submit applications;
- the feasibility of spending the renewal funding within the two months following a decision in January 2021;⁵³ and
- clarity on the funding available compared to the £33m announced.

The RaiSe team have analysed the ACNI funding data released in November 2020 to create a series of data visualisations. An interactive mapping visualisation of the distribution of funds to individual artists across Northern Ireland can also be found on the [RaiSe blog](#)⁵⁴. Figures 3 and 4 below illustrate the amounts awarded by the ACNI through Programmes 1 and 2 of the Organisation Emergency COVID-19 Funds.

Figure 3 Total Sum of Awards for Organisations in Receipt of Programme 1 and 2 of ACNI Emergency Funds

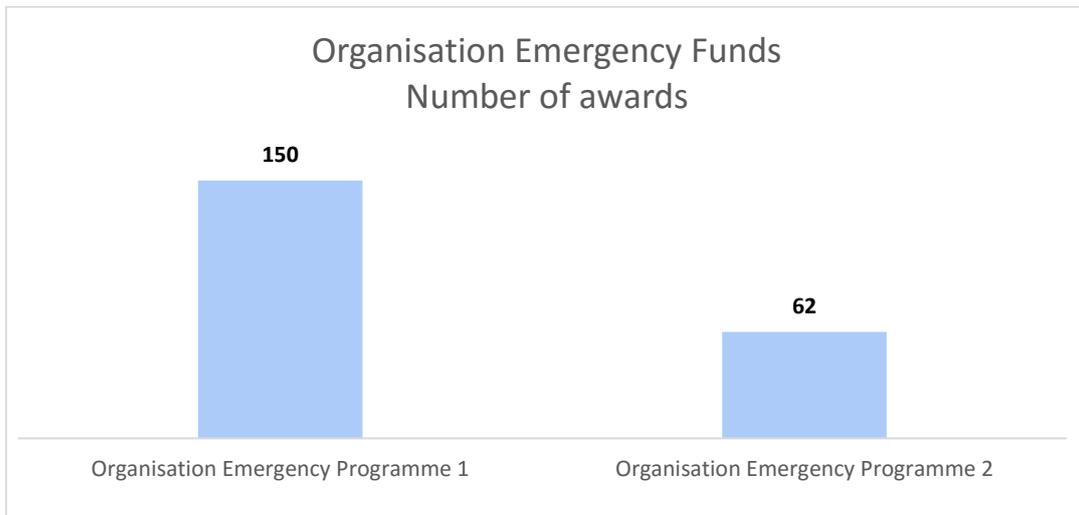


Source: Arts Council of Northern Ireland

⁵³ ACNI Stability and Renewal Programme Webinar Nov 2020 <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/webinar-acni-stability-and-renewal-programme-for-organisations-tickets-128486028169> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁵⁴ <https://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2020/11/25/how-has-covid-19-emergency-funding-for-the-arts-and-culture-sectors-in-northern-ireland-been-distributed/>

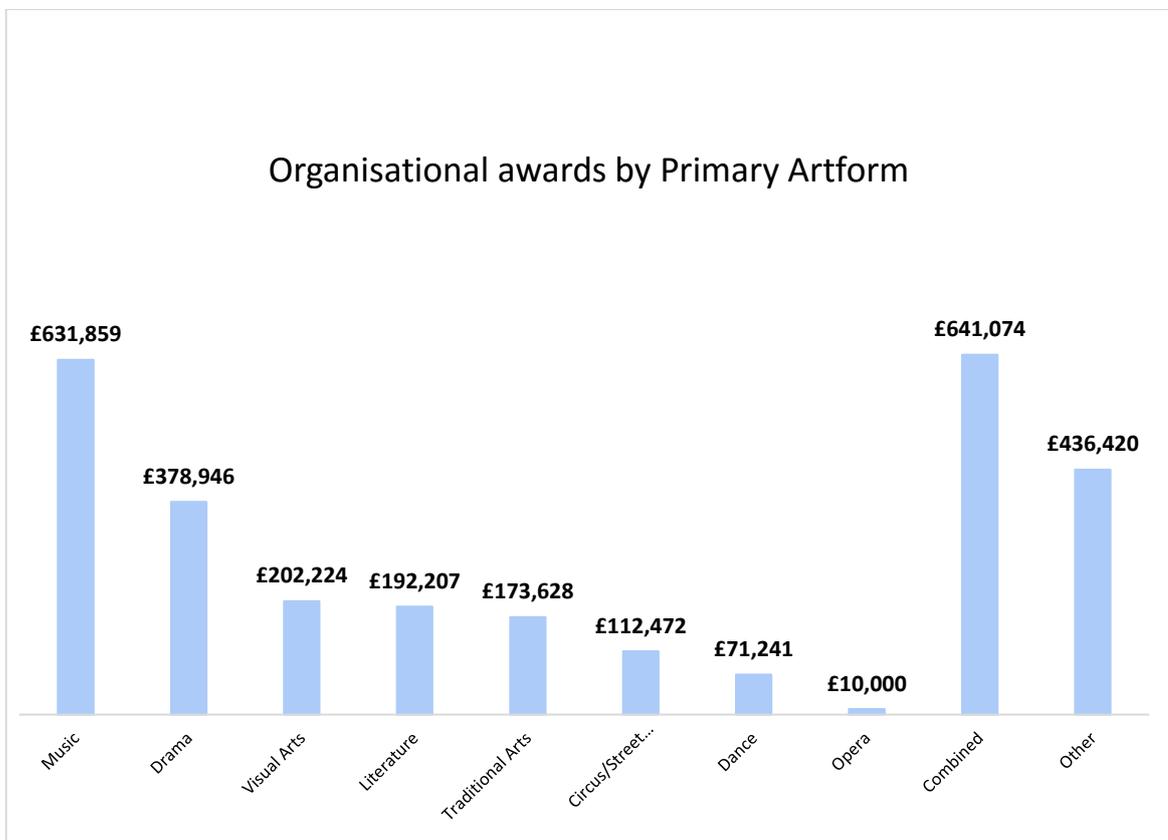
Figure 4 Sum of Organisations in receipt of Programme 1 and 2 of ACNI Emergency Funds



Source: Arts Council of Northern Ireland

And Figure 5 sets out the distribution of funding between different art forms. Music being one of the highest totals, behind 'Combined', demonstrating the interconnected nature of the arts.

Figure 5 Total Sum of ACNI Organisation Emergency Awards by Artform



Source: Arts Council of Northern Ireland

4.2.2 Museums and Heritage

Research by the International Council of Museums found that more than one in 10 museum workers worldwide expects their institution to close permanently because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Museums Association (which supports the non-national museums) has created guidance for the sector in Northern Ireland. Many local museums in Northern Ireland are over-seen by local councils and are therefore ineligible for a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan.

The Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division issued a survey to gain greater insights into how the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting heritage organisations in Northern Ireland. In November 2020, DfC announced a £5.7m Heritage Recovery Fund, to be distributed by the National Lottery. Also, National Museums NI, the Councils and Community Foundation NI have been allocated funds as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 includes details of the division of the £33M from the Executive, as well as funds repurposed by DfC, ACNI and the National Lottery.

Table 5 DfC COVID-19 Response Funding 16 November 2020

Covid 19 Funding Programme	Delivery Agent	Allocation £m
Individual Artists	ACNI	6.25
Stability and Renewal Programme for Organisations. Open to arts, cultural and community centres, theatres, galleries, grassroots music venues, comedy venues	ACNI	7.75
Culture in Quarantine	ACNI and BBC	0.015
Heritage Recovery Fund Various Projects	National Lottery Heritage Fund	5.7
Irish Language, Ulster Scots and Sign Language	DfC Languages Branch Ulster Scots Agency Conradh na Gaeilge Ciste Infheistiochta Gaelige	2.5
Community Arts, Culture and Heritage	Community Foundation NI	2
Various Projects (not open call)	NI Screen	0.5
	Libraries NI	0.3
	National Museums NI	0.2
	Architectural Heritage Fund	0.1
	National Churches Trust	0.5
	University of Atypical	0.2
Council support funding	Councils	3
Renewal projects in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas	Neighbourhood Renewal P'ship Boards	0.535

Total		29
Executive Funds		4
July 2020		
DfC, ACNI and National Lottery		1.5
April 2020		
Total		34.85

Beyond public funding, there are other funds available to the arts and culture sector in Northern Ireland. One example is the Freeland's Foundation Hardship Fund of £500,000. It is open to visual artists and freelancers in the visual arts sector in Northern Ireland. Applicants must state whether they have been previously successful in applications for ACNI emergency grants and the Freeland's Foundation⁵⁵. As outlined by ACNI, income from Trusts and Foundations contributed less than £2m (3%) of arts funding in 2018/19.⁵⁶

4.3 Scotland

Table 6 details the funding available to the arts and culture sector in Scotland. This includes funding provided as part of the UK Government's arts and culture rescue package.

Table 6 COVID-19 Emergency Arts Funding in Scotland

Funder	Fund	Eligible Recipients
Creative Scotland	Bridging Bursary	Individual artists and freelancers
	Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary	
	Open Fund: Sustaining Creative Development	Individuals and organisations Rolling applications. 174 individual applicants and 97 organisations in receipt of £4.7m funding by Oct.
Screen Scotland	2 x £1m funds	Broadcasting and film productions
Museums Galleries Scotland	£700,000	Independent Museums urgent core costs
	£55,000	Digital working
	Independent Cinema Recovery and Resilience Fund 14 Sept – 5 Oct £3.5m	27 Applicants Decisions by end of Oct.

⁵⁵ Freeland's Foundation Eligibility Criteria Sept 2020 <https://www.a-n.co.uk/about/freelands-foundation-emergency-fund-2/>
Page last accessed 30.11.2020

⁵⁶ ACNI Communities Committee Submission May 2020 <http://artsCouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/news-documents/ACNI-Submission-to-the-Committee-of-the-Department-for-the-Communities-22-05-2020.pdf>

Creative Scotland ⁵⁷ £31.5m	Culture Organisations and Venues Recovery Fund 10 Sept – 24 Sept £15m	348 Applicants Decisions by November
	Hardship Fund for Creative Freelancers £5m P'ship with CraftScotland, Help Musicians, Society of Authors, Visual Arts Scotland and BECTU	£700,000 Screen Scotland Hardship Fund decisions communicated to applicants in October
	Sustaining Creative Practice Fund ⁵⁸ £5m = £1.5m Culture Collective £3.5m Open Fund Threshold of £50,000 over 12 months	Open on a rolling basis Supported by National Lottery funding
	Youth Arts £3m = £1.2m Access to Youth Arts Fund £700,000 Small Grants Scheme £50,000 Time to Shine Nurturing Talent Fund £1.050m Youth Arts Targeted Fund	Closed 12 Nov Closed 2 Nov Closed 13 Oct
	Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund	20 venues in receipt of £7.5m in August, supporting 500 jobs and 1,000 freelancer commissions 59 venues in receipt of £4.74m Announced in Sept
	Grassroots Music Venues Sustainability Fund £2.2m	72 venues in receipt of £2.2m Announced in Sept

4.4 Wales⁵⁹

Arts Council Wales, the Welsh Government and the Welsh Museums Foundation are distributing some of the rescue funding allotted to Wales from the UK Government's £1.57bn rescue package for the arts. Organisations can quickly check their eligibility for funding using an online checking system.

⁵⁷ Creative Scotland COVID-19 Funding Update Oct 2020

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/Inquiries/20201015_CreativeScotlandCovid19OctoberUpdate.pdf Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁵⁸ Creative Scotland COVID-19 Funding Overview Nov 2020 <https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-overview#:~:text=Creative%20Scotland%27s%20funding%20is%20split%20into%20three%20main,specific%20priorities%20or%20shared%20goals%20with%20other%20agencies>. Page last accessed 17.12.2020

⁵⁹ Arts Council of Wales COVID-19 Funding <https://arts.wales/funding/coronavirus> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

Table 7 COVID-19 Emergency Arts Funding Wales

Fund Distributor	Fund	Eligible Recipients
Arts Council Wales	£7m Arts Resilience Fund	Organisations
	Urgent Response Fund	Individuals
	Stabilisation Fund	Individuals and Organisations
Welsh Government	£1m Creative Wales fund	Grassroots music venues, TV and publishing sectors
	£1m Cultural Resilience Fund	Museums, collections, conservation services, archives, and community and public libraries
	£250,000 Digital Library Resources	Public libraries to provide additional digital resources to the public
	£750,000 Emergency Relief Fund	Smallest and most vulnerable independent sector sport, museum and heritage organisations
Welsh Museums Federation	£325,000 COVID-19 Resilience grant scheme	Museums and heritage attractions
Arts Council of Wales £25.5m of revenue funding £2m of capital		Theatres, arts centres and concert halls Galleries Organisations producing and touring arts activity Organisations providing participatory arts activity
Welsh Government £25.5m		Grass roots music venues Heritage sites Local museums, libraries and archive services Events and festivals Independent cinemas Individual freelance creative professionals

4.5 England

From the £1.57bn rescue package the following was assigned to support the 'mothballing' and 'cocooning' of some of the jurisdiction's cultural organisations.

- £1.15 bn support pot for cultural organisations in England delivered through a mix of grants and loans. This will be made up of £270m of repayable finance and £880m in grants;
- £100m of targeted support for the national cultural institutions in England and the English Heritage Trust; and
- £120m capital investment to restart construction on cultural infrastructure and for heritage construction projects in England, which was paused due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Table 8 lists some of the funds available through Arts Council England, Historic England and the British Film Institute. This is from the £1.15bn pot allotted to England's arts, culture and heritage sector.

Table 8 COVID-19 Emergency Arts Funding England

Fund	Amount	Recipients
Historic England	£88m Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage	To help heritage organisations or businesses cover operating costs, assess and adapt their business models, and become financially viable
Historic England	£50m Heritage Stimulus Fund	Organisations to help with costs for operating, reopening and recovery
Historic England	£2m Architecture Heritage Fund	Architecture Heritage Fund to support charities and social enterprises occupying historic buildings.
Historic England	Emergency Response Fund	Grants to help organisations, voluntary groups and self-employed contractors
British Film Institute	£30m Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas	Independent Cinemas
Arts Council England	Culture Recovery Fund £270m Long Term Loans £500m Grants for Organisations	Organisations
Arts Council England	£3.36m	Grassroots Music Venues (135 awarded grants)
Arts Council England	£55m Capital Kick-start Fund	Organisations in need of capital funding
Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grants	£18m increase, making £75m available	Individuals, community and cultural organisations
Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice	Increased budget from £3.6m to £18m	Help creatives step up their work in new ways
Arts Council England Freelancer funds	£1m to Theatre Artists Fund £1m to Help Musicians Fund	Freelance professional theatre workers and musicians
Arts Council Emergency Response Funds	£20m Emergency Response Fund (ERF)	£2,500 available to artists, creative practitioners and freelancers
Arts Council England	£50m ERF	Up to £35,000 available to organisations outside the National Portfolio
Arts Council England	£90m ERF	Available to National Portfolio Organisations and lead Creative People and Places

4.6 Ireland

The Irish Arts Council had its funding allocation increased by €25m over its initial budget allocation in 2020. It has been allocated a total funding provision of €130m for 2021. Irish Arts Council funding is to be used to;

- support safe reopening;
- find new ways of reaching audiences in person and online;
- protect jobs and livelihoods;
- €50m is to support live entertainment in 2021;
- pilot live performance support scheme has been extended to incentivise venues, producers and promoters of live performances to plan new productions and to employ workers in the cultural and creative sector; and
- an arts and culture task force has been formed to plan for the sector's recovery.

4.7 COVID-19 Arts Funding Elsewhere

4.7.1 Europe

In response to the pandemic, the culture budget for the EU was doubled and the European Commission took a number of horizontal measures through its Creative Europe funding programme. These included a temporary framework for Members to access State Aid to grant compensation to companies for damage suffered due to COVID-19. This means Member States can grant financial support directly to consumers for cancelled services or tickets that are not reimbursed by the operators concerned.

Changes in the regulatory framework means Member States can redirect funds to the cultural sector. A €100bn support package to mitigate unemployment risks included income replacement measures for the self-employed. Details of all of the support available for each Member State can be found in Further Reading list at the end of this paper.⁶⁰

5 Effectiveness of Supports – Key Considerations

Researchers from the Centre for Cultural Value⁶¹ have described the difficulty in determining the total amount of additional funding distributed on behalf of the Exchequer by the cultural arm's length bodies. Particularly when attempting to compare the amount of COVID-19 emergency funding with funds allocated on an annual basis, in years before the pandemic. This may be a consideration for further research in 2021.

5.1 Timing

Decisions about the Stability and Renewal fund will be made in January 2021. As part of their applications, details on how renewal costs will be spent before the end of March

⁶⁰ EU Commission Creative Europe COVID-19 Policy Measures Nov 2020

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/coronavirus_policy_measures_16_november.pdf Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁶¹ John Wright Centre for Cultural Value Nov 2020 <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/CV/resources/policy-review-cultural-policy-responses-to-covid-19-in-the-uk/>

2021 have been requested. At a webinar⁶² held to support prospective applicants understand the eligibility criteria, concerns were raised about the practicality of spending the funding within two months.

5.2 Thresholds

The grant threshold for individual artists applying for funding in NI is £5000. This is significantly less than Creative Scotland's Open Fund⁶³, which has a threshold of £50,000 to be spent on activity within a 12 month period.

5.3 Support Mix

Comparing supports in NI with neighbouring jurisdictions, as well as hardship grants, specific COVID-19 funds for independent cinemas, live events and grass roots music venues have been ring fenced in Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland. Some of these funds have been supported by National Lottery funding. The arts emergency funding programmes distributed by ACNI have largely been split between individuals and organisations.

5.4 Monitoring

In July 2020, ACNI published a manual of guidelines to support venues to safely reopen once restrictions permit. Some creative professionals have voiced concern that as the lockdown restrictions are lifted and social distancing remains necessary, live events may not resume at full capacity for some time. This could lead to the income gap between self-employed artists and the rest of society widening. Continual monitoring of the situation has been recommended by the UUEPC⁶⁴.

6 Suggestions of Further Measures

Given the unique mix of self-employed and freelance workers, as well as the already fragile and precarious nature of the sector, the Arts Collaboration Network has stated that a bespoke package of support measures are required for the recovery of the arts and culture sector.

⁶² ACNI Stability and Renewal Programme Webinar Nov 2020 <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/webinar-acni-stability-and-renewal-programme-for-organisations-tickets-128486028169> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁶³ Creative Scotland COVID-19 Funding Overview Dec 2020 <https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-overview#:~:text=Creative%20Scotland%27s%20funding%20is%20split%20into%20three%20main,specific%20priorities%20or%20shared%20goals%20with%20other%20agencies.> Page last accessed 17.12.2020

⁶⁴ UUEPC Nov 2020 https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/683077/COVID-19-and-the-Arts-Culture-and-Heritage-sectors-16-October-2020-published-version.pdf Page last accessed 27.11.2020

Measures suggested by the UUEPC⁶⁵ include; hardship grants and loans for venues facing closure, 100% rate relief, funding for cancelled events, visitor and skills vouchers, as well as bursaries. In the longer term, kick-start and recovery funds similar to those in England and Wales were also suggested. And in the longer term, continued monitoring of the particularly vulnerable subsectors to determine the need for further supports.

6.1 Cultural Recovery Taskforce

The Arts Collaboration Network represents a range of arts organisations in Northern Ireland. Recommendations previously submitted to the Communities Committee on 25th June 2020, included the Committee's support for a co-created arts and culture recovery plan with an NI cultural taskforce.⁶⁶

Both the Irish and UK Governments⁶⁷ have already created taskforces. The diversity and inclusivity of the DCMS cultural recovery taskforce was questioned as part of a recent DCMS Committee Inquiry⁶⁸.

Membership of the Irish taskforce included musicians and artists as well as senior leaders of Ireland's arts and cultural organisations and advocacy groups.

6.2 Universal Basic Income

The Irish Taskforce released its strategy for recovery on 17 November 2020. This included a call to pilot a universal basic income. Social security measures specifically for artists already exist in Germany⁶⁹ and France⁷⁰, each to varying degrees of success. Table 9⁷¹ summarises the ten issues identified by the Irish taskforce and their suggested solutions.

Table 9 Summary of Recommendations from Ireland's Cultural Recovery Taskforce

Issue	Solution
Protect livelihoods and careers	Pilot a universal basic income scheme for a three-year period in the arts, culture, audio-visual and live performance and events sectors

⁶⁵UUEPC Nov 2020 https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/683077/COVID-19-and-the-Arts-Culture-and-Heritage-sectors-16-October-2020-published-version.pdf Page last accessed 27.11.2020

⁶⁶ NIA Communities Committee CAN Briefing June 2020 <https://niassembly.tv/committee-for-communities-meeting-thursday-25-june-2020/> Page last accessed 30.11.2020

⁶⁷ UK Gov Cultural Renewal Taskforce May 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/cultural-renewal-taskforce-and-supporting-working-groups> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁶⁸ HoC DCMS Committee Inquiry Report Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS' Sectors July 2020 <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2022/documents/19516/default/> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

⁶⁹ Germany's Artists Social Security Fund <https://www.bmas.de/EN/Our-Topics/Social-Security/artists-social-security-fund.html>

⁷⁰ Intermittents Du Spectacle <https://www.pole-emploi.fr/spectacle/>

⁷¹ Irish Gov. Cultural Taskforce Report Nov 2020 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/97103/f957257b-e3f1-4268-b4a4-1d5917bb5c59.pdf#page=null> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

Mitigate income loss	Establish a new VAT Compensation Scheme for artists and for freelance arts, live entertainment and events workers and companies
Ensure fair pay for the makers of creative content	Transpose the EU Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market into Irish Law without adjustment or dilution of the intention of the directive as it relates to rights holders
Secure the viability of the live events industry	Introduce a Business Supports Grant Scheme for SMEs in the events industry that are excluded from the COVID-19 restrictions support scheme (CRSS)
Sustain Local Authority capacity to support arts, culture, live entertainment and events	Government should commit to continue its provision of financial support to local authorities to offset any loss of income they experience in 2021 so as to enable them to maintain their investment in arts, culture and events at 2020 levels
Ensure the wellbeing of Ireland's creative and cultural community	Establish a programme that provides wellbeing supports to the creative sector
Build sectoral capacity through upskilling and professional development	Establish a capacity building and upskilling scheme for artists and creative workers aimed at recovery and renewal through professional development
Make space for arts and live entertainment to contribute to national recovery	Review the Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021 Plan for Living With COVID-19 to better reflect actual circumstances and the particular behaviours of artists, audiences and venue staff in this area of Irish life.
Provide more outdoor public spaces for cultural events	Establish 'Re-imagining our Public Spaces': a capital improvement programme.
Address the environmental impact of arts, cultural and event activities	Establish and fund a Creative Green Programme.

Source: Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

7 Longer Term Considerations

At a webinar hosted by the Centre for Cultural Value⁷² in September 2020, Dr. Franco Biancini presented a number of longer term considerations for a new policy agenda for the arts and culture sector.

These considerations included;

- funding programmes that support libraries and community arts organisations to address the impacts of social isolation, unemployment and digital divides;
- new forms of cooperation between cities and rural areas;
- different forms of measuring value beyond economics, including more acknowledgement of the social value of the arts; and
- opportunities for a more inclusive and diverse recovery.

⁷²Centre of Cultural Value Webinar Sept 2020 <https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/resources/webinar-recording-international-policy-responses-to-covid/> Page last accessed 22.11.2020

8 Further Reading

- [DCMS Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS Sectors – Government Response](#)
- [UUEPC COVID-19 Impacts on Arts, Culture and Heritage in NI](#)
- [Scotland – Creative Scotland Update – COVID-19 Response](#)
- [Wales – Cultural Recovery Fund Update](#)
- [Ireland – Culture Recovery Taskforce Report](#)
- [Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre – What is the impact of COVID-19 on the Creative Industries?](#)
- [Queens University Belfast - Performing Artists in the Age of COVID-19](#)
- [Economics Observatory What do we know about the impact of coronavirus and the creative industries?](#)
- [Thrive and Indigo Ltd After the Interval Audience Survey July 2020](#)
- [Creative Europe COVID-19 Support Measures](#)
- NI Artists Responses to COVID-19
 - [Older People](#)
 - [Patients and Hospital Staff](#)
- [ACNI Manual for Safe Reopening of Venues](#)