



Department for

Communities

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An Roinn

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Our ref: CORR 0033 2025

Date: 13 February 2025

Colin McGrath MLA

Via email: colin.mcgrath@mla.niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Colin,

Follow up action to AQO 1351/22-27 raised at Question Time 14th January 2025 – distribution of Arts Council funding.

On 14th January 2025, in a follow up question to AQO 1351/22-27, you asked " **Is the Minister aware of the percentage of Arts Council funding that goes to the Belfast City Council area compared with other areas?**"

I have recently received funding figures for both Exchequer and National Lottery funding provided by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. I have attached these at Annex A.

Funding for the arts across Northern Ireland must be equitable. The needs of those in rural and urban areas are equally important; whether they are creative practitioners, seeking a career in the arts and creative industries, or experiencing the arts in their daily lives.

Belfast is the largest conurbation in Northern Ireland and is the postcode base for many organisations whose artistic footprint reaches beyond the council boundaries. So, at face value, it is understandable that it appears that Belfast is favoured.

There is work to be done to better understand the way funding is distributed. My officials are currently examining this as part of the development of the new arts policy.

I hope that you find the information provided useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Lyons', written in a cursive style.

Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities



Annex A

Exchequer and Lottery funding	2022/23	2023/24
Local Authority Area	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	0.61	0.98
Ards and North Down	2.20	2.40
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	2.66	2.51
Belfast	70.75	71.06
Causeway Coast and Glens	1.83	1.83
Derry and Strabane	12.97	12.00
Fermanagh and Omagh	1.65	1.61
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0.94	0.76
Mid and East Antrim	0.41	0.64
Mid Ulster	1.42	1.40
Newry, Mourne and Down	2.60	3.18
Other	1.97	1.64
Grand Total	100.00	100.00