FOI case reference number: 202500494599 – Summerhall – Aug-Oct 2025

REQUEST:

Could you supply all documentation held by the Scottish Government, including correspondence sent and received (including internal), minutes/notes from meetings, briefings, analysis, about Summerhall venue in Edinburgh, between August 1 2025 and October 1 2025?

Requested information starts from here:

- [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] – personal information – names / addresses / telephone numbers
- [REDACTED under FOISA Section.30 (1)(b) - Free and frank provision of advice

DOCUMENT 1 (emails x 12, PDF x 1) (13)

The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

13 August 2025

Rt. Hon. Angus Robertson MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1
3DG

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Freedom of Speech and Publicly Funded Cultural Institutions

I am writing to express my deep concern — and my dismay — at a series of recent incidents which together paint a deeply troubling picture of intolerance, censorship, and political conformity within some of Scotland's most prominent cultural institutions. These are organisations which, in many cases, receive substantial sums of public funding, and which therefore carry an obligation to uphold, in both principle and practice, the fundamental freedoms of speech and expression.

[redacted – out of scope]

Regrettably, this is not an isolated case. At Summerhall Arts during this year's Edinburgh Fringe, the Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes, was subjected to an extraordinary episode in which the venue issued a public apology for her very presence and indicated she may not be welcome to appear again, citing her views on gender reform. We are told that some artists were "terrified" by the presence of a democratically elected government minister — a claim which, on any objective reading, is absurd. The principle, however, is deadly serious: to suggest that a public figure, invited to speak at a legitimate and lawful event, should be excluded because others disapprove of her political views is discriminatory and, as recent legal precedent confirms, unlawful. Yet Summerhall Arts receives significant public funding through Creative Scotland. This raises pressing questions about whether such organisations are fit to receive taxpayer support while operating on a basis that excludes lawful viewpoints and chills free expression.

[redacted – out of scope]

When these incidents are considered together, a clear and concerning pattern emerges: prominent cultural institutions, often in receipt of public funds, bowing to internal or external activist pressure, narrowing the space for public discourse, and allowing political conformity to outweigh artistic or historical merit. This is corrosive not only to the arts, but to the democratic principles on which they must rest.

[redacted – out of scope]

Scotland's cultural life should be a space for the widest range of voices, views, and creative expressions — not a narrow corridor patrolled by those who decide which opinions are permissible. Just because someone does not agree with a book, a viewpoint, or a piece of art does not mean it should be banned, excluded, or quietly erased. That is not tolerance. It is censorship, and it has no place in a modern, democratic Scotland.

The Scottish Government has a duty to protect the principle that the arts exist to challenge, to provoke, and to reflect the full diversity of thought and experience in our society — not merely to amplify the views of those who already dominate public discourse. I therefore hope you will take a clear and public stand, and that you will ensure the Scottish Government sends an unambiguous message to all publicly funded institutions: freedom of speech is a principle to be defended actively, not negotiated away under pressure. Sincerely,

Stephen Kerr MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Central Scotland

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 15:18
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]/Kenneth/Shona

In light of the attached – is there anything further we could say at this stage?

Amends in red are additions to yesterday's response.

Thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

SG spokesperson said:

"Creative Scotland is an arms-length funding body and Ministers have no role in individual funding decisions, nor booking or curation decisions taken by individual venues or institutions. The Scottish Government supports individuals' rights to freedom of expression and we are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination in Scotland."

Background

The Culture Secretary will respond to Stephen Kerr in due course.

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 13:46
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

Ok

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 13:37
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

SpAds,

Michael Blackley has followed up to ask SG's position on Murdo Fraser's comment re Creative Scotland funding for Summerhall that 'All grants must be returned forthwith'.

Yesterday's line focused on booking as opposed to funding so suggest we just go back with the following if you're content with that.

Thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

SG spokesperson said:

"Creative Scotland is an arms-length funding body and Ministers have no role in individual funding decisions."

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 13:42
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

Thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)], putting to PO for Cab Sec clearance now.

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 13:40
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted

S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

Apologies but I think I am overcomplicating matters. I'm content to go with this line, having looked at previous comments.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said

"While Ministers have no role in booking or curation decisions taken by individual venues or institutions, the Scottish Government supports individuals' rights to freedom of expression and we are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination in Scotland."

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 13:19
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

Thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]. Grateful for your views on updated version below.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"While Ministers have no role in booking or curation decisions taken by individual venues or institutions, the Scottish Government fully supports individuals' rights to hold their own opinions and voice them within the boundaries of freedom of expression law. We are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination or prejudice in Scotland."

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 12:57
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

I don't think that's quite what I'm saying – we support freedom of speech even where it can be reasonably discourteous

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 11:46
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

Could add the following to that end:

A Scottish Government spokesperson said

"While Ministers have no role in booking or curation decisions taken by individual venues or institutions, the Scottish Government fully supports individuals' rights to freedom of expression in a courteous and respectful manner and we are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination or prejudice in Scotland."

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 11:18
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

Thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)].

Grateful for a SpAd view on proposed response, we might also consider incorporating some of the language FM used in his recent culture sector speech:

I want to ensure that Scotland – the birthplace of the enlightenment – remains a country of robust debate and inquiry.

I firmly believe that art and culture must be able to challenge us, to ask us tough questions, and to force us to look at things from different perspectives.

And yes, it must at times be allowed to shock and to offend us. It can also heal us.

So let me be absolutely clear – as First Minister I will always protect freedom of speech in our country.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

LINE TO TAKE

A Scottish Government spokesperson said

“While Ministers have no role in booking or curation decisions taken by individual venues or institutions, the Scottish Government fully supports individuals’ rights to freedom of expression and we are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination or prejudice in Scotland.”

QUERY

As discussed, looking for a line on the twin free speech rows over night.

One being The Times' story about the National Library of Scotland and the row over the Women who wouldn't wheest

And the other being Summerhall's ban on Kate Forbes after staff complaints - that's in the Mail today.

Taking it forward with the below quotes from Murdo Fraser which are what I need a Scot Gov response to.

Cheers,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Scottish Tory MSP Murdo Fraser branded those running the venue as “anti-women fascists” and said they “must be stopped”

He added: “Outrageous that they are in receipt of public funds from Creative Scotland. All grants must be returned forthwith:
“All public servants in Scotland should be required to defend free speech and stand up to bullying. If not, they should be sacked.
“The same principle should apply to all groups in receipt of public funds, they should be conditional on free speech being upheld.”

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 11:06
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted

S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

Thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] – happy from a policy perspective.

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 10:57
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

Adding SpAds for info at this stage.

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Sent: 13 August 2025 10:44
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>
Subject: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun
Importance: High

Hi all,

To see below from Conor Matchett – and to note Ms Robison is doing a media briefing with journalists at 11:00.

Are you content with the following as a starter?

LINE TO TAKE

A Scottish Government spokesperson said

"While Ministers have no role in booking or curation decisions taken by individual venues or institutions, the Scottish Government fully supports individuals' rights to freedom of expression and we are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination or prejudice in Scotland."

QUERY

As discussed, looking for a line on the twin free speech rows over night.

One being The Times' story about the National Library of Scotland and the row over the Women who wouldn't wheest

And the other being Summerhall's ban on [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] Forbes after staff complaints - that's in the Mail today.

Taking it forward with the below quotes from Murdo Fraser which are what I need a Scot Gov response to.

Cheers,

Conor

Scottish Tory MSP Murdo Fraser branded those running the venue as "anti-women fascists" and said they "must be stopped"
He added: "Outrageous that they are in receipt of public funds from Creative Scotland. All grants must be returned forthwith:
"All public servants in Scotland should be required to defend free speech and stand up to bullying. If not, they should be sacked.

“The same principle should apply to all groups in receipt of public funds, they should be conditional on free speech being upheld.”

-- [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

News | Communications Team Leader

Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

The Scottish Government **|** St Andrew's House, Edinburgh
Mobile: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] **|** Portfolio Media inquiries: 0300 244 9029

DOCUMENT 2 (Emails x 10)

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 15 August 2025 09:54
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Sharing for info the statement which Summerhall has given to media.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

On the ongoing tabloid reports which are completely unfounded,

Summerhall Arts:

The Fringe event passed without incident.
Forbes is not banned from the Summerhall building which encompasses a cafe, pub, arts venues, galleries and independent traders' offices and studios. Swinney, Curtis, Sarwar, Forbes all entered and exited the building the same way for the events over each day.
The events, The Herald Unspun events were a paid hire and programmed by The Herald newspaper.

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 19:09
To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)], will issue at 1930 unless I hear otherwise.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

News | Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

Mobile: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]| Portfolio Media inquiries: 0300 244 9029

www.gov.scot/news

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024
Sent: 14 August 2025 19:07
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet

Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Hi Kerry-Ann,

Grateful if this could go on SpAd clearance please, unless SpAds aren't happy with that?

Thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture – Angus Robertson MSP

The Scottish Government

St Andrew's House **|** Regent Road **|** Edinburgh **|** EH1 3DG

Email: CabSecCEAC@gov.scot

Phone: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 18:56
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted

S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Grateful for clearance as soon as possible please.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

News | Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

Mobile: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]| Portfolio Media inquiries: 0300 244 9029

www.gov.scot/news

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 17:27
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Adding duty

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 17:11
To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted

S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Cab Sec / PO,

Following discussion with SpAds, grateful if Cab Sec could consider response as originally sent, in response to Murdo Fraser's comment regarding Creative Scotland funding for Summerhall that 'All grants must be returned forthwith', and attached letter.

Thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

LINE TO TAKE

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"Creative Scotland is an arms-length funding body and Ministers have no role in individual funding decisions."

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Sent: 14 August 2025 14:21
To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted

S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Apologies – please hold off for now and we'll revert regarding attached letter which reporter has just sent on.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 13:49
To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Cab Sec / PO,

The Daily Mail has followed up to ask for the Scottish Government's position on Murdo Fraser's comment regarding Creative Scotland funding for Summerhall that 'All grants must be returned forthwith'.

Grateful if proposed response on this could be put to Cab Sec for consideration – SpAds are content.

Thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“Creative Scotland is an arms-length funding body and Ministers have no role in individual funding decisions.”

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024
Sent: 13 August 2025 16:26
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Hi [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Mr Robertson is content.

Thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2025 13:58
To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted

S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: For Cab Sec clearance - Sun/DM/Telegraph queries - NLS/Summerhall

Good afternoon Cabinet Secretary, PO,

CC DFM PO for awareness

The Sun, Daily Mail and Telegraph have approached us regarding two stories they are covering from a freedom of expression angle:

- Times – free speech blow as national library bans book opposing gender self-ID
- Daily Mail – Kate Forbes may be banned from arts venue because of her views on trans issues

Murdo Fraser MSP has reacted to the coverage with the comments below, arguing that venues and groups in receipt of public funds should be required to defend free speech.

Policy, comms and SpAds have agreed the following response. I'd be grateful if you could confirm whether the Cabinet Secretary is content as soon as possible, please?

For awareness, I have also included the full query received yesterday in relation to Summerhall and DFM's response.

Many thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

RESPONSE

A Scottish Government spokesperson said

"While Ministers have no role in booking or curation decisions taken by individual venues or institutions, the Scottish Government supports individuals' rights to freedom of expression and we are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination in Scotland."

QUERYS/MF COMMENTS

As discussed, Murdo Fraser MSP is calling for public funding to be withdrawn from organisations that fail to uphold free speech, following the row about Summerhall Arts planning to 'ban' Kate Forbes from appearing again at the venue in future.

He intends to raise this formally with the Culture Secretary and Creative Scotland. Comments below:

Mr Fraser said: 'There's a need across the public sector to understand thar free speech needs to be upheld.

'Public bodies like the National Library of Scotland cannot be involved in censorship of public opinion because they want to protect militant activist groups in the workforce. The same has to apply to groups in receipt of public funds.

'Summerhall has received substantial grant funding from Creative Scotland and these grants need to be conditional on certain standard being met, including upholding free speech.

'The idea that anyone is terrified of Kate Forbes is laughable and it is ridiculous that one of the most powerful politicians in the country as Deputy First Minister is not going to be allowed to speak. No organisation taking that view should receive a penny of public funds.'

Mr Fraser said he intends to raise the issue with Culture Secretary Angus Robertson and with Creative Scotland.

As discussed, looking for a line on the twin free speech rows over night.

One being The Times' story about the National Library of Scotland and the row over the Women who wouldn't wheest

And the other being Summerhall's ban on Kate Forbes after staff complaints - that's in the Mail today.

Taking it forward with the below quotes from Murdo Fraser which are what I need a Scot Gov response to.

Scottish Tory MSP Murdo Fraser branded those running the venue as "anti-women fascists" and said they "must be stopped"
He added: "Outrageous that they are in receipt of public funds from Creative Scotland. All grants must be returned forthwith:

“All public servants in Scotland should be required to defend free speech and stand up to bullying. If not, they should be sacked.
“The same principle should apply to all groups in receipt of public funds, they should be conditional on free speech being upheld.”

ORIGINAL DAILY MAIL RESPONSE AND QUERY (12 AUG)

Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes said:

“As I stated at the event, it is important that people can continue to have open discussions and debates.

“My approach is to respect people who disagree with me. It’s a reflection of a healthy democracy.

“I represent a diverse constituency and I appreciate opportunities to work alongside people from all different backgrounds and with different viewpoints.”

I wanted to make you aware of a story I’m doing for tomorrow and give you the opportunity to comment.

I have heard that the Summerhall venue which hosted your interview last week issued an apology to performers for allowing you to appear at the venue because of your views on trans issues, while some performers at the venue set up a “safe room” while you were there.

I have contacted the venue and they have confirmed that this communication was issued to other performers.

They also said that Summerhall Arts’ ‘primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of the artists and performers we work with’, and that ‘going forward we will be developing robust, proactive inclusion and wellbeing policies that would prevent this oversight in our bookings process happening again’.

I am doing this story as a freedom of speech row, as there was previously a lot of concern when the Stand comedy club tried to cancel [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]’s show for similar reasons. Are you concerned that a major Fringe venue may be unwilling to allow anyone to appear in future who does not share their views on trans issues?

Full text of note from Summerhall: *This event was booked as a series of longform interviews prior to the guest list being confirmed. Summerhall Arts primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of the artists and performers we work with, and going forward we will be developing robust, proactive inclusion and wellbeing policies that would prevent this oversight in our bookings process happening again*.

Summerhall Arts issued a communication to all artists making them aware of the event.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

News | Media Manager

Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh
m: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

gov.scot/news

DOCUMENT 3 (Emails x 4)

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 18:43
To: Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>;Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>
Cc: Lisa Baird <Lisa.Baird@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Summerhall

Hi Shona

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] received a quick response from SGLD, for speed I have copied below.

I am off tomorrow but [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] is around (and knows more than me, anyway!), just in case anything pops up between now and then.

Many thanks

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[REDACTED under FOISA Section.30 (1)(b) - Free and frank provision of advice

[redacted – out of scope]

From: Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 17:03
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Lisa Baird <Lisa.Baird@gov.scot>;

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Summerhall

Thanks v much

[Shona

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 17:01
To: Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Lisa Baird <Lisa.Baird@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Summerhall

Shona – we'll take this forward taking advice from SGLD and get back to you ASAP. [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

From: Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 15:56
To: Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Lisa Baird <Lisa.Baird@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs DGSEA@gov.scot
Subject: Summerhall

Kenneth

The Perm Sec asked me to check the legality of Summerhall's position. He doesn't want to question the independence of CS decision making or to get into a public fight. But he would like us to check the legality of their position and whether it is inline with the guidelines for public funding.

Can you or one of the team get back to me on this?

Shona

Shona Riach (she/her)

Director General, Strategy and External Affairs | Scottish Government

Mobile: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Email: shona.riach@gov.scot

DOCUMENT 4 (Emails x 4)

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 15 August 2025 15:14
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: Daily Mail query - Summerhall

That's fine.

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 15 August 2025 15:09
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; >; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: Daily Mail query - Summerhall

Good afternoon SpAds,

The Daily Mail has asked for response to the following comments from Scottish Conservative Tess White MSP regarding Summerhall.

Comms suggest reissuing the lines agreed yesterday, below. I'd be grateful for your views and confirmation I can reissue on your clearance, please.

Many thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

RESPONSE

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"Creative Scotland is an arms-length funding body and Ministers have no role in individual funding decisions."

QUERY

Scottish Conservative shadow equalities minister Tess White **said**: "This craven buck-passing by the SNP Government and its quango has to stop.

"Summerhall's shameful decision to suppress free speech didn't occur in a vacuum. For years the SNP have been pushing their reckless and unlawful self-ID policy on Scotland's public bodies and pandering to gender extremists. Even in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling, ministers have failed to issue a fresh legal directive.

"As a result, organisations funded by taxpayers think it's okay to silence those who have the moral courage and legal vindication, to stand up for women's rights.

"It's totally unacceptable. John Swinney and Creative Scotland, which has form for financing dodgy projects, should remove funding from any group or venue that blocks legitimate free speech."

ENDS

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 17:02
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

I don't think we need to add to the line.

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 August 2025 17:01
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Shona Riach <Shona.Riach@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SPAD VIEW: NLS / Summerhall - Scottish Sun

SpAds,

In light of Stephen Kerr letter subsequently forwarded on by the Daily Mail for comment (attached), which the Telegraph has also now asked for comment on – suggest following updates to line in bold.

Grateful for your views.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"**Creative Scotland is an arms-length funding body and Ministers have no role in individual funding decisions,** nor booking or curation decisions taken by individual venues or institutions. The Scottish Government supports individuals' rights to freedom of expression and we are clear that there is no place for any form of discrimination in Scotland."

"The independent Review of Creative Scotland is ongoing and is expected to publish recommendations in November."

Background

The Culture Secretary will respond to Mr Kerr in due course.

DOCUMENT 5 (Emails x 2):

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@creativescotland.com>
Sent: 26 August 2025 14:18
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@creativescotland.com>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Info Request: PQ - S6W-39924 - Funding awards to Summerhall - Due cop 27 Aug

Hi [Redacted S.38(1)(b)],

Please find the awards listing attached. Please note Creative Scotland has only made one award to Summerhall Arts (Multi Year Funding). For information, we have included awards to Summerhall Management Ltd received between 01/01/20 to 25/08/25.

I hope this is of assistance.

With best wishes,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Government Relations
Oifigear Dhàimhean Riaghaltais

T [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
D [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
M [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Creative Scotland, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Alba Chruthachail, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

www.creativescotland.com

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 22 August 2025 12:52
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@creativescotland.com>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@creativescotland.com>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: Info Request: PQ - S6W-39924 - Funding awards to Summerhall - Due cop 27 Aug

Hi [Redacted S.38(1)(b)],

We have received the below PQ.

For 2020/2021 to end 2024/25, grateful if you could provide a list of Creative Scotland funding awards to Summerhall Arts please.

I have the 2025/26 information re Multi Year Funding for Summerhall. However if there have been any other CS funding awards made to Summerhall this current financial year, grateful if you could include that information too please.

S6W-39924 Fergus Ewing: *To ask the Scottish Government what grants have been paid to Summerhall Arts in Edinburgh in each of the last five years, broken down by the (i) value and (ii) specific purpose of each grant.*

It would be very helpful to receive input by **cop 27 August** please.

Kind regards,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] l Policy Officer - Performing Arts l Sponsorship and Funding Branch l Culture and Historic Environment Division l Scottish Government

DOCUMENT 6 (Emails x 3)

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 29 August 2025 17:13
To: Jamie MacDougall <Jamie.MacDougall@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Clearance: S6W-39924 - Grant payments to Summerhall Arts - due 01 Sept

Hi Jamie,

Thanks for that. I've amended the top line as:

"Summerhall Arts, set up in 2023, was awarded Multi Year Funding by Creative Scotland in January 2025. Over 2025/26 it will receive grant funding of £168,254 which will support its core operating costs...."

Thanks,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] l Policy Officer - Performing Arts l Sponsorship and Funding Branch l Culture and Historic Environment Division l Scottish Government

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

From: Jamie MacDougall <Jamie.MacDougall@gov.scot>
Sent: 29 August 2025 13:20
To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Clearance: S6W-39924 - Grant payments to Summerhall Arts - due 01 Sept

Thanks – although a different organisation, I think that it's helpful to include the table as now drafted. The only other changes is whether there is a top line from CS about what the nature of the funding for Summerhall is? Something like: to support Summerhall's ongoing running costs?

Jamie MacDougall | Deputy Director, Culture and Historic Environment | Directorate for Culture and External Affairs | The Scottish Government | Victoria Quay Edinburgh EH6 6QQ | Tel: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 29 August 2025 13:00
To: Jamie MacDougall <Jamie.MacDougall@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For Clearance: S6W-39924 - Grant payments to Summerhall Arts - due 01 Sept

Hi Jamie

Thanks for taking a look. I've amended the answer but just to clarify:

In the table, those grant awards were support funding measures from SG /CS (from COVID-19 and other times). Summerhall didn't receive regular funding from SG/CS before, but it does now as of 2025/26 from CS' Multi Year Funding.

I originally had the funding table in the answer; however I noticed that there is is a distinction between the two organisations (i) Summerhall Arts and (ii) Summerhall Management. The difference being Summerhall Arts, as mentioned in the PQ, took over as operator of the venue in 2023 from Summerhall Mgmt.

I removed the table so as not to mix up the organisations but I'm happy to leave the funding table in the answer for fuller picture if preferred? **S6W-39924**.

Thanks,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] l Policy Officer - Performing Arts l Sponsorship and Funding Branch l Culture and Historic Environment Division l Scottish Government

DOCUMENT 7 (Emails x 4)

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Creative Scotland Review
Sent: 25 September 2025 15:36
To: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] RI [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]) [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@parliament.scot>; Creative Scotland Review
Subject: RE: Review of Creative Scotland

Dear Fergus Ewing MSP,

Thank you for your follow up email. Just to confirm that your letter has been treated as a submission to the Review, and I have reflected on your points. It would be inappropriate for me to comment either on my personal views or to share my initial thinking ahead of the publication of my findings, but I can assure you that your points have been considered and that my priority is to complete the Review, as directed, by the end of November. I note that you copied your original letter to Creative Scotland and I would expect them to be looking into this and advising you accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Leitch, CBE

Chair of the Review of Creative Scotland

From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP
Sent: 17 September 2025 10:59
To: Creative Scotland Review
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] RI [Redacted S.38(1)(b)])
Subject: Re: Review of Creative Scotland

Dear Angela

Thanks for your reply of17 September

My letter was sent to be treated as a submission if relevant to the remit

My reading was that it is not. I sent it as the suggestion of angus robertson

If you consider it IS relevant. Fair enough

But if you agree that it is not really relevant but rather about protecting freedom of expression from breach by those to whom you choose to fund - then I would appreciate your reply now

Can you please let me know your own view of this as the Chair of a public body and as such accountable to the public for the funding choices made of millions of taxpayers money

Many of My constituents were appalled at the absurd decision of Summerhall to cancel the DFM

Can you also please indicate if you agree that this decision was manifestly absurd.

I think it is very important that Chair women and men are accountable to the public and should clearly indicate views protecting freedom of expression under the law and I have the impression that Creative Scotland intend to carry on regardless and that we will as a direct result see more ludicrous decisions taken by bodies venues and organisations to whom CS decide to hand out huge amounts of hard earned tax payers cash

Yours sincerely

Fergus Ewing MSP

Inverness and Nairn

Sent from my iPhone

On 17 Sep 2025, at 10:45, creativescotlandreview@gov.scot wrote:

CAUTION: *This e-mail originated from outside of The Scottish Parliament. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.*

Dear Fergus Ewing MSP

Thank you for your email of 12 September regarding the independent review of Creative Scotland. I welcome your interest in this work and thank you for providing a written submission relating to Creative Scotland's processes and decision making. You will appreciate that with the Review currently underway I am not in a position to respond to specific points, but I can assure you that I have noted your concerns. The Review is focusing on:

1. Creative Scotland's functions and remit, as set out in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, to ensure they continue to be relevant for the culture sector and meet Ministers' aspirations;
2. How Creative Scotland delivers its functions including the appropriateness of existing governance arrangements; and
3. How to maximise the impact of the funding Creative Scotland distributes to the culture sector by ensuring Creative Scotland use and distribute funding appropriately and effectively.

The remit for the is available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-review-of-creative-scotland-remit

The Review is expected to conclude in November 2025 and I will publish a report outlining my findings and recommendations for the Scottish Government to consider and take forward.

Your sincerely,

Angela Leitch CBE

Chair of the Review of Creative Scotland

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] RI [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]) [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@parliament.scot>
On Behalf Of Ewing F (Fergus), MSP
Sent: 12 September 2025 15:59
To: Creative Scotland Review <creativescotlandreview@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <permanentsecretary@gov.scot>
Subject: Review of Creative Scotland
Subject: Review of Creative Scotland
Importance: High

Iain Munro

Chief Executive

Creative Scotland

Angela Leitch CBE

Chair appointed for Creative Scotland review

Dear CEO of Creative Scotland

Re: Review of Creative Scotland.

I am writing as urged by the Cabinet Secretary Angus Robertson to write to you in relation to a matter I raised in Holyrood at the General Questions session on 4th September, 2025.

I was urged by him to make a submission to the review and now do so. However, in reading the remit of the review it is not immediately obvious that this will encompass the point I make and the change I advocate.

It may do - or may not. Please advise me what your view is of whether it is within remit.

Whether that is or is not the case, I am ALSO asking that you please reply on the specific points made in this letter, the essence of my point being that organisations or bodies in receipt of public funding from CS should NOT be permitted to act contrary to freedom of speech, expression and thought, and should, in particular, NOT ban cancel or censor law abiding citizens who are asked to appear in an arts venue or make a contribution to an event or performance, simply because their views, lawfully expressed, may not be shared by others.

I am of course referring to the decision by the Summerhall Arts Venue to “cancel” future further appearances from the Deputy First Minister.

This decision taken by the boss of Summerhall was subsequently after understandable widespread criticism from just about everyone, rescinded. Though the wording of the statement rescinding the original decision was mealy mouthed and unapologetic. I also noted that the founder of Summerhall distanced himself from this decision.

However, it is surely outrageous that any arts venue in receipt of public money should and could be allowed to, behave in this way.

As a Christian, and one of many hundreds of thousands or millions of peoples of faith - many different faiths in Scotland , I may hold private views with regard to morality with which people disagree. But that surely is part of a democratic society. My views are certainly not illegal, and informed by the tenets of the faith to which I subscribe. Kate Forbes MSP and DFM has made it clear - crystal clear - that her beliefs are her private beliefs and do not determine her work or decisions as a Minister in Government.

I mention my own faith, because I know that a huge number of people found the decision taken by Summerhall profoundly wrong, and a clear prima facie breach of freedom of expression.

The notion that the DFM is a “threat” to safety is just absurd. I am writing to ask each of you, as the CEO and Chair of Creative Scotland, to confirm that:

1. The original decision by Summerhall to ban our DFM from any further appearances in a performance event such as she took part in as a guest of the Herald was ludicrous preposterous and that you unequivocally condemn it;

2. That you agree that no body organisation or venue, in receipt of public money, should breach freedom of expression in this way; and

3. Should any such venue body or organisation do so in future, that any funding paid out by CS to them should be clawed back. If you issue such a policy, then of course this ludicrous decision will not happen ever again.

In my view, should you fail to issue such a policy, then it will in all likelihood happen again. I also draw your attention to the equally preposterous decision of the National Library as regards the book “The Women Who Wouldn’t Wheesht.”

As stated I make this as a submission to the review simply because the Cabinet Secretary appeared to imply that it would be relevant thereto, but also do so as a letter to which I would be most obliged to receive a direct response .

I am copying this letter to both the Cabinet Secretary and the Permanent Secretary.

I will, should you disagree that funding should be clawed back, then ask the Cabinet Secretary to use his powers under section 40 of the Public Services Reform Scotland Act to issue a direction requiring you to do so. I am sure you will be aware of the terms of section 40. (I have also read the terms of Sections 37, 38 and 39, where the directions may not apply, but these are inapplicable here, as the issue is breach of freedom of expression; In passing the terms of Section 37 appear to have been breached by Summerhall in that section 37 requires the encouragement of people participating in the arts and culture - not the banning or "cancelling" of them!).

If you do agree that it is wrong to "cancel" people who hold perfectly lawful views, because some others may happen to disagree, then I urge you to show leadership that people expect of heads of public bodies in Scotland.

If you allow this to continue without penalty or condemnation, then I shall of course continue to raise this in Holyrood in the Chamber, urging that this abhorrent practice constituting flagrant breach of freedom of expression speech and thought, be ended by the Cabinet Secretary using his statutory powers which powers, I suggest, exist for this purpose and set of circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

Fergus Ewing MSP

Independent Constituency MSP

Inverness and Nairn

****

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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba: A' toirt deagh bhuaidh air beatha sluagh na h-Alba

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The information in this email may be confidential. If you think you have received this email in error please delete it and do not share its contents.

DOCUMENT 8 - (Email x 1

From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 15 September 2025 11:35
To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: For awareness: The Express, Freedom of expression in culture

Good morning Mr Robertson / PO,

We have been asked by the Express to respond to the below news Opposition release, focusing on freedom of expression in culture.

With thanks to SpAds, we will point the reporter to the PQ response. Sharing for your awareness.

Many thanks,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

PQ Response

Question

To ask the Scottish Government how it is protecting cultural freedom and open debate in any events that receive public funding.

Answer

The Scottish Government supports the culture sector to make its own decisions relating to artistic or cultural judgement. How individual cultural organisations engage in public debate is a matter for them, as are their programming decisions. Artists and cultural organisations are free to explore and convene dialogue on any issues whilst having regard to relevant legislation, such as the Equality Act.

QUERY

Stephen Kerr MSP has blasted the SNP Government for "washing its hands" of responsibility over free speech after Culture Secretary Angus Robertson refused to guarantee that taxpayer-funded institutions will protect open debate.

In response to a Parliamentary Question from the Scottish Conservative MSP, Mr Robertson claimed that cultural organisations are free to make their "own decisions" about speech and debate — a reply Mr Kerr branded "flippant" and "deeply troubling".

Mr Kerr pointed to a string of recent controversies, including the National Library of Scotland's decision to ban *The Women Who Wouldn't Wheesht* from its centenary exhibition despite it being approved and nominated by the public, and the public apology issued by Summerhall Arts for hosting Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes at this year's Edinburgh Fringe. He said these incidents show a disturbing pattern of publicly funded bodies bowing to activist pressure and censoring lawful views.

"This evasive response shows a total abdication of responsibility by the SNP Government," said Mr Kerr . "Ministers are giving publicly funded organisations carte blanche to silence voices they disagree with and impose political conformity, all on the taxpayer's dime. Scotland's cultural life is being narrowed and our democratic principles undermined. It is utterly unacceptable."

The Central Scotland MSP accused the SNP of "turning a blind eye" while a climate of censorship grows in Scotland's arts and cultural institutions, warning that the Scottish Government must take a clear stand or risk losing public trust altogether.

"Free speech is not negotiable," he added. "Censorship has no place in a free and democratic Scotland — least of all where taxpayers are footing the bill."

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

News | Media Manager – Finance, Local Government and Corporate
The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

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DOCUMENT 9 – PDF x 1 – CREATIVE SCOTLAND BOARD PAPERS

AGENDA

Board Meeting

19 September 2025

10.00 – 15.00 Waverley Gate Board Room / Teams

No.	Item	Papers (Y/N)	Action	Owner	Time
	Reflections on the Strategy Day discussions			**All**	**10.00am**
1. 1.1 1.2	 Apologies Declarations relevant to the agenda	 N/A		 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]	 10.30am
2. 2.1 2.2	Previous Minutes Board meeting 24 July 2025 Matters arising from minutes	 Y	 Approval		 10.30 (5 mins)

3. 3.1 3.2 3.3	Committee updates Audit & Risk Committee 19 June 2025 (previously verbally reported 24 July) Audit & Risk Committee 20 August 2025 (agenda) Finance & General Purposes call 13 August 2025	 Y Y N (verbal)	 Report / Discussion	 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]	 10.35 (10 mins)
4.	Chief Executive Report	Y	Discussion	IM	10.45 (1 hr)
5.	Multi Year update	Y	Discussion	[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]	11.45 (30 mins)
6.	Risk update	Y	Discussion	[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]	12.15 (15 mins)
	Break				**12.30 (30 mins)**
7.	Financial Planning	Y	Discussion	[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]	13.00 (30 mins)
8.	**[redacted – out of scope]**	Y	Discussion	[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]	13.30 (15 mins)
9.	Any other business				13.45
10.	Date of next meeting				
	20 November 2025 10.00 – 15.00 *Waverley Court*				
	[redacted – out of scope]	**[redacted – out of scope]**	**[redacted – out of scope]**	**[redacted – out of scope]**	**[redacted – out of scope]**

[redacted – out of scope]

Item: 5 Creative Scotland Board Meeting

September 2025 Multi-Year Programme Update

[redacted – out of scope]

1.8 MYFO specific issues arising – Summerhall, [redacted – out of scope] [redacted – out of scope]

For Board awareness, I wanted to specifically flag some additional handling involved with 3 organisations over the past couple of months – **[redacted – out of scope]**, **[redacted – out of scope]**, and Summerhall Arts.

[redacted – out of scope]

Summerhall Arts were embroiled in a high profile media and political storm during August following a newspaper article in the Daily Mail which suggested they had banned the Deputy First Minister from speaking at their venue due to her views on gender, that they had apologised to staff and audiences for the booking her to come onto the premises and that they set up a 'panic room' for those who felt threatened by the Deputy FMs presence on site.

This led to calls for Creative Scotland to investigate the incident and remove all public funding from the organisation, as well as several FOIs and Complaints to us about our funding processes. The MYF SRO and CS CEO also met with Summerhall Arts CEO and Chair to find out more detail of what happened.

The reality is that whilst Summerhall Arts acknowledge they made some mistakes in how they handled the story as it evolved – the original story as presented was false and based on selective interpretation of disparate information. The Deputy First Minister took part in a series of long form interviews, programmed by the Herald newspaper who hired the space and ran the events themselves. The event was trailed for months, took place as scheduled and passed without incident. An internal email by Summerhall was issued on the day – drafted in response to some concerns from trans-artists performing at the venue as part of the Fringe at the same time – and was sent to a limited selection of staff and performers. A week after the event had happened, and with no suggestion of any ban on anyone wishing to perform at the space, the article was published without any warning or opportunity for Summerhall to respond. Summerhall – advised by their PR agency – chose not to make a public rebuttal or statement on the issue and instead tried to brief enquiring journalists about the facts (the event took place without incident, no ban exists, no panic room was set up) but the story swept across a range of other media most of whom took the original piece as their basis.

Summerhall were very honest and candid when they met with us and agreed to undertake an after-action review for any lessons they could learn. They did this and have supplied us with a summary. As SRO I am content that this issue has been examined and there is nothing that warrants further action from CS.

[redacted – out of scope]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] Major Programmes September 2025

[redacted – rest of document out of scope]