

Independent Report from the National Partnership for Culture

March 2022

Introduction

“Scotland is a place where culture is valued, protected and nurtured. Culture is woven through everyday life, shapes and is shaped by society and its transformative potential is experienced by everyone. Scotland’s rich cultural heritage and creativity of today is inspired by people and place, enlivens every community and is celebrated around the world.”

Vision statement – A Culture Strategy for Scotland

A Culture Strategy for Scotland articulates a bold and distinctive vision. Published by the Scottish Government in February 2020 and informed by a wide-ranging national conversation across the culture sector, and beyond, it asserts the centrality of culture and creativity to the future wellbeing and prosperity of Scotland: cultural, social, economic, and environmental. In stating that culture in Scotland is valued in and of itself, the strategy sets Scotland apart from other countries by seeking to move beyond asking the culture sector to repeatedly prove its worth and instead to focus on how everyone can best be supported to participate freely in the cultural life of the community and enjoy the arts.

The two years since its publication, just weeks before the start of Covid-19 pandemic, have served to underline even more strongly the importance of culture in the life and wellbeing of the nation. We turned to culture – film, television, books, on-line choirs, digital broadcasts – in our droves. Artists and creative activity came to the fore, supporting home schooling, combatting social isolation, and providing much needed moments of connection and joy. Artists helped – and continue to help – us make sense of the experience we’ve all been through whilst the lockdown has given us a glimpse of a Scotland without live music, clubs, plays, and festivals. In short, the potential of mass participation in culture as a building block towards the Wellbeing Economy was clear to see.

At the same time, despite significant and much appreciated investment in emergency support from the Scottish Government and impressive work by Creative Scotland, EventScotland, Museums and Galleries Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, the Scottish Library and Information Council, and other agencies, the sector is extremely fragile. Many of the issues considered by the National Partnership for Culture are not new, indeed many are highlighted in the Culture Strategy, but they are now more critical than ever. Many professional artists and companies are in a deeply precarious position. With the impact of the pandemic compounded by extreme inflationary pressures and the impact of Brexit their livelihoods are under threat. The aspirations of the Culture Strategy cannot be delivered without a vibrant and flourishing cultural ecology that supports the creation, presentation, and enjoyment of creative and cultural activity in every part of Scotland. Sustained and long-term investment in cultural organisations, from national companies to community organisations, artists and cultural workers – so many of whom are freelancers – is critical if Scotland is to achieve a recovery based on Climate Justice and a transition to a Wellbeing Economy, following principles laid out by the Advisory Group for Economic Recovery. A move away from short term project funding to longer term

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arrangements is also essential to maximising the impact and effectiveness of investment, as is developing a Fair Work framework for the culture sector that protects and facilitates self-employed working as well as employees.

The National Partnership for Culture (NPC) has been charged with supporting delivery of the vision, ambitions, aims, and actions set out in the Culture Strategy, making recommendations to the Scottish Government that would support a more strategic and connected approach across government, the sector, and beyond, to ensure that the transformative potential of culture can be maximised for everyone. This first report focuses on four areas which the partnership judged as critical to recovery; Education and Learning; Community and Place; Health and Wellbeing; and Fair Work, as well as recommending appropriate measures, data and research that would best support decision-making related to the delivery of the Culture Strategy.

The recommendations in this paper build on the vision and ambition outlined in the Culture Strategy, whereby culture is 'mainstreamed', and are proposed as a key part of how Scotland can recover from Covid as a fairer, greener, and better country in which to live and prosper. The paper presents proposals that are conceived as building blocks towards a national approach to ensuring Scotland is a country where culture is nurtured and flourishing, building structures of collaboration between culture and health, education, community development, and economic regeneration. It presents culture as a cost-effective and multi-dimensional delivery partner but makes clear that culture can deliver the most when partners, whether they are health boards, local authorities, public bodies, or the third sector are equally committed to delivering for culture in return. The intended approach is both additional and complementary to existing cultural provision and as noted above, cannot be delivered without a thriving and vibrant ecology of cultural activity across Scotland. It will also require additional resource, as well as finding ways to maximise the benefit gained from existing investment which at present is often undermined by the disjointed and piecemeal way in which it is distributed.

Recommendations are aimed at enhancing, supporting and sustaining mass participation in culture and widening the role of culture in society, creating more opportunities for people to actively participate in experiencing as well as making their own culture. This participation should be facilitated by co-creation undertaken by professional and amateur practitioners, agencies and organisations working at a local, regional and national level, utilising and augmenting the existing cultural infrastructure and supporting sustainability and resilience within the culture sector.

There are numerous good practice examples across the country of culture in education, health, and communities. However, they are unequally distributed, sometimes working in isolation, and many of those delivering them find it difficult to sustain and scale up what they know is working. The principle underpinning all these recommendations would be the pooling of experience and resources across different fields and agendas. Important national initiatives such as the Culture Collective¹ and Creative Communities² have already grown from the Culture Strategy but embedding these ways of working will require long term commitments and further changes to

¹ [Culture Collective](#)

² [Creative Communities - Inspiring Scotland](#)

how culture is supported. The National Partnership for Culture believes we can use these, and other initiatives, as foundations around which we can build new ways of working, attracting and developing people and practices that ensure Scotland puts culture and the cultural workforce at the heart of the effort to build a country based on wellbeing and climate justice.

1. Education and learning

1.1 The Scottish Government should guarantee the equitable provision of cultural education both in formal and informal education for young people.

A commitment to young people, ensuring access to cultural and creative formal and informal education supports the long-term economic, social, and cultural capabilities of the population. Research shows that participating in structured arts activities increases transferrable skills, including confidence and communication by between 10-17%.³

Access to participate freely in cultural life and the arts is noted as a right in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UNCRC also acknowledges that State Parties must “recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”.⁴ The current Programme for Government (PfG) commitment to youth arts (Sistema and the Youth Music Initiative) states that “cultural and creative activities helps young people grow confidently as citizens, playing an important role in the development of an overall wellbeing economy”. The PfG also sets out the intention to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scottish law.

Scottish Government support for existing initiatives that aim to improve access to culture for young people, and whose objectives relate to child attainment and wellbeing, includes Sistema Scotland’s Big Noise programme, the Youth Music Initiative and the Music for Scotland manifesto delivered in partnership with the Music Education Partnership Group, each supported by recent evaluation. Scottish Government could harness existing resource to extend such ways of working into other art forms and to scale up existing evidence based programmes to ensure increased access to a diverse cultural education for young people, irrespective of where in Scotland they live.

In scaling up and extending existing initiatives, recognition must be given to the different needs of, and resources within, communities. Overarching national approaches do not always operate at a level of granularity that is able to take into account the differing contexts and priorities of diverse communities or the complexities of different families. Embedding artists in schools, while welcome, may

³ [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] Department for Culture Media and Sport - CASE programme \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ Convention on the rights of the child (1989)

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not be sufficient: additional resource, not limited to financial resources but including appropriate space and equipment, cultural organisations and artists, is likely to be required. This will need to be used in a more targeted manner to build a sustainable cultural ecology appropriate to each place, and relationships which are a necessary precondition to facilitating opportunities for young people to engage with cultural education both in and out of a formal education context, across Scotland. To maximise the potential of interventions, careful consideration should be given to developing the links between formal education, families, and local communities. The Scottish Government should consider engaging directly with communities in scaling up or creating new cultural initiatives in cultural education. Consideration should be given to how reinvestment and the realignment of funding can be put in place to ensure equity of access to opportunities for young people across Scotland.

1.2 Relevant agencies should be charged with developing a national plan to embed artists and other creative practitioners in all schools, in ways that align with the curriculum.

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) aims to promote a holistic understanding of what it means to be a young Scot growing up in today's world and to optimise the contribution of education to the wider vitality of Scotland's economy, society, and culture.⁵ CfE places high importance on literacy and numeracy and while value is placed on a holistic education, it does not match the bolder inclusion of culture in the curriculum seen in Nordic countries, New Zealand, and Canada. Cultural education is integral to the strength of communities, economic progress, the international reputation of Scotland, and to individuals' collective sense of identity. Developing a curriculum in which the arts are afforded the same importance as science, technology and maths has been shown to produce more collaborative, disciplined and inquisitive individuals and is reflective of the contribution of arts, humanities and the social sciences to people, the economy, and the environment.⁶

CfE is supported in Scotland by the requirement of a three-year Community Learning Development plan that includes specific information on how it helps to underpin the curriculum. The Scottish Government should encourage stronger connections at a local level to ensure that local authorities and schools are both aware of and making use of the cultural resources available to them - that is, cultural initiatives and projects, artists, and practitioners - and ensure culture is a key consideration in this planning. This could be supported by a commitment to refresh, renew, and promote the Creativity Portal, supported by Education Scotland and Creative Scotland, to support and empower schools in choosing the arts and heritage programmes and organisations that could work with them. Effective delivery of this recommendation is contingent on accepting recommendation 1.1. Without a guarantee of equitable provision and access to artists or arts organisations there is an inherent inequity which results in a differential experience depending on school and location.

⁵ [Improving-Schools-in-Scotland-An-OECD-Perspective.pdf](#)

⁶ [CLA-STEAM-Briefing-A4.pdf \(culturallearningalliance.org.uk\)](#)

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The Arts Alive programme, which the Scottish Government runs in partnership with the Scottish Book Trust, is a programme which not only creates opportunities of access to culture for young people, but also creates opportunities for artists and practitioners through workshops and residencies. The Creative Wellbeing Fund, part of the recently refreshed Creative Scotland and Education Scotland Creativity Action Plan, provides funding designed to help school partnership groups work together with a creative partner to increase learner wellbeing. The PlaCE programme, funded in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council, offers school children an opportunity to engage with creative professionals from Edinburgh Festivals. The Scottish Government should be proactive in identifying where success is occurring at a local or regional level and, as with the examples in 1.1, identify ways in which they can be scaled up and resourced appropriately to support a national plan to embed creative practitioners in Schools.

98% of primary school teachers feel culture is critical in education, however 73% feel under resourced to deliver culture as part of the curriculum.⁷ To embed culture in the curriculum fully, Scottish Government will need to consider how to address the capability of educational professionals to deliver this. Combining the expertise of Education Scotland, Arts in Education Recovery Group, the creative workforce, and the National Performing Companies would allow the upskilling of education professionals in a cultural space. Funding already provided to Higher Education Institutions could be utilised to support this upskilling, particularly those in the technical education or Professional Graduate Diploma in Education space. This work should take into account the concerns noted in the section above regarding the importance of engaging with communities and enabling targeted approaches where required.

To implement the development and delivery of this recommendation it would be crucial to involve creative and educational agencies in a partnership approach, linking in with Local Authorities.

1.3 Greater support and guidance should be provided to education professionals and young people to help demonstrate accessible pathways into careers in culture.

There must be equitable access for young people from any background to a career in the cultural and creative industries, and investment in cultural opportunities is one of the key elements to this. The Culture Counts manifesto highlights that access to cultural experiences will spark ambition in children influencing life-long professional goals.⁸ Existing research demonstrates that careers in the culture sector are often seen as unattainable or not viable professions to young people from certain backgrounds.⁹ The culture sector is one of the poorest in terms of demographic, and socio-economic, diversity.¹⁰ This reduces the breadth of voices and experiences that are shaping the cultural outputs of Scotland and, in turn, what that says about a

⁷ [\(PDF\) Music Education in the Primary Classroom in Scotland - Research Report \(researchgate.net\)](#)

⁸ [Cultural Manifesto 2021 — Culture Counts](#)

⁹ [Panic-Social-Class-Taste-and-Inequalities-in-the-Creative-Industries1.pdf \(createlondon.org\)](#)

¹⁰ [138603 Creative Scotland Arts Project Final Report v12 12 june](#)

contemporary Scottish cultural identity. It is therefore vital that routes to careers in culture are clear and supported by educators, parents, and career advisors.

The link between schools and further and higher education needs to be strengthened to secure the skills pipeline, supporting new jobs.¹¹ Vocational learning routes, like apprenticeships, are an area in which to do this; however, investment is required to develop suitable programmes that recognise and respond to the specificities of a sector heavily populated with sole traders and small businesses. With high levels of freelance workers, the sector has not been able to effectively adopt an apprenticeship model based on the assumption of continued employment by a single organisation. Building on the foundations of the Creative Learning Plan, the Scottish Government should ensure that existing career initiatives, like Developing the Young Workforce, Modern Apprenticeships, and Graduate Apprenticeships are better equipped to support careers in the creative and cultural industries, signposting to a wide range of careers across the sector.

The Scottish Government should also develop nationally recognised vocational learning routes in schools, and through informal education settings, to increase awareness and signpost opportunities to apprenticeship positions, cultural skills development, and entry opportunities into cultural professions. To realise the delivery of the recommendation, Skills Development Scotland would play a key role.

2. Community and place

2.1 National initiatives should be joined up and both inform and be influenced by local and regional initiatives.

The National Partnership for Culture propose that the recommendations on community and place should be taken forward by a multi-sector task force that includes representation from the following sectors: arts, heritage, education, health, community development, local authorities, regeneration, local democracy, diversity, fair work, and planning. The task force should have an independent chair and secretariat support from Scottish Government. The role of the task force would be to gather local, regional, and national intelligence, recommend policy and monitor implementation.

The Culture Strategy highlights the importance of place and the role that people, location and resources play in realising the full potential of communities across Scotland. Combining this with skills and support ensures that the capabilities are in place to build a sustainable culture infrastructure and ecology that facilitates participation in all parts of Scotland, across all organisations and regions.

The Scottish Government should commit to continuing to widen the role of culture in society, by increasing the ways people can participate in culture. This is highlighted throughout this paper with proposed initiatives in health and education and similar approaches should also be applied in community development, local democracy and

¹¹ [Advisory Council for Economic Transformation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

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regeneration (e.g. community planning, 20 minute neighbourhoods, community wealth-building and community ownership). The Scottish Government should continue to develop place-based approaches to policy making and be open to utilising resource in new ways, focusing on more strategic delivery of the benefit that culture offers to communities: for example in community development, participation in local decision making, growing social enterprise, place planning and physical regeneration initiatives.

2.2 Equity of access to culture should be prioritised at a national level to support local, grassroots delivery.

The Scottish Government should commit to developing a synergy between local, regional, and national initiatives. This requires new communication and support structures which facilitate joining up and collaboration on a national, regional, and local level to maximise the resources available and ensure that smaller, local organisations can become the sustainable infrastructure needed to support and develop local populations of freelancers and create pathways into the sector for people currently under-represented within it.

2.3 Local authorities should use culture as part of their delivery across wider local authority services.

There is clear potential for culture's role to be amplified within local authorities. It should be promoted as an asset that supports community wellbeing, fairness, and equality. There is currently significant disparity in the role culture plays within local authorities across Scotland, which is a significant barrier to realising the aspirations of the Culture Strategy across every part of Scotland.

To help support grassroots delivery and improve equity of access to culture, the Scottish Government should consider updating, resourcing, and reinstating the role of Culture Co-ordinators or Creative Community Link posts, supported by Creative Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland and Museum and Galleries Scotland, ensuring there is active engagement with COSLA. Joined up strategic planning of national and community activities would be beneficial to ensure equity of provision across the country, with capacity to target as required.

The PfG commitment to define 20-minute neighbourhoods offers an opportunity for the Scottish Government to adopt an inclusive approach in integrating culture across wider local authorities. The Scottish Government should consider the power of culture to help deliver the priorities on "planning our places" with an emphasis on living locally, supporting public health and wellbeing, reducing inequality, and strengthening community resilience. This could be achieved by dedicating a percentage of funding for this commitment to culture and developing a bespoke, place-based implementation strategy at regional level. The Scottish Government should consider the National Planning Framework as an opportunity to develop this place-based approach.

3. Health and Wellbeing

3.1 The Scottish Government should be charged with ensuring that culture is employed as a key part of delivering Health and Social Care priorities and contributing to an overall wellbeing economy.

The Culture Strategy recognises the impact that culture can make on tackling health inequalities, preventing mental and physical illness and promoting recovery and general wellbeing. The connections culture has with health and well-being are increasingly recognised in research, as well as in clinical and policy settings. Culture can play an important part in assisting the delivery of the PfG's health commitments, including the delivery of a mental health and wellbeing service by 2026.

However, for this to be successful, it is imperative that the underpinning principle outlined in the introduction to this report is accepted. That is to say, the mainstreaming and mass participation of culture will be essential if the potential of culture as a driver of Scotland's progression to a Wellbeing Economy is to be realised. Without this, there is a risk that deploying culture to improve wellbeing could actually increase health inequalities. This is a strong illustration of the interconnected nature of the recommendations presented in this paper. The ambitions articulated in this section cannot, for example, be achieved without the related enablers of equitable provision of cultural education for young people **(1.1)** and the national prioritisation of equity of access to culture through supporting local, grassroots delivery **(2.2)**.

Synergies, ideas, and good practice spanning culture and health policy areas are shared across existing national and local networks, but the approach is often not strategic, and successes can be undermined by the prevalence of short-term project funding. Low awareness of the evidence related to cultural interventions on health outcomes, combined with preconceptions about its quality and relevance are also barriers to the scaling-up of projects and initiatives in this space, even where these projects have been shown to be successful.

The Scottish Government should commit to joint programming at Ministerial level to develop approaches to health and wellbeing which include culture as a means to support delivery of health outcomes. In particular, this should involve cross working between culture and proactive and preventative care, population health and wellbeing, and health workforce wellbeing. This aligns with the Christie Commission recommendation to take a preventative approach to healthcare services.

Ongoing projects which demonstrate existing cross working include: the Art for Baby project at GoMA; Grampian Hospitals Art Trust – supporting NHS staff; Art in Action (ArtLink's work with Health and Social Care Partnerships to support people with profound disability); and Time to Dance by Scottish Ballet. However, it can be challenging to embed an understanding of the impact of this work within professional healthcare settings. To realise the value of culture in supporting health and social care priorities, the Scottish Government could resource and reinstate Creative Community Link Workers in local authorities to embed cultural approaches locally, as

well as build stronger links with COSLA around culture and health. There is likely to be a role for Public Health Scotland in this work.

Scottish Government should commit to embedding culture in NHS training programmes, in particular Leading for the Future¹² and Project Lift¹³ (or their successor programmes), to ensure health workers understand the evidence and how to maximise existing resource. Working with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) would be key in supporting the delivery of this recommendation. Support in Mind would also be well placed to support in the delivery of this recommendation.

3.2 Scottish Government should make connections at Ministerial and policy level to highlight the impact that social prescribing can play and identify the role of culture in nurturing and scaling work in this area.

Social prescribing is a model that can achieve significant health benefits, sometimes where other support and intervention has not been able to achieve success.¹⁴ There is clear evidence that social prescribing is an area which can help relieve increasing health and social care pressures. In the UK, up to one fifth of patients see a GP for a problem that requires social prescribing.¹⁵

To make connections to ensure that culture is included and recognised as valuable in social prescribing, Scottish Government should encourage and develop awareness and training for those in clinical and community settings on the efficacy and appropriateness of cultural approaches to support preventative care, which can be used by care givers as an option to individuals developing their own care plans. The Scottish Government should also develop programmes to support artists and creative practitioners who want to work in health and wellbeing and enable them to develop creative interventions that have positive impacts in these areas. There is a spectrum of work in place in this area, from clinical/therapeutic practice to working with specific groups of health vulnerable people, to more general wellbeing work. Engaging with Higher Education Institutions is key, ensuring that degrees prepare relevant students with the necessary skills to work professionally, ethically, and to a high-quality standard in this area.

3.3 A dedicated funding stream for culture initiatives should be developed within the health portfolio.

Cultural activities can play an important role in a preventative spend agenda, and there is evidence suggesting that in many care contexts they can be cheaper, more accessible, and less risky than some clinical interventions.¹⁶ The cycle of short-term projects with time limited funding is a broad and significant problem across the culture sector: it takes time to raise awareness of social prescribing initiatives, and

¹² [Leading for the Future | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)

¹³ [NHSGGC : Project Lift - National Leadership and Management Platform](#)

¹⁴ [Voluntary-Health-Scotland-Briefing-on-the-Culture-Strategy-and-Health.pdf \(vhscotland.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁵ [Creative Health Inquiry Report 2017 - Second Edition.pdf \(culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁶ https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/Publications/Creative_Health_Inquiry_Report_2017_-_Second_Edition.pdf

this often occurs as short-term projects are coming to an end, limiting their potential impact, and in some cases risking having a detrimental impact on those who had been involved by removing access to something they had come to value and rely on. The short-term nature of projects makes referral difficult for health professionals.

The Scottish Government should commit to a dedicated funding stream for culture initiatives within the health portfolio and developing a referral infrastructure. That is not to say a redirection of funds from health priorities, but to build on and formalise the savings that culture provides to the health portfolio due to its positive influence on preventative spend. This should be designed in a way that empowers artists and creative practitioners to develop and deliver cultural programmes, which should be evaluated in a way that supports cross sector learning and the sharing of best practice. This funding and the related referral infrastructure should also be simple and accessible to artists and organisations who are charged with delivering this, but do not necessarily understand how to navigate complex NHS processes.

4. Fair Work

4.1 A national network of free support should be available for freelance, and self-employed, artists and creative practitioners, providing training opportunities and HR support comparable to what would be available to those in salaried employment.

Fair Work is an outcome in itself and also key to supporting the Culture Strategy aim of developing the skills and conditions for culture to thrive through valuing and supporting a diverse creative workforce for their vital contribution to society and the economy.

The Culture Strategy highlights that the culture sector comprises a growing expert workforce, with a high level of self-employment and project-based working. The Scottish Government's vision is for Scotland to be a leading Fair Work Nation by 2025. The Fair Work Framework states that individuals should be offered an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment, and respect, balancing the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers.

Many of the large organisations in the culture sector are working towards the Fair Work Nation target and work effectively in partnership with Trade Unions, developing employee networks, partnership meetings and surveys. However, there is an ongoing tension in the culture sector between salaried employment and freelance, and self-employed, working. An inherent inequity emerges when rights afforded to salaried employees are not extended to freelance or self-employed workers, raising concerns about the sustainability of careers in the culture sector for freelancers and the self-employed.

As well as lack of HR support, access to training and ongoing skills development for freelancers, and the self-employed, is a significant barrier. The culture sector faces issues of bullying, a lack of maternity or paternity leave and contracts which are often

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written to the detriment of workers.¹⁷ The cost of training courses is high, and loss of earnings due to time taken means training is often not a viable option unless culture professionals are able to support themselves without paid work. This means opportunities are more likely to be open to privileged individuals who have a financial support network, which limits diversity (particularly socio-economic) in the sector. Where training initiatives have been introduced, they are often aimed at young people and those new to the workforce, with less provision for freelancers or self-employed workers already in the sector.¹⁸

To support freelance and self-employed culture professionals, the Scottish government should support the development of a free network of support for freelance and self-employed workers in the culture sector to provide the training opportunities and HR support afforded to those in employment. Historic Environment Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland, National Museums Scotland, National Library of Scotland, and Creative Scotland are committed to promoting Fair Work practices within their organisations and the organisations they fund. Each of these organisations invest in workforce development, support learning and development and provide employees with training and progression opportunities. Resource and lessons learned from these practices should be harnessed to support the development of equivalent provision for freelance and self-employed professionals.

4.2 The Scottish Government must commit to enforcing and monitoring the Fair Work practices of any organisation in receipt of public funding.

Adopting Fair Work practices is not currently a condition of funding for Public Bodies through the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture Portfolio. While Public Bodies support the principle of Fair Work and, on the whole, promote Fair Work practices, there is no clear picture as to the extent that these practices are enforced and the impact of this on the culture sector workforce.

Recovery and renewal of the culture sector cannot happen fully without a stronger sector, where work is less precarious and the importance of creative skills to society is valued more widely and supported accordingly. To facilitate this, the Scottish Government should continue to advocate Fair Work practices and the paying of the living wage for everyone in the cultural and creative workforce.

Where public funding is distributed, Fair Work principles should be enforced by the Scottish Government and its agencies through grant offers. A policy on Fair Work does not in itself ensure that these practices are effectively adhered to, so it is vital to set this alongside a commitment to monitor implementation and compliance. The Scottish Government, and the agencies that distribute public funding should set clear expectations, via offer letters, of what organisations should provide as evidence of Fair Work in practice.

¹⁷ <https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Looking-Glass-Final-Report-Final.pdf> ; <https://pipacampaign.org/research/covidreport?referrer=/research> ; <https://writersguild.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CWC-Report.pdf>

¹⁸ [138603 Creative Scotland Arts Project Final Report v12 12 june](#)

5. Data and Evidence

The Measuring Change Group (MCG) was convened in 2020 as a standing sub-group of the National Partnership for Culture. The MCG's remit is to advise the NPC on appropriate measures, data and research that would best support decision-making related to the delivery of the Culture Strategy for Scotland.

The MCG provided an information paper based on their work programme and hosted an NPC workshop in September 2021. These underpin the following recommendations. A summary of the information paper and the workshop output report will be published alongside the NPC's recommendations.

The current data landscape is fragmented, in terms of both the cultural workforce and public engagement with culture, and in relation to readily available information on the overall level and distribution of public funding for culture. There is a clear opportunity for improvement in these areas.

Alongside the challenges in data and evidence availability, it is important to note that the Culture Strategy itself, which the MCG was founded to advise upon, was not written in a way that is easily measurable. The Culture Strategy sets out bold and ambitious aspirations and contains several actions, but these are generally not linked to specific outcomes, indicators or targets, which hampers efforts to monitor and evaluate its impact.

Considering the context set out above, we propose the following three overarching recommendations.

5.1 The four National Performance Framework indicators for Culture should be reviewed, to better encapsulate the spirit and priorities of the Culture Strategy.

The Scottish Government's outcome for Culture ('We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely') is currently measured by four indicators:

- Attendance at cultural events or places of culture (percentage of adults who have attended or visited a cultural event or place in the last 12 months).
- Participation in a cultural activity (percentage of adults who have participated in a cultural activity in the last 12 months).
- Growth in the cultural economy (the amount of income generated by businesses, measured by Approximate Gross Value Added [aGVA], of the Creative Industries Growth Sector [GBP Millions]).
- People working in arts and culture (the number of jobs in the Creative Industries Growth Sector [culture and arts]).

These are relatively narrow quantitative indicators, which are being used to measure a largely qualitative outcome. On the basis that the National Performance Framework is due to be reviewed in 2023, we propose that an updated set of

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indicators should have a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, which seek to evidence tangible and meaningful change related to the National Outcome for Culture. The indicators should be focussed not only on the sector but should also include the perceptions of the public: what they value about culture, how culture brings meaning to their lives, and the cultural activities they find meaningful. The cultural values of children and young people should also be considered alongside those of adults. Sufficient time and consultation should be factored into the refresh process to allow these indicators to be altered accordingly.

Additionally, the Scottish Government's planned refresh of the Culture Strategy's work streams and Action Plan should aim to provide clarity about any intermediate outcomes and indicators that will be used in understanding its impact and explaining its contribution to the overarching National Outcome for Culture.

5.2. The primary generators and users of cultural data should be asked to standardise, manage, and share current, ongoing and future data sets so that cultural organisations and artists are not required to provide the same data repeatedly and a wide range of cultural organisations and bodies can easily access, use and contribute to them. This should include the Scottish Government providing updated guidance to the national public bodies about the key data they should be collecting from the culture sector in a standardised manner to aid aggregation and comparison.

To do this, the Scottish Government should create clear guidelines for the relevant public bodies (those who regularly undertake or commission data collection), which should set out: what key data should be collected and monitored; how it should be collected in order to ensure consistency and facilitate aggregation; for what purpose it is being asked; and how it should be shared. Consideration should also be given to how duplication and repetition of requests for artists and organisations to provide similar monitoring data to multiple agencies can be reduced or removed entirely.

Alongside this, there should be a joined-up approach to evaluation and research, to increase the efficiency and coherence of this work and data collection related to it. Evaluation should be proportionate to the scale of the work being evaluated, and the focus should be on less, but better evaluation that is oriented towards learning and the potential for work to be scaled up or learnt from in other areas of Scotland.

The need for improved data sharing relationships between Government, local authorities, national bodies, and organisations underpins this proposal, and in delivering on these recommendations, the Scottish Government should explore whether there is a requirement for: 1) additional investment within Government in data analysis and expertise dedicated to the culture sector; 2) key cultural public bodies to fully collaborate in ensuring they align and standardise their approaches to data monitoring and ensure they collectively adopt a strategic approach to evaluation and research that builds on rather than replicates existing work; and/or 3) the creation of a single, neutral third party, to look across the data landscape, akin to the role played by HESA in the Higher Education sector.

5.3 The Scottish Government should commit to undertaking a meaningful evaluation of the Culture Strategy for Scotland and the extent to which the Strategy has produced change.

The Culture Strategy did not set out a timeframe for the achievement of its aims and aspirations nor clear outcomes against which the impact or effectiveness of the Strategy can be assessed.

The Scottish Government should work with stakeholders and national public bodies to decide which outcomes and indicators are appropriate to these aims and aspirations. This should take into account the MCG's proposed long list of potential indicators, which will be included in the output report when published. Following this, the Scottish Government should produce a terms of reference for an independent evaluation capable, at an appropriate 'mid-term' point, of a) assessing the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of progress towards delivering the aims of the Strategy, and b) capturing lessons on the quality of its implementation. In designing and delivering this evaluation, qualitative data should be placed as equal in value and importance to quantitative data.

The Scottish Government should also require the taskforce, detailed in **2.1** above, to monitor and publicly report on progress towards delivery of the agreed outcomes on an annual basis, drawing on the shared monitoring data proposed in **5.2** above and any interim data generated as part of the agreed evaluation framework.

Summary of recommendations

Education and Learning

1.1 The Scottish Government should guarantee the equitable provision of cultural education both in formal and informal education for young people.

1.2 Relevant agencies should be charged with developing a national plan to embed artists and other creative practitioners in all schools, in ways that align with the curriculum.

1.3 Greater support and guidance should be provided to education professionals and young people to help demonstrate accessible pathways into careers in culture

Community and Place

2.1 National initiatives should be joined up and both inform and be influenced by local and regional initiatives.

2.2 Equity of access to culture should be prioritised at a national level to support local, grassroots delivery.

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2.3 Local authorities should use culture as part of their delivery across wider local authority services.

Health and Wellbeing

3.1 The Scottish Government should be charged with ensuring that culture is employed as a key part of delivering Health and Social Care priorities and contributing to an overall wellbeing economy.

3.2 Scottish Government should make connections at Ministerial and policy level to highlight the impact that social prescribing can play and identify the role of culture in nurturing and scaling work in this area.

3.3 A dedicated funding stream for culture initiatives should be developed within the health portfolio.

Fair Work

4.1 A national network of free support should be available for freelance artists and creative practitioners, providing training opportunities and HR support comparable to what would be available to those in salaried employment.

4.2 The Scottish Government must commit to enforcing and monitoring the Fair Work practices of any organisation in receipt of public funding.

Data and Evidence

5.1 The four National Performance Framework indicators for Culture should be reviewed, to better encapsulate the spirit and priorities of the Culture Strategy.

5.2. The primary generators and users of cultural data should be asked to standardise, manage, and share current, ongoing and future data sets so that cultural organisations and artists are not required to provide the same data repeatedly and a wide range of cultural organisations and bodies can easily access, use and contribute to them.

5.3 The Scottish Government should commit to undertaking a meaningful evaluation of the Culture Strategy for Scotland and the extent to which the Strategy has produced change.

Conclusion

The National Partnership for Culture is comprised of individuals from across the sector and beyond who have contributed their time and expertise to develop the recommendations in this paper. In developing this initial set of recommendations, the NPC has had to make choices; the areas covered by the Culture Strategy are wide ranging and these recommendations do not attempt to offer a comprehensive response to every topic. Instead, the recommendations presented here are a starting

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point from which to move towards government providing a more strategic and connected approach to supporting culture in Scotland.

The National Partnership for Culture welcome the opportunity to discuss the recommendations in this paper with the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development. The future role of the National Partnership for Culture and the Measuring Change Group will be reviewed with members and Scottish Government officials following the Scottish Government's response to the recommendations.

Finally, the National Partnership for Culture wishes to record its gratitude to the many individuals who have supported this work through attending workshops and providing valuable input, which has helped to shape the recommendations in this paper.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80435-187-1 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, March 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1041890 (03/22)

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