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Fiona Sturgeon Shea
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Your Ref: Scottish Government budget 23/24
Our Ref: 202300341066

2 March 2023

Dear Sturgeon Shea,

Thank you for your letter of 27 January 2023 regarding the reduction in funding provided to Creative Scotland in the 2023-24 draft Scottish Government budget. As the culture sector falls into my remit as the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, your correspondence has been passed to me to respond.

Firstly, the Scottish Government values the importance of the culture sector for the many benefits they can bring such as nurturing creativity, providing employment and improving the health and wellbeing in communities across Scotland.

I recognise that this is an incredibly worrying time for the culture sector as a whole, most notably against a backdrop of continued impacts from Covid-19, the cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures outside of our control. However, the Scottish Government's ability to respond to the current financial context is limited by the inactivity of the UK Government and the financial restrictions of devolution, which required prioritised spending and extremely hard funding decisions in the budget had to be made.

Nevertheless the Scottish Government is in regular dialogue with the sector, most recently through holding a series of roundtable discussions. While we have had to make difficult choices to live within budgets, we have also listened to the concerns raised by the culture sector. In response, as announced on 21 February, the Scottish Government will provide an uplift of £6.6 million for Creative Scotland for 2023-24 to ensure their accumulated lottery funding reserves can supplement rather than replace grant funding. We expect Creative

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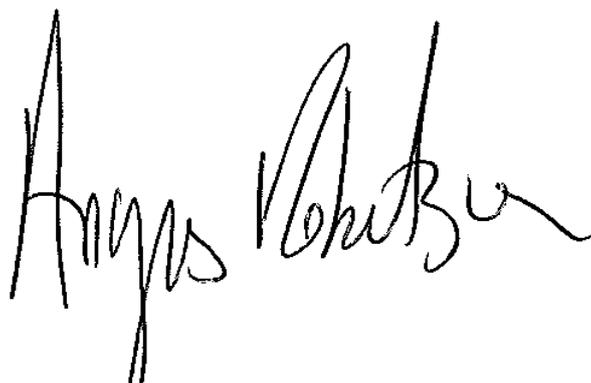


Scotland to set out quickly for the culture sector how it will use these additional resources to support organisations at this difficult time.

This decision means that the Scottish Government is continuing to compensate Creative Scotland for a 6th year for generally reduced lottery funding and over six years we will have provided a total of £40 million.

I will continue to work with the culture sector to identify barriers to immediate and long-term recovery, and the Scottish Government to do everything within our powers and resources to help those most affected by current economic challenges. I will also continue to work across government to look at ways of responding to the very clear challenges that exist for people and organisations in the culture sector at present.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Angus Robertson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Angus" written in a larger, more prominent script than the surname "Robertson".

Angus Robertson
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

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