



NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE ARTS' Submission

Joint Committee on Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht

NCFA represents **over 54,000 artists, arts workers and arts organisations** who make up Ireland's internationally acclaimed innovative and intelligent arts ecosystem. We represent makers, organisations, theatre companies, producers, colleges, venues, arts centres, galleries and publishers. NCFA speaks and plans for both the tip of the iceberg and the many crucial layers of ice that lift that tip out of the water.

The Covid-19 crisis has created profound challenges for the arts, culture and live events sector which have compounded years of under-investment. Throughout 2020 NCFA have engaged in cross-sectoral consultation with artists and arts workers, and the resource organisations who work with them. On 27th May, NCFA published a National Recovery Plan for the Arts containing 13 actions essential for survival and recovery. According to a report by consultants EY, completed on behalf of the Arts Council, published last weekend, **the recession faced by the arts and culture sector will be -55% compared to -11% in the Irish economy overall**. Data currently available predicts that employment levels in the arts and culture sector will not return to 2019 levels until 2025. Analysis by the ERSI shows how **value added in the arts, entertainment & recreation sectors collapsed by 72% compared with an average decline of 29% across the rest of the EU**. The arts, culture and events sector is hardest hit because: we're public facing; we're seasonal; and we are composed mostly of SME's and freelance workers.

In June and July, the additional investments by the Government were vital in stemming the losses faced by many artists, arts workers and arts organisations. But the sector remains in crisis.

This investment represented a positive first step in recognising the value of our arts community. However, after positive moments of reopening and reengagement with our audiences, the return to Level 3 restrictions means all arts and culture organisations are now closed. Furthermore, social distancing measures will continue to mean that events and gatherings are simply not viable. These restrictions remain regardless of which level of the Living With COVID plan we are at. **EY predicts that recovery will take two years or longer depending on the evolution of the virus.**

The publication of the Survive, Adapt, Renew report by The Arts Council's Covid-19 Expert Advisory Group, of which the NCFA was a member, and the ongoing work of the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce are very welcome.

With the knowledge that we are submitting this document in advance of Budget 2021; we will now highlight the key asks of the NCFA pre-budget submission for 2021:

- ➔ Ensure artists and arts workers are supported through the PUP and EWSS until mass gatherings are permitted again and cultural events can take place at full capacity. Ensure that the rate of the PUP returns to €350 for the Arts and Events sector.
- ➔ Increase funding to the Arts Council to €135 million in 2021 with a view to at least doubling investment in the Arts Council by 2025.
- ➔ Prioritise and expedite the trial for Universal Basic Income outlined in the Programme for Government to develop a model for UBI for all citizens over the lifetime of this government.
- ➔ Classify local authority arts spending as a mandatory requirement.
- ➔ We support the call to commission a review of taxation practice as it relates to the arts in Ireland.
- ➔ Encourage total insurance reform.
- ➔ Transpose the European Union's Directive on Copyright for the Digital Single Market into national law by June 2021.

We recognise that the Government is taking the appropriate steps to protect public health and that they have acknowledged the significant challenges faced by the arts and culture sector as a result of these measures.

The arts have provided respite and solidarity for adults and children across the island during the past 8 months of crisis. Never has it been more evident that all our citizens lose out when artists can no longer produce their work.

We would like to end with a quote from the EY report:

'The Arts could act during the crisis as a civic force field enriching our cultural lives. It provides joy and inspiration; it helps to energise us; it is a gateway for people to experience our society and all it has to offer. Covid-19 has brought the importance and value of community into focus and in many ways the arts sector is synonymous with community as a place and an expression of positivity. For this reason, [...] it should be at the heart of our recovery strategy.'



WHAT YOU SEE ON STAGE IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG



To put performers on stage and deliver a single performance requires a vast informal economy made up of **artists, arts workers, arts organisations**, and more. These are full time staff, casual staff, freelancers, sole traders, SME's and larger businesses, as well as the wider hospitality and travel industries. Planning and engagement with various parts of this economy could begin as far as 18 months in advance, with full time rehearsals normally 6-8 weeks before the show.

The actual performer, and the moment on stage, is just the tip of the iceberg.