



National Campaign for the Arts
c/o Theatre Forum
Festival House
12 Essex Street East
Dublin 2
D02 EH42

4th April 2022

Niamh Smyth, TD
Cathaoirleach
Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media
Leinster House
Dublin 2
D02 XR20

Dear Niamh,

We are writing to the Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media in relation to your request for a written submission on the delivery of a safe and respectful working environment in the arts, insofar as these issues relate to the National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA).

Further to the publication of [*Speak Up: A Call for Change \(Towards Creating a Safe & Respectful Working Environment for the Arts\)*](#) launched by Minister Catherine Martin in October 2021, NCFA wholeheartedly supports and endorses the recommendations of the Irish Theatre Institute's (ITI) report. NCFA looks forward to the immediate and urgent implementation of measures to make the arts a positive and safe place to work, and would encourage an all-of-government approach to implementing these crucial steps to ensure a safe and respectful working environment in our sector. We hope that the arts sector can be an example to wider sectors where these problems continue to exist¹.

¹"Harmful behaviour in the workplace is not the preserve of the arts; it is a societal issue as recent reports from other sectors have shown, including law, sport, and the military."

https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_tourism_culture_arts_sport_and_media/2022-02-16/3/

We echo the position of Fair Plé and Safe Arts of Ireland (SAOI) that it is unacceptable for arts workers to have no course for redress where unbalanced power dynamics exist with individuals and organisations. When individuals make complaints, they run the risk of losing work, wider blacklisting, and in some cases, allegations of defamation and risk of lawsuit.

We are calling for a resourced action plan to realise the ITI Report's recommendations, led by the Government, the Minister and relevant agencies, to be formulated and implemented with clear timelines. It must address the need for change at a systemic level and be rooted in equality legislation, which will require cross-departmental engagement, given how widespread the problem is.

We acknowledge Minister Martin's announcement of €200,000 in additional funding, but it is clear that further funding will be needed to support the implementation of the report's recommendations and the continuation and expansion of ITI's Speak Up initiative. NCFA welcomes the scope of this work being extended beyond theatre and into the broader arts sector, but echoes the report's call for further research across the entire arts sector, agreeing that issues express themselves differently in different artforms and areas of work.

The lack of detailed research into the arts sector has been an issue for many years. Funding bodies, arts organisations and lobbying bodies have had to rely on out-of-date, unreliable statistics to communicate valuable information about the arts sector. Support for continued research into the arts sector should represent the beginning of a new era of research to inform the development of the arts and culture in Ireland.

Regards,

Angela Dorgan (Chair), Aideen Howard, Aileen Galvin, Cian O'Brien, Eoghan Carrick, Georgina Jackson, Liv O'Donoghue, Olga Barry, Tom Creed
NCFA Steering Committee