

Dafydd Elis-Thomas

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

Welsh Government

6 July 2020

Dear Dafydd,

UK Government additional funding for culture

I would like to join you in welcoming the news from the UK Government that they are investing £1.57 billion in culture. In anticipation of the Welsh Government's decision on how the £59 million coming to Wales will be spent, I would like your assurance that the total sum will be used to support the cultural sector. We know that this sector suffered a catastrophic loss of income from the overnight closure of venues. Given that the public resumption of activity for many could be some months away, every penny will be needed to support the arts, creative industries, museums and galleries.

£59 million is a significant sum of money, but is noticeably less than a population-based share of the total £1.57 billion funding package. Could you please confirm how Wales's share of this total funding was determined, and whether you are content with it?

As part of the Committee's inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on areas within its remit, we heard from the Arts Council of Wales of the scale of the threat to our venues and artists. Nick Capaldi, Chief Executive of the Arts Council, told the Committee how they had prioritised funding through the Council's stabilisation and resilience funds, but that even so, there was only sufficient funding to support the sector until September. We hope this additional funding will be the lifeline that our cultural venues need to ensure they can weather the storm until



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audiences can return in full. I would be grateful if you could set out how the additional funding will be used to support arts and cultural venues?

We also heard that there are worrying gaps in the support for those who work in the arts and the creative industries. At our meeting on 12 May you mentioned that the Welsh Government is aware that freelance workers have found it difficult to access support from the UK Government's Self-Employment Income Support (SEIS) scheme. I know you share my concerns that both the SEIS and Job Retention schemes should be continued beyond October this year. If these schemes are wound up according to the current timetable, there is potential for a large number of job losses and substantial economic hardship for those who work in the sector. Can you confirm whether, with the additional funding announced this week, the Welsh Government will be planning some form of income support for those working in the arts and creative industries?

We are fast running out of time if we are to stabilise and sustain our artistic talent and infrastructure. I would be grateful if you could update the Committee setting out how the Welsh Government will prioritise the additional funding to ensure our arts organisations are not forced to close their doors for good or make valued employees redundant.

Finally, your personal commitment to culture and the arts is well known. I hope, therefore, that we can rely on you to ensure that the flow of investment that we will see into England's cultural infrastructure is matched by a similar determination to make the most of the funds that are available here to Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Mary Jones".

Helen Mary Jones

Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

