



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

DRAFT

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

Thursday 6 June 2019

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

Thursday 6 June 2019

CONTENTS

Col.

ARTS FUNDING 1

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
17th Meeting 2019, Session 5

CONVENER

*Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)

*Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP)

*Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con)

*Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green)

*Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD)

*Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Rona Alexander (Voluntary Arts Scotland)

Kirsten Gow

Katriona Holmes

Janie Nicoll

Emma Jayne Park

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Stephen Herbert

LOCATION

The Robert Burns Room (CR1)

Scottish Parliament

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

Thursday 6 June 2019

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:03]

Arts Funding

The Convener (Joan McAlpine): Good morning and welcome to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee's 17th meeting in 2019. I remind members and the public to turn off their mobile phones; any members who use electronic devices to access committee papers should please ensure that the devices are set to silent. Apologies have been received from Tavish Scott.

Agenda item 1 is evidence from two panels of witnesses for our arts funding inquiry. I welcome our first panel, which comprises Rona Alexander, vice-chair of Voluntary Arts Scotland, and Janie Nicoll, a visual artist who is a past president of the Scottish Artists Union and who co-led research on in-kind work in the contemporary arts sector.

Thank you for coming to give evidence. I ask Janie Nicoll to start by talking us through what her research found.

Janie Nicoll: I did the project with my fellow artist Ailie Rutherford. It was the result of discussions between me and her after our experiences of taking part in a variety of art festivals, all of which had the common themes of the difficulty in getting paid and the willingness of artists to self-exploit in order to take part.

We undertook the in kind research project in 2018 as part of Glasgow international, which is a large visual arts festival. Our project aimed to map the hidden economies of the visual arts and the below-the-waterline economy. It charted the unseen and unaccounted-for efforts that enable so much of the arts to take place, so it explored unpaid labour, mutual support, favours and volunteer hours. That relates to a feminist notion of the economy.

GI has different strands; some are curated and funded, and some are funded by arts organisations. We took part in the across the city strand, which is completely unfunded and is the largest section of GI. Under that strand, artists are encouraged to find and use new and unusual spaces across the city.

The festival involved 90 exhibitions and 78 venues. It gives one £3,000 bursary, and I worked

out that the total funding for GI in 2018 was about £114,000 across the exhibitions and venues, but the vast majority of artists who take part are self-funding.

Our project asked artists to log their out-of-pocket expenses and the unpaid hours that they contributed in order to take part in GI. We created a mobile information unit and worked with statistics, and we set up a website where artists could log their hours and out-of-pocket expenses. That information was displayed as a data visualisation that updated in real time throughout the three-week festival.

The point was to highlight the precariousness and unsustainability of the huge amount of self-exploitation—I have used that term already—by artists or the huge contribution that they must make to take part in GI. The committee can see more about our project on our website—inkindproject.info—which includes the data visualisation and the stats.

We have participated in subsequent events, including one at the Barbican in London. Our project coincided with the “Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries” report, which was produced by sociologists and statisticians from the University of Edinburgh and the University of Sheffield. That report looked at whether the arts are a meritocracy. We were asked to take part in workshops at the Barbican, and we created a list of demands at a follow-up workshop event at Kinning park complex. We also gave a presentation to the cross-party group on culture.

That was to illustrate our project. If members would like to, they can find out more about it online.

The Convener: Thank you—I asked the question to get the information on the record. Through the written submissions and other oral evidence, we have discovered the amount of work in the arts sector that is unpaid or does not attract fair pay. I ask Rona Alexander what the extent of that problem is.

Rona Alexander (Voluntary Arts Scotland): I represent Voluntary Arts Scotland, which is on the other side of the coin—it is the national development agency for those who take part in arts and culture in their free time, which ranges from painting groups to sculpture, dance, country dancing and so on. Our evidence is less about fair pay for artists but, in working with voluntary groups, we encourage them to pay fair rates when working with professional artists.

I guess that Janie Nicoll and I are appearing together because we both represent parts of the sector that are a bit under the radar and below the waterline for funding decisions. I do not know

whether Janie Nicoll wants to say more about the scale of the problem.

Janie Nicoll: I will speak with my other hat on as an executive member of the Scottish Artists Union. Since 2012, the SAU has conducted membership surveys, so we have amassed a load of stats and information about how artists operate and support themselves.

The SAU represents professional working artists and has a membership of more than 1,300. We have amassed all the statistics. We recently asked a question about volunteering in the arts, so we know that more than 50 per cent of our members who filled in the survey volunteer in the arts. That is endemic—it is almost a way of operating. That goes along with the fact that, consistently, about 80 per cent of our members are self-employed. People who are self-employed are not supported with holiday pay or maternity pay or with all the rights that accompany a salary. That is another factor in the arts.

The Convener: Some written submissions have considered ways of addressing the issue, such as requiring funded organisations to dedicate at least 50 per cent of their annual budgets to artists. In the regularly funded organisations row, quite a lot of the concern was about the fact that a lot of the money was going not to artists but to organisations that focus on administration or management. Another suggestion was that organisations that do not pay union rates should not be funded. What is your view on those solutions?

Janie Nicoll: It has taken the SAU a number of years to get Creative Scotland to embed our recommended pay rates in its funding structures, but Creative Scotland now recommends that, if artists or organisations apply for funding, they should give evidence that they will use the pay rates from the SAU, Equity, the Musicians Union or other arts unions. That has helped the situation.

Getting funding is incredibly competitive. One of our demands is to make the arts less about competition, so that artists are not competing. Individual artists can apply only to Creative Scotland's open project fund, which is one large pot of money for all art forms that is for individuals as well as organisations. A low rate of our members has received public funding—60 per cent have never received it.

Over and over again, we hear that our members find applying intimidating. We have ridiculously high levels of dyslexia in the visual arts—I think that Glasgow School of Art has an entire department to address dyslexia. People find even filling in the forms intimidating, as is dealing with budgets and adding percentages. I have 25 years' experience as an artist and I graduated in 1989

but, even for me, a Creative Scotland funding application would probably be at least three weeks' work. That is intimidating, although I have all that experience, so I hate to think how recent graduates from art schools feel about tackling such an uphill struggle. That is an issue.

Another issue—I could talk all day about this—is that the SAU has realised that more than 60 per cent of our members are over 50, which raises the question of where all the young artists are. Are they disappearing off down south? Do they not see the union as relevant to them? We provide public liability insurance as one of our membership benefits, so it is advantageous for artists to join the union if they work in the sector.

09:15

High numbers of students are going through art schools, but we are worried about the number who end up working in call centres or bars and about how few can take on work in the incredibly competitive arts sector. That is a major issue that bodes badly for the future.

I could go on. In some cities, local authorities have small pots of money to give £2,000 grants, for example. Such funding might facilitate a project, but it in no way enables people to survive financially.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): Janie Nicoll mentioned dyslexia. I am the deputy convener of the cross-party group on dyslexia. Do you have percentages or figures about people with dyslexia in the sector?

Janie Nicoll: I do not have such figures at my fingertips; the SAU has not questioned people on that in our membership surveys, although we probably should. However, I know anecdotally that the levels are extremely high—people with dyslexia often naturally gravitate towards creative activities. My partner, who is a cabinet maker, is dyslexic and one of my daughters is dyslexic and is extremely creative. Dyslexia and creativity almost go hand in hand. As you are probably well aware, filling in forms and applying for funding are additionally tricky for people who are dyslexic.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The inquiry raises two issues. One is how the pot of money is spent, which is about whether it goes to individual artists versus organisations, for example. The other is how we increase the size of the pot. Is the real issue how we get more money?

My questions are for Rona Alexander. The Government and all the political parties have signed up to a policy of improving wellbeing, which involves investing in health and education services. Traditionally, the voluntary arts have been underfunded and have existed on a

shoestring, but does Voluntary Arts Scotland see benefits for those policy areas from the voluntary arts?

Rona Alexander: Absolutely.

Claire Baker: Are there moves towards those policy areas contributing to the arts? Do you have examples of co-working?

Rona Alexander: The voluntary arts are hugely beneficial to the broader wellbeing agenda and to social connectedness. There is the product of art but also the process of being a maker and working in groups, which can greatly benefit wellbeing and connectedness. The landscape is difficult and has become increasingly so, because there is less local authority funding—there are fewer of the microgrants that voluntary and amateur groups might need to continue their work, to work in areas with less social or economic capital or to work with an artist to improve their reach and participation levels.

The points that Janie Nicoll made about proportionality in applying for funding are equally the case for voluntary and amateur groups, which rarely, if ever, access Creative Scotland's open project fund, because of the work that an application takes and the demands that it makes. The people who are part of our network appreciate initiatives such as awards for all, which provides small project funding, and microgrant schemes—we have in some cases offered microgrants to help with hospitality and event costs.

A good example comes from Creative Scotland's funding for this year's refugee festival, which has allowed refugee and asylum seeker groups to put on events across Scotland. That is a positive development, because the Syrian intake means that many local authorities are hosting refugees for the first time.

Claire Baker: You mentioned local authority funding and the awards for all scheme. Are you aware of conversations with bodies such as the national health service, other statutory bodies or the private sector about contributing to your work?

Rona Alexander: It is difficult to get private sector contributions to us as a network organisation, because most corporate funders prefer to fund direct outcomes with direct beneficiaries who they can see and put a label on. A network organisation such as us therefore struggles to access such funding. People get support from local businesses, but that is not transformative.

As for the NHS, good things happen in some areas, but the picture is not universal. I do not know whether Janie Nicoll would say the same thing.

Janie Nicoll: I have had residencies in places such as care homes, but they have been random and sporadic. I have done such work for Aberdeenshire Council.

Lots of different arts organisations are doing things. I wear another hat as a trustee for Engage, which is the National Organisation for Gallery Education. It does a lot of diverse work with galleries on outreach projects, which all has an impact on bringing people from more diverse backgrounds into the arts.

Local authority cuts have really affected a source of income for artists. Under Labour, there were cultural co-ordinators, who people look back on as a good conduit between artists and schools. Artists are not necessarily good brokers for themselves or good negotiators, which is why pay is always an issue. No matter what career status they have—even if they are highly successful—artists always find negotiating difficult. The cultural co-ordinators provided a good conduit for all the work that went on in local authority areas.

It always seems to be relatively easy to cut arts budgets; we hear the cliché about funding a hospital instead. However, lots of arts organisations see the link between artistic activity and general wellbeing, which is in the ether.

Claire Baker: The Government is working on the culture strategy, which has had a number of drafts and consultation events. You describe a fairly piecemeal situation and a lack of strategic direction nationally and at local government level—how different local authorities approach culture varies. Will the strategy help to address those issues?

Janie Nicoll: I would like to think so. The Government has done enough research and the culture strategy stuff seems to have gone on for years. The strategy will help.

Rona Alexander: I hope that the strategy will help and that it will go some way towards recognising the issues that are under the radar and the areas that have had less of a voice than the big institutions. The balance could be redressed. Janie Nicoll talked about cultural co-ordinators; I note the lack of any uniform infrastructure locally to support groups, highlight opportunities and refer people to them, and network.

Janie Nicoll: I keep thinking about how it would be if the arts were ring fenced. Moray Council cut its entire arts budget, which was only £60,000—it was just one arts administrator and an assistant. You could buy a Land Rover for that, and how many Land Rovers are driving around Moray? Arts budgets are not necessarily large, but they can be very significant and they can have a far-reaching effect.

Artists initiate a lot of projects and bring in other funding. They are innovative.

Rona Alexander: They are catalysts.

Janie Nicoll: Yes, they are catalysts for other things. Money spent on employing or engaging with artists is money well spent.

Claire Baker: Janie Nicoll talked earlier about diversity. What impact is the current financial landscape having on diversity? Other witnesses have talked about black and minority ethnic representation and older artists, and you have talked about women's involvement in art and the challenges in that regard.

Janie Nicoll: The financial landscape is definitely having an impact. Who can afford to be an artist? For GI, artists had to sign up to man their exhibitions for three weeks—and that does not include all the work that went on prior to that; putting on and setting up an exhibition takes a lot of work.

The situation is not sustainable. Artists struggle to sustain their careers; lots of artists end up dropping out because they have family commitments, for example. Being an artist means living in a precarious situation. There are statistics that prove that a high percentage—probably more than 60 or 70 per cent—of our members earn less than 20 grand a year. They are earning way below average earnings.

Artists are basically on low pay, because they are self-employed and because of the difficulties in getting paid and sustaining a career. However, artists contribute a lot to the overall culture of Scotland and to our international reputation.

It should not be just people from privileged backgrounds who get opportunities. However, more and more, that seems to be how things are panning out.

Rona Alexander: The picture is the same in the community sector. If someone is in an area of economic prosperity and has a lot of social capital, they can perhaps continue to be involved in the arts without funding. However, funding is vital in our more disadvantaged communities, where there is a need to bring in arts expertise to increase audiences, improve the quality of work and engage more people. If that is missing, we are getting a more and more unequal playing field.

One of the key things that Voluntary Arts Scotland tries to do is to support diversity in the arts. Our epic awards highlight really good examples from different communities in different parts of the country.

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): The proposal for a universal basic income in Scotland has moved on quite a bit in the past year and four

local authorities have agreed to trial the approach. In written evidence that the committee received for its inquiry, it was suggested that a UBI would be beneficial to artists in Scotland. I am interested in hearing how you think that might work and how the approach might change the landscape for individual artists who are not part of wider organisations and networks.

Janie Nicoll: At the Scottish Artists Union annual general meeting last year, a guy from the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce—I cannot remember his name—came along and gave a presentation on the universal basic income. It looks like that could be a way of supporting people to have creative lives.

I keep referring to our membership survey. Another thing that we noticed was that a lot of artists are in the older age bracket. There seems to be evidence of people putting off a creative career until they retire, or taking early retirement so that they can be in a stable enough position to take on a creative profession. Do we want all our artists to be at that end of the age spectrum? It affects the age span diversity of the arts. We should free up the universal basic income. The old age pension is a universal basic income—it is a non-means tested income with no questions asked—so we already have a universal basic income, but we do not give it to younger people. The SAU would be interested if it was rolled out in different areas of Scotland.

09:30

Ross Greer: The social security system came up in our roundtable discussion with artists last week. Do you have any thoughts on artists' experience with the current system? It was suggested that, in the past, some folk have continued to do their art while—this phrase was used—on the dole. Over recent years, as the system has become more hostile, it has made that impossible. Has the Scottish Artists Union, in particular, noticed that? Have you seen it in your networks?

Janie Nicoll: Generally, the benefits system has become so vilified, problematic and difficult that one imagines that people avoid it like the plague. I know lots of artists started their careers claiming while on the dole claiming benefits. Way back, there was the enterprise allowance scheme—I do not know if any of you remember that—which was the start of many small businesses. It enabled people to put out records or set up record companies, for example.

I was involved in a scheme called Fuse, which was run by Patricia Fleming. I do not know whether you have heard of her, but she runs her

own organisation. It was like the enterprise allowance scheme, and it meant that artists did not have to sign on every week. It was within that kind of system, and we got money for materials and stuff like that. It was for a whole year. We avoided the business of having to fill in forms and were working within a creative setting. That was an interesting model. She managed to make the system work for artists, which was quite unique. I do not know whether anyone has managed to do that again.

Ross Greer: Rona, Janie Nicoll talked about the demographics skewing towards older folk with access to a pension—do you see that happening in your networks in voluntary arts?

Rona Alexander: Yes. In a large number of groups, older people are in the majority, certainly among our membership. We speak up for them as great creative people doing great things in their communities. The big challenges for the groups that we work with are bringing in new members, refreshing their organisations and how they run them and making connections with younger people.

Ross Greer: I realise that the reasons for that will be substantial and varied, but are financial constraints—and having to go elsewhere to secure some kind of income stream—a significant part of that for younger artists.

Rona Alexander: It is really to do with the profile of volunteering generally; there are certainly points in people's lives when they are more able and willing to volunteer than they are when they have a young family or a full-on career. To return to my point about why funding to level the playing field between different areas is so important, people certainly need a level of financial security to fully contribute as a volunteer.

Janie Nicoll: There is evidence to show the drop-off in the number of people who are operating as artists within five years of leaving art school. I think that it is down to 10 per cent or something. Artists go on and operate in different sectors, which is great, because they contribute to society, bringing their creativity into different spheres, but in a way it is a waste, given all the input, for people to be unable to push on and have what we might consider to be successful careers as artists.

It goes right back to young people choosing subjects at school. If there is an idea that the arts are not going to be a viable occupation when young people come out of school and their parents want them to do well in life, their parents are going to push them towards the sciences and becoming a doctor rather than towards the arts. Obviously, people do the arts subjects because they want to, but that idea is problematic.

On Monday, I am going to do a workshop for the graduating year at Glasgow School of Art on professional practice. I have to go and speak to a roomful of 20 or 30 young and optimistic arts graduates and give them a bit of harsh reality about the statistics. Young graduates may think that they have a career trajectory that will go up and up whereas, in fact, I am 25 years out of art school and am still struggling to get paid, quite often. It is a tough career choice.

Rona Alexander: Young people often get involved in using the arts to highlight other issues of concern that are central to them. Working with artists can be very powerful, be it in relation to dyslexia or autism, or in bringing issues to the fore and finding self-expression. We see a lot of that through our epic awards. Our winner last year was an autism project from a very disadvantaged community in Inverclyde. It does fantastic work, which I think it has even brought to the Parliament, that raises awareness of how to be around young autistic people.

Ross Greer: Great—thank you.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): I have a supplementary question that follows on from what Ross Greer said about a basic income. When we were at Ayrshire College on Monday, we spoke to a lot of young people, and one issue that came up was the diversity—not necessarily in a good way—in what is done for artists in different educational institutions. For example, we were told by a graduate of Glasgow School of Art that no assistance whatsoever was provided in the form of support, instruction, information or training on setting up a business, applying for grants or even filling in tax returns and things like that, whereas Ayrshire College did all those things. Do you have any concerns about that? Would you like to see such things established across the board so that, when young people are starting out, they have a solid grounding in how to negotiate their lives?

Janie Nicoll: Yes. There is definitely a lot of scope for that. At the Scottish Artists Union, we have become affiliated to the Scottish Trades Union Congress and we now have union learning funding to run training programmes for artists. However, that is after graduation. The art schools do professional practice work, but it may be just a one-day event, and it is often done at a time when students are graduating, so they may not see the point of it and engage with it.

You mentioned the work at Ayrshire College to embed those life skills. I suppose that people learn by experience how to become self-employed and do their own accounts, but for people to be shown the steps for that is extremely beneficial.

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): In the discussions that we have had both last week and today—Claire Baker alluded to the point—we have talked about the fact that the very wide range of asks are all very laudable, but we come back to the pot that is available. Starting with the way in which things are structured at the moment, which is principally through Creative Scotland and the national companies, we need to take a view on whether that is the system that we should have going forward or whether we should have a different system. Starting with that, what do you see as a possible way forward? Should we keep the system as it is, change it or overhaul it completely?

Janie Nicoll: You could make changes that would make Creative Scotland more accessible. You could make applying for funding a lot easier, perhaps for smaller chunks of money, so that each application does not seem like an uphill struggle. You could do something that supports artists. There are other models. In Ireland, artists get travel grants, which help them to exhibit abroad. Things like that could be happening.

It is hard to say. Creative Scotland's heart is in the right place, but a lot of people feel that the way in which the money is being dished out means that it is inaccessible and problematic.

Rona Alexander: The key is transparency and proportionality. That is how the groups that we work with and how we, as a very small national development agency, feel. We are regularly funded with £390,000 for the three-year cycle, but that leaves us a small organisation.

The reporting and application requirements are heavy. I realise that the pot is small and hard decisions have to be made but, at the moment, the budget that goes to small grant funding through Creative Scotland is £0.5 million a year in the awards for all scheme. We are glad that that came back after being out for a while, but it seems a small sum to support community activity all over Scotland.

As I said, it is very daunting to apply for the open fund, which is very competitive and very hard.

Like all organisations, Creative Scotland could look at how it divides the money that it has. We benefit a lot from the funding plus that Creative Scotland offers: the professional support, the networking opportunity, and access to facilities. Creative Scotland has helped us to revise our booklet "Cash for Culture: A guide to fundraising for voluntary creative groups", which makes voluntary groups aware of all the funding sources. That has been a great help. An emphasis on things that the national agency can add beyond funding is equally important.

Annabelle Ewing: Two themes are coming across as far as adapting the existing structure is concerned. You said that the budget for small grants is about £0.5 million, which represents a very small percentage of the budget as a whole. Janie Nicoll also made a point about the excessive time that it takes to apply for this bit of funding, which is a very small percentage of Creative Scotland's budget.

Rona Alexander: There are also the reporting requirements and the data gathering and so on.

Annabelle Ewing: One of the issues that we discussed at some length last week was using peer review in an effort to get through the challenge of excessive requirements for information, even to make an application for funding. What are your views on that?

Janie Nicoll: In the past, the Scottish Arts Council involved artists more at the stage of reviewing applications. Artists seemed to be more involved then, rather than there being a divide between the people applying and the admin side. Something like a peer review system might be more accessible.

It could also change so that individuals and artists do not have to compete with organisations for a pot of money. Organisations are going for the same pot of funding and, obviously, individuals do not have the resources that an organisation has. They might not have the experience or a paid fundraiser. From my point of view, individuals always seem to be at a disadvantage when they go for that kind of funding.

Also, artists at all stages of their careers are competing for the same type of funding and it feels as though the fact that some are younger or recently graduated is probably not taken into consideration. That makes the process more intimidating for younger artists, I would think.

09:45

Annabelle Ewing: One possible approach would be to have microfunding. Would you welcome that, bearing in mind that the system would have to be devised to balance the light touch that would be inherent in such an approach with some checks and balances?

Janie Nicoll: We have mentioned local authority funding. Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and other areas have small pots of money. If artists are supported, even with small amounts of money, they can benefit greatly from the kudos as well as from the support and back-up and so on. It is not just about the money; it is about getting that kind of support. All of that can help.

I suppose that that approach could work on a local basis rather than with a more centralised

organisation. Local authorities could do things that are for their local areas, with all the benefits that that entails.

Rona Alexander: I agree. Microgrants are best delivered at the hyper-local, local or network level, where there is a close connection between the funder and the people who are applying so that the trust is high and the monitoring is light. It is all about getting the money out and making things happen and, I suppose, the funder accepting a greater level of risk because they are closer to the people who get the money. There are good examples of that. For Paisley's United Kingdom city of culture bid, microgrants were given, and we are still seeing the benefit of that for the groups that were supported through that process, which are carrying on.

Annabelle Ewing: You both seem fairly enthusiastic about that notion, but you anticipate that, for it to really work, the local connection would be key, and you say that we should have a look at past precedents.

Rona Alexander: Yes. Our focus on place-based working would seem to provide fertile ground for that approach to be part of the picture.

Claire Baker: I want to follow up on Annabelle Ewing's points. Some representation has been made that, when it comes to Creative Scotland funding, some organisations, such as the Royal Lyceum, the Traverse and the other big venues, will be funded. They go through the same bidding process but, in some ways, we all know who will get the funding. It has been suggested that those organisations should be taken out of the system because they are of national significance and that we should make more of a division between the organisations that will be funded and others.

Annabelle Ewing's question also made me think about geographic spread. I do not know where the reasons for this lies, but Creative Scotland has been criticised for an inability to reach all areas of Scotland with its funding, which tends to be focused on certain areas. Would microgrants help to increase the geographic spread? That is still a question about how we spend the current pot rather than increase it.

Janie Nicoll: We know from the SAU survey that we are quite unusual in that, geographically, our members are spread throughout Scotland. Obviously, there are dense pockets in Glasgow, Edinburgh and the other cities, but we have members throughout every region in Scotland. The kind of funding that has been mentioned can benefit people living in the more remote locations.

I am sorry, but what was your other question?

Rona Alexander: It was about the major institutions such as the Lyceum and the Traverse

being taken out of the RFO round and dealt with separately.

Janie Nicoll: Yes. We have the national companies, but we also have certain organisations that are similar to them and are almost like institutions in themselves. Again, we have different organisations having to compete for pots of funding, and I think that it is a really harsh system. They are competing for three years of funding at a time. How can any organisation plan ahead when it gets funding for only three years at a time? It is not practical and it adds a kind of precariousness to the sector.

I suppose that I see the arts sector as a kind of stretched elastic band, and things are pinging. At present, the Stills gallery in Edinburgh has run into trouble and is under threat because the city council has raised the rents. Inverleith house dropped out, although it has been reinstated—kind of, in a different way. It seems to be quite easy to close art galleries. People are not going to take to the streets and complain in the way that they would if a hospital was being closed. However, galleries are part of the really strong culture that we have in the arts in Scotland, which is something that we should be proud of.

Stuart McMillan: My question follows on from the one about geographic spread. If the larger organisations were taken out of that round and considered separately, that could skew things, with even more money going to the cities rather than towns and rural communities across the country. Is that a fair assumption?

Rona Alexander: It is all about how the overall pot would be divided, is it not? It would be difficult to resolve the issue of which organisations should be judged to be national institutions and which should not.

We are pointing to the difficulty of having apples and pears competing in the same process. We have different organisations with different structures, and the current approach disadvantages individual artists and community-led organisations.

Janie Nicoll: Many organisations are city based but do a lot of outreach work elsewhere or have artists coming to the cities to use them. The Lyceum theatre was mentioned. Exhibitions and theatre productions tour throughout Scotland. The fact that something that is funded is city based does not necessarily mean that its influence will be felt in only that one place.

Stuart McMillan: A few moments ago, you spoke about microfunding. Is it a fair assumption that, when most artists graduate, they set up as small businesses?

Janie Nicoll: I do not know that they necessarily set up as small businesses. A lot of craft makers set up as small businesses, but I am a sole trader. I do not see myself as a small business as such. Like a lot of artists who I know, I am self-employed.

Stuart McMillan: Would you be entitled to apply to the business gateway for funding to assist you to do what you need to do?

Janie Nicoll: I set up as self-employed quite a long time ago and there was no funding. I do not know what the situation is now. I am not sure whether there is any funding out there. It would be worth investigating that.

Rona Alexander: I noticed that some of the written evidence mentions the potential for community interest companies, which can be funded through the lottery and other sources. However, in another role, I sit on the board of a community interest company that was set up by an individual artist, and I know that that involved a huge amount of work and effort that did not necessarily play to her artistic strengths and, to an extent, diverted her from her practice. That was a requirement of being an RFO. It might be the right route for many people, but it is not right for everybody.

Janie Nicoll: Things such as apprenticeship schemes could be adapted to help craft makers. They are locally based programmes, but they might be seen to be inflexible—I do not know. Such schemes could be more prevalent and could perhaps be used to help sole traders and small businesses, particularly in the craft sector.

Stuart McMillan: I was thinking about help from business gateway over and above, rather than instead of, funding for creative activity.

In the discussion on Monday in Ayrshire, the issue of peer review came up. The creative sector is very broad and is not just about music or art. With that in mind, how would you establish a peer reviewing operation to ensure that there is a fair and transparent process for allocating money?

Janie Nicoll: That is a hard one. We do not want nepotism, obviously. However, peer review is a good idea, particularly if we had some kind of rolling body of reviewers so that people did not stay in position for too long and dominate things.

Rona Alexander: I previously worked for a lottery funder and, with that hat on, I can say that peer review works if it is open, transparent and flexible, and if people take their turns and do not get stuck. It has to be an open process, rather than a closed one. That could add a lot of value.

Peers would be recompensed for their work. They would also gain skills and a greater understanding of the assessment process, which

might help people to understand the difficult decisions that always have to be made. When grant making is very closed for a long time, people become suspicious about what is happening.

Stuart McMillan: Someone who was sitting at my table on Monday suggested that, if a person who obtains money from Creative Scotland to progress their career becomes a star and gets very wealthy, they should put something back in, to help others.

Rona Alexander: I think that every star of the Scottish arts scene gets hundreds of letters asking for support from voluntary groups in their area—that is what people do. I cannot envisage a system that would compel people to help. The people who have made it are well known and are often approached, and they probably often support the arts.

Janie Nicoll: An artists benevolent fund is a nice idea, but the sad reality is that the percentage of people who earn even 30 grand a year or more is very small—it is about 3 or 4 per cent, according to our figures. As I said, if you are an artist, it does not necessarily mean that you are a good negotiator. On paper, you might look successful, but that does not necessarily translate into getting artists fees, exhibition fees and money in the bank.

Life is always precarious for artists, which makes it hard for them to take the kind of approach that was suggested. An artist might stop being the flavour of the month. The invitations to exhibit or take up residencies might stop. Their career could take a nosedive.

10:00

Rona Alexander: I guess that that may contribute to them giving help in kind, rather than cash.

Janie Nicoll: Yes. As our in kind project highlighted, artists at all levels give a lot, anyway. Anecdotally, we heard from artists who are relatively well known or who we would assume are doing quite well but who are struggling financially or not doing as well as we would think. The project highlights that.

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): There is no doubt that we are and continue to be a creative nation. You have given strong evidence about how people are inspired to do things and how they manage to do them. However, at the end of the day, it is about the strategies that are put in place by local authorities, the Government or Creative Scotland. Are there distinct roles for those three groups in organising that? You have touched on the fact that there have been some successes, but there does not seem to

be the transparency or co-operation between the organisations to make that happen.

Janie Nicoll: A certain amount of co-operation and talking goes on, but I keep going back to the fact that some local authorities, including Stirling and Moray, have completely cut their arts budget. To me, that seems crazy and I wonder what the people living in Moray think. It has an impact on children, older people and others who would normally get the chance to be involved in the arts. That is really short sighted. Those organisations need to talk to each other.

Alexander Stewart: You mentioned ring fencing. Perhaps that policy should be reconsidered in some situations and there should be at least a minimum basic level of resource put into local government or whatever to make sure that funding is continued. Opportunities are being missed.

Janie Nicoll: Yesterday, I was at an Engage meeting in London and we talked about the Welsh branch, Engage Cymru, which has been involved with the cross-party group on arts and health in the Welsh Assembly. Rather than the group being just about culture, which may be thought of as something on its own, the idea is that it covers arts and health, which are integrated. There are links to wellbeing, mental health and people's health in general. It is a slightly different way of looking at the issue.

Alexander Stewart: Co-ordinating all that gives much more of a pathway and even a career. At the moment in the arts, if someone is in management or administration, their career is to an extent sound and secure but, if they are an artist, that is not the case. We are losing the talent into different areas because they are trying to sustain their lifestyle.

Janie Nicoll: Yes. I hope that there has been less of it in recent times, but such things as the use of unpaid interns have an impact by undermining actual jobs in the arts, which is something to be avoided.

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): I have a number of diverse questions, so I hope that you will bear with me. At the session in Ayrshire, we talked about striking a balance between providing funding for small arts projects that are measurable and have measurable audiences, and funding something that is art for art's sake and allowing artists simply to be creative. Do you have any views on that?

Janie Nicoll: In an ideal world, there would be funding for both. The idea of the arts encouraging participation so that people from a diverse range of backgrounds take part is a good thing. It helps to demystify the arts. The Engage organisation works on gallery education and tries to be an

interface between people and what might seem intellectually difficult for them to grasp. By getting children, young people and whoever into galleries to engage with the work, you can demystify it, and they can then start to create their own artwork in response.

As a nation, we need people with the creative vision to develop that sort of thing and to create careers as practitioners, but we also need to encourage the general population to take more of an interest in the arts. After all, as we have talked about, there is the link with health and wellbeing and the fact that art can benefit everyone, not just people who think that they are professional artists.

Rona Alexander: That is very much the approach of Voluntary Arts Scotland, which seeks to highlight the value of participation in the arts as a tool for improving wellbeing and creating social connectedness. I presume that that sort of thing would, in turn, help to build support for the arts to get more funding by allowing, as Janie Nicoll has suggested, people to understand art more and to be less intimidated by art galleries, opera houses or whatever.

Janie Nicoll: Creative Scotland is helping to fund these things. With, for example, the Scotland+Venice partnership, it is putting internationally renowned artists on the world stage, which is highly commendable, but it is also funding organisations at the other end of the spectrum such as Engage Scotland, which encourages young people and children to go to art galleries in an attempt to demystify them and ensure that people engage with them.

Jamie Greene: At the event in Ayrshire, a criticism that I heard at my table was that Creative Scotland turns up and puts on events in local communities when there are local groups that might be better placed to do that sort of thing because they understand their communities, are more engaged with people and are deemed as being more accessible. That might be a structural problem with Creative Scotland.

Another piece of feedback from the event that I found interesting and about which I am keen to hear your views was that, although people felt that Creative Scotland is good at big-ticket items and supporting our well-known national organisations, there was disagreement about who should be involved in local decision making. Some people thought that it should be local authorities, who used to have more resources such as culture officers, while others felt that the issue should be kept away from local authorities as much as possible. What structural changes can Creative Scotland make to ensure that it not only looks after the big-tent events but can administer small funds at a micro or local level to community projects?

Rona Alexander: It would be very hard to do that without having infrastructure in the local area, which, as we have pointed out, is what is lacking. I am sure that Creative Scotland's approach is to work in partnership, and parts of it—the parts that we report to and work with—are focused on working with local authorities and on developing place-based activity. Perhaps the criticism is more about Creative Scotland's place-based approach being underresourced or underdeveloped. I understand that it has been putting more emphasis on that, but obviously it could do more in that respect.

That brings us back to the point about the three levels that need to be joined up. Having more of a definition of what is meant by adequate arts provision at local level and what the budget should be is an essential part of solving that problem.

Janie Nicoll: Back in 2008, under the Scottish Arts Council pARTners residency scheme, I did a year-long residency at Callendar house in Falkirk, and it was a great experience for me and the other artists who were involved. Because we were there for a year and had the resources of Falkirk Council, which had been funded by the Scottish Arts Council to enable the scheme to happen, we were able to have genuine engagement with the community. It was a really good example of a local approach that worked through funding from a Creative Scotland-type organisation.

Glasgow City Council has just announced that there will be an artist residency in every ward in the city—which I think adds up to 10 or 20 residencies—and people are really interested in seeing how that new and innovative model will work. Again, it is about embedding artists in communities to ensure that there is genuine engagement instead of simply parachuting them in.

Jamie Greene: I have two other separate questions, but I will try to be brief.

First, how can the application process be made more accessible? We had some feedback that the process is quite onerous for artists, who might not be used to completing lengthy forms or do not understand how to answer the questions, because they feel that those questions are not relevant to their type of art. Moreover, as we have discussed, that kind of process adversely affects those with dyslexia or autism, those who are not used to working in complex online application environments or those who rely on the skills of professional applicants.

Secondly, should art students be given more business training? Many creative people are very good at what they do in an artistic sense but, when it comes to setting up companies, filing accounts, making tax returns, writing business plans or

raising funds in the private sector, they find that sort of thing difficult, and we just do not focus enough on providing that training in art schools.

Janie Nicoll: There is a lot of scope and a lot of work that could be done to help young artists gain, say, business skills. It might seem onerous at the time, but they would obviously benefit from that.

Making the application process more accessible would mean having a more level playing field. After all, if you are articulate, good at writing and so on, you are at an advantage compared to those who find those things problematic, and the issue becomes less about what you are creating or making and more about what you write about it. Of course, that is a separate issue to do with people overacademicising things instead of concentrating on what is being created or made.

Rona Alexander: We should facilitate conversations with people really early on so that we are not wasting their time if they are not going to hit the mark as far as getting funding is concerned. A two-stage process involving a quick triage can be useful, because it ensures that those who go through to the second more developed stage have a much higher chance of being successful. Indeed, we used that approach in the Big Lottery Fund to reduce the burden on applicants.

Jamie Greene: One artist told us that he spent most of his time filling in forms instead of being an artist, which seemed quite sad to me.

Janie Nicoll: It is a cause of frustration.

Rona Alexander: In that case, though, he should be having a conversation to find out what he could be doing differently or why his work is not meeting the outcomes that the funder is seeking.

The Convener: That ends our first evidence-taking session this morning. I thank our witnesses for their interesting evidence, and I suspend the meeting briefly to allow a changeover.

10:13

Meeting suspended.

10:26

On resuming—

The Convener: I welcome our next panel of witnesses, who are individual artists and creative freelancers. Katriona Holmes and Emma Jayne Park are with us in the Parliament, and Kirsten Gow will give evidence via videoconference from Jura. We are having a few technical issues at the Jura end, but Kirsten will join us as soon as they are resolved. I thank everyone for coming to give evidence today.

I will ask the opening question. The issue that we are considering is fair pay for artists, and one of the things that has come through in our inquiry is that, in order to deliver that, we need to be able to convince the general public of the purpose of arts funding. I invite you to reflect on that. Should the purpose of arts funding be artistic excellence, amateur arts support, audience development, genre support or something else?

Emma Jayne Park: The purpose needs to be broad, and I do not think that any of the things that you have mentioned are mutually exclusive. That is part of the issue that I regularly face: my practice is quite broad, and I am asked to place it in silos. Furthermore, if I am working with a community practice, that can be seen as something other than artistic excellence, which is a huge problem.

For me, public arts funding is about believing in the arts and culture and their contribution to a society. It is about funding artists to do their job, which is to make art, and it is about funding a range of artists to make that art. Some of them will make art in an area of social justice, and some will make art for art's sake. At the moment, there is, as sometimes happens, a lack of public support, and that is because of the confusion arising from the fact that no one can tie down what the strategy or the aim is in relation to public funding for art.

I say that because my family and I regularly have the potholes argument, which, as you know, goes, "Why are we funding arts when we should be sorting the potholes in the road?" People in my family do not go to arts events. I am one of those anomalous people who works in this area but who did not grow up around arts and culture in the way that I now experience them. I see their benefits, but the difficulty is that my parents, for example, do not understand what my job is. That is all about visibility, and it is difficult to be visible when your life is spent sitting in closed rooms, writing applications and securing funding instead of being out on the ground, doing what you do and talking about it. For the next 10 years, the role of public arts funding should be to make arts and culture and their place in society more visible. Only once that work has been done can we move the discussion on with regard to what that role should be.

10:30

The Convener: From your point of view, what would make things easier in the short term?

Emma Jayne Park: It would help if there was a little more faith in artists. Things very quickly come back to the issue of money. On a personal level and from what my peers have said, I know that having a very small, but regular, salary would

make our lives easier, because we could then plan appropriately. However, I think that it comes down not to money, but to resource, partnership, opportunity and lots of things that are not about just throwing more money at the problem. We could throw lots of money at the arts tomorrow, but that would not fix the inherent issues that we face. It is about having the time to get on and do my job.

A lot of people who have been around me when I have been doing my job know that, although I sit in rooms such as this one, even though I feel really uncomfortable, and although I send in applications—I am quite fortunate that over a number of years I have trained myself to do so—I have the greatest impact when I am in a room with people, doing the thing that I do. That might be when I am in a rehearsal room at the Royal Lyceum theatre, working as a movement director and bringing a show together, or when I am working in a prison reform unit with young men who do not think that the arts have anything to do with them. It might look as though we are just making cups of tea and having a doddle about but, by the end of our time together, we will have worked on a lot of interpersonal skills and talked about the benefits of creative output.

Being able to get on and do my job would make the difference for me. That might be about having a salary and being able to pay myself to do the work so that I do not have that worry, or it might be about having doors opened to me. I would like to get on and do my job, but quite often I cannot do that. A couple of recent projects were absolutely supported—I was very lucky that last year was the year of young people—so they were free. However, when I walked into three other institutions to offer free arts projects to the young people in the area, people were not interested because they thought that they might disrupt their everyday lives. If we cannot give away these kinds of projects for free, it shows that we have a huge problem in relation to public buy-in and the visibility of what we are doing.

The Convener: Does that resonate with you, Katriona?

Katriona Holmes: Yes. This is an interesting question for me, because I have gained quite a bit of arts funding for projects that I have worked on, but I am also involved in promoting a music and arts festival, which generates some of its own income. A lot of the conversation around arts funding is about diversifying income streams, creating social enterprises and bringing in our own income. People say, "If people don't want to see it, why put it on? If it's not selling tickets, why do we need it?" That is where arts funding comes in; new art needs to be made, risks need to be taken and artists need to be able to experiment and break new ground.

Having a good arts sector and good artists is important for society, for our culture and for who we are and who we can be in the future. The inspiration behind designs, businesses and so on starts with poor artists doing crazy work, which later becomes the norm. Arts funding is really important for the experimental and risky work that audiences perhaps do not go to see, because where else will artists get funding for that? Nowhere.

The other point is that funding needs to benefit society. People from all parts of society, including those from different socioeconomic and more diverse backgrounds, need to be seen to be enjoying the arts, so there is an argument that arts funding should enable all parts of society to experience more accessible art forms, such as the Knockengoroch music festival, which I promote, or children's theatres. Arts funding should facilitate people going to see things that they might not normally go to see.

The Convener: In your submission, you made a number of practical suggestions about how funding could be adapted to make things easier for artists and cultural freelancers. You suggested, for example, that there could be a formal way of recognising freelancers who have a track record and have been proven to deliver. Would you like to expand on that?

Katriona Holmes: The regularly funded organisations are cultural organisations that do great work, have been doing it for a long time and are trusted to deliver it. However, there is no equivalent for individuals, whether they be individual artists, producing artists or creative producers. That is a whole area in itself, but a lot of independent individuals who work in the cultural sector do not have any long-term or formal support for what they do. They exist hand to mouth and project to project.

It is part of what happens in the arts that people work on a project and then it is over, but that means that, in difficult times, artists can go under, because they are not bringing anything in. One of those difficult times might be when you have a child, because you will not be able to get out there and network, to meet people and other artists or to develop in your head ideas for projects. You cannot get out there and you cannot make an income—and once you are out of the race, you lose your momentum and your contacts.

Just before I had my baby three years ago, three or four people asked me if I wanted to work on a project, and I had to say no to all of them. Three years later, those people have gone, and it is almost as if I am starting again. I have not lost everything, but I am having to pick myself up and get out there all over again. I am determined to stay with what I do, because I love it so much and

I think it is really important, but it would be quite easy for me just to get an easier and more straightforward job that does not involve so much risk.

The Convener: Thank you.

I think that we now have Kirsten Gow on the videolink. Can you hear us, Kirsten?

Kirsten Gow: I can hear you. Can you hear me?

The Convener: We can hear you—that is great. Welcome, and thank you for attending this morning.

We will move on to questions from Claire Baker. I should say that we do not have a lot of time, and we have already lost some.

Claire Baker: Earlier we had a discussion about diversity within the arts. Emma Jayne Park, you work as an artist as well as working in prisons and the social sector; last week, we heard about the model of the artist working on their own work as well as working in other sectors, but it was suggested that that might not be the solution, as not all artists will want to do that. Such a mixed approach might not suit some people. Can you comment on diversity in the arts? I know that Emma Jayne was at the cross-party group on culture, and she has talked about women's representation.

We have also had representations from the BME community on difficulty in gaining funding, and the previous panel told us about the generation gap in the arts and those who can afford to participate as artists. Do you have any comments on that? How could we in Scotland try to address some of those issues?

Emma Jayne Park: There are quite a few things to unpack in those questions. I am around a lot of artists who do different things, and I have a community practice, because I am genuinely driven to do that and because—I would argue—I thrive when I do it. A massive part of my practice is the fact that it is so broad.

I have been around a lot of artists who make unbelievable and brilliant art. If you drive these people to work in these environments as part of some tick-box exercise or because it is trendy to have community participation, you will end up putting people off art really quickly, because you will have the wrong person doing the job. It is as simple as that.

We need balance in our strategy so that we can have art for art's sake, because that sort of art makes a huge impact. I speak as someone from a working-class background who did not have access to any art of the sort that my parents would say is "Just people weirdin about". It was what I

needed in my life; I stumbled on it by accident, and it is unbelievable.

As Katriona Holmes said, it is impossible to sell people tickets to things if they do not know that they exist, which brings me back to my point about visibility. We cannot have diversity in the arts if we do not give everyone access to all these weird and wonderful things and have the right people in the job to deliver them.

It is important that we do not put unfair pressure on artists to be something that they are not. That ties into lots of different conversations, whether they be about application writing or all the entrepreneurial skills that people celebrate. I have had to learn those skills. I am not very good at them and they cause me massive amounts of stress and are responsible for some deep-rooted mental health issues and concerns. My whole family know when I am writing an application, because I am a nightmare. It is not what I am programmed to do; I have just learned to do it. We do a disservice to the arts if we put people into positions where they have to do a job that they are not cut out to do.

Claire Baker: There is a balance between management jobs in culture and artists. It was suggested last week that there should be capacity within the arts organisations that are funded by Creative Scotland to support artists to write applications. Do you agree?

Emma Jayne Park: I think that that is a possibility. Some organisations do that extremely well. It is a fallacy to use the word “organisation” in the context of arts organisations; there is a hierarchy of organisations, which have different purposes, and it seems foolish, at best, to ask them to work at cross-purposes.

It is a question of people knowing what they are doing and doing it very well and, if they are doing it well, supporting them to do more of it. Imagine that is an organisation that I would herald. I was fortunate to be part of its accelerator programme. It involves artists submitting a two-page document about their artistic idea in which they talk about their art—which is, of course, the thing that artists can do. Four of those people were invited to discuss their ideas, along with a couple of producers; budgets were written; they were given help to look at their projects; and two of those projects were funded. My project was not, because what I wanted to do was far beyond the financial support that Imagine that could provide. The best thing that happened to me was being told, “Please don’t scale down what you’re doing to meet our resources, because the art will suffer.” I was then supported to get some form of funding to move forward with that project. It would be really useful if organisations like that could be supported to do more of those things.

It is not helpful when organisations feel that they have to support artists just to tick a box. It means that, when I turn up as an artist, I know that no one really wants me there and there is not a lot of investment in my being there. I might be given a room and a very small subsidy. In dance, which is one of my key art forms, that often results in a lot of solo work. There has been a massive kickback in terms of programming dance, because a lot of what is being done is solo work. The reason for that is that many residencies for people to develop their work come with a £500 a week bursary, which is one person’s fee. That means that people just work on their own, which I would argue does not make the best art. If someone cannot see the work that they are doing, I am not sure that they will be totally able to judge the quality of it—there need to be other people in the room. There have been a lot of thoughts about the situation, but it is acknowledged that some organisations are just not cut out to do those things, nor is it their aim to do them, so I do not think that we should force them to.

There is a real struggle with diversity, particularly with women’s representation, and I speak as a white woman from a working-class background. I hear a lot of people saying, “We need to gender balance these programmes by getting women into theatre.” That sort of chat has been happening for years. For me, having a gender balance is quite straightforward—it means programming between 45 and 50 per cent male writers and male directors and stopping once that quota has been hit. I do not know why that is so complex. Artists who work outwith the gender binary face far greater issues, and it leads to further complications, because we have not provided enough support for those artists to have profiles. There is work to be done there.

As far as women’s representation is concerned, there are women clawing the door down. There are lists online of female writers and directors. I am unsure why some of the regularly funded organisations are still struggling to meet the gender balance requirement and are not being held to account for that.

Claire Baker: Would Katriona Holmes or Kirsten Gow like to comment on diversity issues?

Kirsten Gow: I echo what Emma Jayne Park said about supporting artists to write applications, and I also agree that not every artist wants to run workshops or to participate in community arts. That should not be the only route to funding.

Going back to the point about supporting people in writing applications, I think that we need to consider that in relation to not just artists, but voluntary groups. I have worked with a lot of voluntary committees. One example is the bunch of volunteers at the Scottish Glass Society, who

had some really good ideas and potential but did not know the steps to access the next level of support and funding that could be available to them to develop projects. I have done quite a lot of work with them.

10:45

We need to give people access to specialists who can help them not only to write really good applications, but with the stage before that, which is about teasing out whether a project requires an application. Is it a good idea that they could do in some other format, or is it a big project on which they could benefit from some extra support?

That support would also help with the diversity of applications that come in to funders, because we would be reliant not just on the people who already have the skills and knowledge to make applications. If the problem is that there is not enough diversity, what do we need to do in order to get that diversity? We need to support people to whom making applications does not come naturally. They can be people from minority groups, but they can also be small groups of volunteers and committees who are doing something good that could go much further with a little bit of paid extra input and help from a specialist to develop the project.

Katriona Holmes: I agree. What about the invisible work that has to be done before a funding application can be put in? Who does that work and how is it paid for? As a creative producer, I do a lot of that work, and the cost is never really reimbursed. If you are lucky, you get the funding for the project, and maybe you can try to factor in a small fee for the pre-work, but it is not an official thing in the funding application. You cannot write in a bit for the work that you did beforehand—and that is if you get the funding. If you do not get it, that invisible work was done for nothing.

Of course, the support might not just be financial; it might take the form of provision of work spaces for freelancers, such as communal work spaces, or childcare, which others have mentioned. However, although support does not always have to be financial, it would also be great if a low-level, basic amount of grant funding or something was available to people who regularly write applications.

I agree that such support would help people who do not understand the language or the way that projects need to be developed before they are ready for funding. I come across quite a lot of people who have great ideas, but great ideas are the very first step on a long journey, and a lot of professional skills are required before people even get to apply for funding. If there was a way to support artists and producers in that regard, that

would be helpful, and it would also help to diversify applications, because we would not get just professionals applying. We would get all sorts of other people who might not normally be able to do that kind of thing.

Emma Jayne Park: We need to support the people who feel that they do not belong in the room, which brings me back to the issue of visibility. I am from a working-class background, and when I go back to where I am from, people regularly say to me, “You actually work as a dancer? Shut up!” I say, “I’ve genuinely done this for 12 years.” I recently started a programme in Dumfries and Galloway that involves working with young people who think that they might want to move into dance, and my just being there on the ground is genuinely shocking to them. My visibility makes it possible for them to think that that might be an option and an avenue.

As for people of colour or people with a visible disability—who sometimes cannot even get into the building; it is embarrassing that that is still happening in 2019—I cannot imagine what it feels like for them to turn up to the room and it looks like they do not belong there. That is why we need to invest in a lot of artists from a variety of backgrounds and send them back out into their communities to say, “You belong in these rooms, so come and be in them.”

That also leads to the issue of language. I am knuckle-headedly against training people to understand the language. We talk about having to justify public funding, but if the artists themselves do not understand the language that is required to secure public subsidy, how can my mum and dad, sitting at home, understand the language that artists use? It needs to be stripped back—we need to talk in plain English instead of dressing everything up in aspirations, jargon and nonsense. That would allow us to cut out a bunch of training that is not needed in the first place and which—I mean this in a kind way—just makes people feel cleverer than they are. It is an odd thing to want when, historically, art was a cultural need and genuinely for everyone.

Alexander Stewart: We have talked about the lack of transparency in funding. There are strategies at Creative Scotland level, at Scottish Government level and at local authority level. How co-ordinated should they be? We have already heard evidence from various people that there is a lack of co-ordination. Some councils have completely removed their creative and cultural sections; other bodies try to support specific areas, whether drama, dance or community arts. If there was ring fencing or real co-ordination, what impact would that make?

Katriona Holmes: Obviously, local authorities are in an excellent position because they are close

to the nub of the matter. They know their regional audiences and the types of issue that there might be in a region, and we hope that they know the artists, producers or organisations that deliver the work. I am lucky enough to have got funding from local authorities, which has been very useful, but I have found that the amounts have been relatively low and the level of reporting has been relatively high.

Local authorities possibly have a tendency to be more bureaucratic, because that is how councils work. When we do that amount of reporting for a small amount of money, we have to question whether it is worth it. I love the fact that local authorities are able to offer funding, but it is very important that they are aware of how much reporting they ask for: ridiculous amounts of financial monitoring are required for tiny amounts of grants. We are sitting there, splitting the pounds and the pennies. It comes back to working with trusted people. If you trust an organisation, a producer or a project manager to deliver a project, although you will not just let them go without asking for some sort of reporting, to a degree, you need to trust them to deliver that work. Depending on the size of the grant, you could look at having lighter evaluation and reporting for smaller grants.

National funders such as Creative Scotland are at an advantage, because they see the international and national aspects. Although they should not ignore regional needs, they have an overview. Communication between national funders such as Creative Scotland and local authorities is important if they are to cover all the strategic aims. The role of local authorities might be more to do with audience participation and reaching new audiences and socioeconomic backgrounds, while the role of Creative Scotland might be more to do with risky art forms. It is a good idea for them to take different aspects of the things that arts funding should do and make sure that everything is covered.

Emma Jayne Park: Any communication at all sounds like a dream. The idea of co-ordinated strategies sounds brilliant. I hate to say it, because I believe in public funding of the arts, but I have to question the strategies. In the past five years, I have read a lot of strategy. I am frequently handed aspirational comments and lots of things that people aspire to; however, if I wrote those things in a Creative Scotland funding application, it would be rejected, because I am told that the strategy must involve my telling you what I am going to do, the detail of how I am going to do it and what the impact will be—even if it is something that has never been done before. I read a lot of strategy that is so broad and overwhelmingly aspirational that it means nothing.

I am a recipient of Creative Scotland's new strategic touring fund for theatre and dance, although I do not think that the fund has a strategy. I applied with a strategy for the project in Dumfries and Galloway, and I was pleased to receive that funding. However, if we hone in on what a strategy is, it will be easier for people to co-ordinate. If I tell you that I want to drink that glass of water, and you agree that you want me to drink that glass of water, we can get on board and figure out how I will do that and the best way to do that.

When it comes to co-ordination, my fear is that more money will be spent on conversations. In those situations, there is often more talking than action, which is worrying when I know that, at the bottom of it, people are not being paid. We also need to look at strategy in the long term and the short term. I will come back to the regularly funded organisations in relation to that.

Within the portfolio, there are organisations that are not going to be rejected for funding. I worked at the Royal Lyceum Theatre and I love it dearly. As we saw in the most recent round of funding, if, tomorrow, you turn around and say that you are not going to fund the Lyceum, there will be public outcry. However, some organisations have to go through the application every three years and report excessively all the time. I wonder whether they could spend that time with artists like me or just have more budget to bring artists in to pursue their projects. Regularly funded organisations also have to cut budgets wherever they can. Smaller organisations that are new to the RFO portfolio are, arguably, less stable. I do not think that there is a great long-term strategy in place, and, without a long-term strategy, the short-term strategy is pointless.

Bringing that back to people, as an artist, I am allowed to think only in short-term strategy. I am allowed to think only from project to project, no matter how much I join the dots. If I join the dots too much, I am told that I cannot be funded again, because I have already been funded to do something. If I am talking about building visibility for dance in Dumfries and Galloway, that is not happening in six months—it is not happening in three years, to be brutally honest. I worry that, if there is co-ordination before there is strategy, we end up with a lot of talk and money spent on cups of tea instead of stuff happening.

Kirsten Gow: Going back to Katriona's point, funding at a local authority level is extremely variable. Some local authorities do it excellently. However, given the range of pressures on local authorities these days, the cuts that they are being asked to make and the general political background, it is unsurprising that it is not a priority for other local authorities. In the vast majority of cases, we should not be asking local

authorities to be the guardians of art in their local areas.

I live in Argyll and Bute, which has a diverse range of geographies. I am on Jura today, and 230 people live on the island. Recently, I was in a consultation on fuel poverty and people were talking about how to make the data that comes through about the area granular enough to understand whether national initiatives are working in all areas of Argyll and Bute. People accept that Argyll and Bute, as a whole, is a tricky beast to cover, because it has such diverse areas. People agree that mid-Argyll, Kintyre and Islay—MAKI—is still diverse, and somebody suggested breaking the region down into housing association areas. The region covers Islay, Jura and Colonsay. Other than because of the fact that they sit together, we would never group those islands together in any universe. When it comes to economy, population and access to services, they are very different.

The difficulty is that people often believe that the problem is solved and that, if we put the funding out to local authorities, it is truly local; however, the geography of Scotland is much more diverse than that. It is one of the reasons why I would champion—

Temporary loss of sound.

That would allow an arts facilitator based on an island at an ultra-local level—not funded for Islay, Jura and Colonsay or Islay and Jura but, for example, funded for Jura—to say, “I just want a little pot of money so that I can help other artists here.” They would almost end up being a funder through another funder. They could get funding from Creative Scotland and use that funding for various initiatives, including group training, grants to enable people to access professional development skills and a whole range of stuff. It is crucial that the focus is ultra local. I have lived in big cities and on very small islands, and I know that it is common for people to think, “This is how we should serve that small, remote area because that is how all small, remote areas should be served.” However, everywhere has different needs and opportunities, and, for me, the data at the local authority level is not granular enough.

11:00

If an organisation claims to be a national organisation that offers national coverage, it must genuinely be national. I do not have a problem if an organisation says that reaching all the islands is a bit difficult, so it will call itself a mainland organisation. At least that is honest. However, if an organisation says that it is a national one, it is really important that a funder or a funding stream shows that it is proactively trying to engage with outlying areas. That can be done through creating

its own networks and its own engagement in communities. We should not rely on local authorities.

Alexander Stewart: If a strategy or an initiative is not working effectively, can you tap into new wellbeing, health, social or community priorities to engage and get the money that is required for your community?

Kirsten Gow: Possibly. However, I work quite closely with community development workers here, and an extra day a week—I am not kidding you—of considering what is relevant and what can be applied for will be involved. Extra work will be involved—we all accept that. Because we live in remote rural communities and do not have access to absolutely everything, there should be a recognition that extra work is involved.

A joined-up approach is lacking. Both of the other witnesses have talked about getting a little bit of funding here and there, funding for the short term and so on. Everybody has different priorities. People can end up with a pile of administrative work on their desk and working really hard for a really small amount of money.

I will give you an example. I applied for funding for projects that were supposed to be for the Argyll islands, and I was recently offered some. I applied using a large chunk of pro bono time—I refuse to call it volunteer time; professional services were involved, so it was pro bono time. I was offered around 85 per cent of the funding that was applied for—that was around £900 for a £4,000 project. The amount of administrative work that went into getting that—the amount of administration that was wanted from us and the number of hoops that we had to jump through for £900—was just ridiculous, and we ended up turning it down. We said that we wanted to rethink the project and consider whether there was a better funder to apply to.

There are other opportunities out there, but they are not necessarily joined up. We have to please several people, and there will be a bunch of administration.

Alexander Stewart: I know that time is tight, so I will stop there.

Ross Greer: There were suggestions in the written evidence, including, I think, in Katriona Holmes’s submission, about a universal basic income and how it could potentially help to support artists—particularly individual artists—in Scotland. Will Katriona Holmes expand on her written evidence, and would the other witnesses like to say something about what role a basic income might play, particularly now that we are heading towards four trials in Scotland?

Katriona Holmes: Heading towards what, sorry?

Ross Greer: Four trials; we have four local authorities that will trial a universal basic income in the next couple of years.

Katriona Holmes: I do not remember mentioning a universal basic income—I am not that knowledgeable about it—but I probably talked about some basic income coming in for freelancers to support gaps between projects or development time for creative ideas, research or working things up on paper.

The people involved would have to be established in the sector and trusted to be part of the regularly funded individuals idea; rather than regularly funded organisations, I suggested the RFI idea, which would recognise people with a proven track record over a number of years who have successfully obtained funding on many occasions.

Having been successful myself in getting funding from Creative Scotland, I am aware that those who are successful in that way get the money and then the Creative Scotland people just go. On some levels, that is great, because you do not want people interfering with you delivering the creative project, but when I come to my project evaluation, I sometimes wonder who reads it, what they do with the information and whether that information will come back to reflect on me. I hope so, because I usually feel proud of my projects and take time over my evaluations. However, I wonder how that comes back to me and how I am known in the cultural sector or by the funders.

I have also worked on the funding side. I gave out the new arts sponsorship grants when I worked with Arts & Business Scotland, and I remember that when an application came in from somebody you knew who had been working in the culture sector in Scotland for a long time, you still read and assessed it, but you felt a certain reassurance and it was much more likely to go through. That is just a fact. When I first started doing that work and was less au fait with the cultural sector, I would ask, “Why is that application getting through more easily than this one?” The reason was that the successful application was from a trusted person who had been working in the cultural sector and delivering projects for a while. The newbies maybe have to build up that trust.

On Ross Greer’s original point, if we can find a way to recognise and trust certain individuals who have worked in the cultural sector for a long time, perhaps there is an argument for a very basic income. I watched the committee meeting on 30 May, when Harry Josephine Giles said that the dole used to support lots of artists and that many

artists got started because there was social security for them. It was unrecognised and a small amount, but it made that difference. There is a case for a universal basic income for artists.

Ross Greer: Before others come in, I will follow up on your point about the administration of that being about recognising individuals who have delivered. Is there a tension between that and the sector not being nearly as diverse as it should be, which we have just discussed, so that the idea of trusted individuals is skewed towards older, white, privileged men—the folk who have consistently got funding?

Katriona Holmes: There is an issue there, and it has to be looked at and balanced up. Having been in a funder’s shoes, I know that, whenever you give money to a person, there is a certain amount of trust. When new applications came in, we did not know the applicant from Adam. We read what they said and found as much information on them as we could. However, at the end of the day, a funder hands over a lump sum of public money and does not know whether the project going to be delivered. There is a certain amount of risk, but funders have to be able to award money to new people.

Maybe we could look at two approaches. One would recognise people who have done back-breaking work for years in the sector to get to the point that they have reached. They are not all old, white, middle-class, privileged men—take Emma Jayne Park and me, for example—although I agree that a lot of them might be. The other approach would look at how to diversify and support newer people who cannot speak the funding language, even by starting them with smaller grants and working up as the delivery and trust grow. I do not have an easy answer, but the idea definitely needs to be looked at.

Kirsten Gow: I am a long-term supporter of the idea of a universal basic income. My take is slightly different from that of Katriona Holmes. Over the past few days, I have spoken to quite a few people about where funding would have helped them in their creative careers. One of the biggest gaps is when people move from being a student to being an established artist. I certainly know that my time in college allowed me to take risks and to spend time investing in my art, but that suddenly stopped after I left. At that point I thought, “Oh—okay; it’s not as though I have an accountancy qualification and can get a job as an accountant now; I pretty much have to look at how I can work for myself as a glassmaker.”

Having a universal basic income would take a little bit of the pressure off people having to switch from doing the thing in which they have trained and invested a lot of time and effort to making money from it in order to pay their rent and eat, as

well as fund additional opportunities such as submitting to an exhibition, attending an event or getting further training. A universal basic income model for people who are just starting out would help to plug the gap.

I work closely with people who work in arts and voluntary organisations and who do a lot of pro bono work on top of their paid work. It is great that they do that and that they have passion, but that leads to burn-out. If people were able to work one fewer day a week, that would give them a little bit more headspace to have a life and to do more pro bono work, and I think that you would find that there would be more engagement from and greater diversity among those involved in the arts and community projects and those working as artists themselves.

I do not know a huge amount about the French example, but I think that we can learn something from it. If people can show that they are making a concerted effort to work as an artist, practitioner or creative freelancer, there should be some support that helps them to make their work sustainable.

Emma Jayne Park: I echo everything that everyone else has said, funnily enough. I think that it is clear that a universal basic income would support artists, particularly in relation to their wellbeing. Most of the freelance artists I know who are on the ground making things happen are absolutely falling apart. I am permanently exhausted, largely because I work too much. Last month, I worked on some very worthwhile projects. On average—I now measure how many hours I work—I was doing about 13 and a half hours a day. At best, I will have made £1,600, after all other costs are taken into account. However, that does not take account of the pro bono work that I did to enable those projects to happen. The situation is really unhealthy.

A basic income would also support artists to buy tickets in order to support other art and reinvest in the sector. A lot of the time, I have to scab a ticket from a friend, because I do not have enough money to buy one. A basic income would also support audiences. One big issue is that people—I see this particularly in relation to working-class audiences—do not have the time or the money to consume art. If we are not making art that people can get to, I do not know why we are making it.

Overall, a basic income would free up people's time and give them the headspace to really engage with things, which would be brilliant. It could free up other resources, too. We talk about money a lot, but we could talk about a lot of stuff—it does not have to be about money. Rural touring is an example. If you can get rural communities to invest in art, there could be free accommodation for the entire touring group, because people just want to hang out with artists. I think that that would

happen everywhere. Right now, a lot of people are having to subsidise their life by renting a room. Artists would save a lot of money if they were not having to pay costs in a lot of areas. Try making work in Aberdeen, for example. You spend more money on hotel rooms than on artists, unless you are willing to make work at the weekends when the prices go down, which is all very odd.

11:15

A basic income would add to quality. There is an organisation in Sweden called the Swedish dancers alliance—I think that it exists in multiple art forms—which is like a universal basic income that dancers can receive at times when they are not employed. That means that, in the periods when they are not employed, they can train and make sure that they keep on top of their craft. One of the biggest issues that I face is that, when I am not doing the thing and getting better at it, I am doing something totally different. When I step back into it, I am always really nervous because I wonder whether I have forgotten how to do it. Also, I am not physically on top of my game because I have spent hours doing other things.

If the quality of art improves, I think that engagement with art will improve; that seems like a no-brainer. To come back to diversity, we would need to have a massive look at who is assessing quality. There are huge gaps in diversity in the arts because the decision makers do not necessarily understand the lived experience of artists and the people for whom they make art. There are multiple things that I could refer to on that.

There has been a series of reviews of events at the take me somewhere festival written by white middle-class reviewers about work by artists of colour. The reviewers seem to have missed the boat heavily and have given the events low star ratings. That can have a real effect. I worked on "Twelfth Night" at the Royal Lyceum and nine out of 10 of our reviews were by middle-class white men who did not understand the need to gender-swap one of the roles in the production. As a young and—I would perhaps say—quite bolshie woman, I wished that I had seen a woman play Lady Toby Belch when I was a child, because it gave me permission to be lots of things. Only one female reviewer cottoned on to the importance of those things.

On looking at a universal basic income and supporting diversity, we need to support diversity in all the wraparound stuff, too, so that we do not end up with people who do not have all the information making the decisions and assessing the impact on quality.

The Convener: Before we move on, I ask that questions and answers are as concise as possible. We are very tight for time.

Kenneth Gibson: I will be quick. We have talked a lot about diversity, to which there are number of aspects. One is the genres in the artistic world. On the panel today, we have people who are in creative production, dance and glass making. Some of the people who have made submissions to the committee have expressed the concern that the distribution of funding across the different genres is not equitable. What does the panel think about that? Is funding biased towards certain genres, or is it well balanced? If it is not balanced, how would you resolve the matter? For example, should there be ring-fenced funding for specific genres, if that were possible, or should it be based on quality? How would you resolve that conundrum, if it exists?

Katriona Holmes: Creative Scotland has heads of departments for the different arts. I am a bit torn, because I can see why there is a feeling that covering everything in one big open fund is too much. It is not just about art forms, but about sizes of organisations and whether those are artists organisations or networking organisations. I am in favour of breaking down arts silos a bit. The issue is particularly relevant to me because I promote a multi-arts festival. I am aware that certain things about that multi-arts festival will not fit into any of the departments in Creative Scotland, because they are not music or art, but music and art, or something that does not fit neatly into any one department. I like the mixing of silos, but I understand that in certain art forms there may be a concern that more is going to one than another.

Emma Jayne Park: It is really complicated. There is more of some stuff than others, which is historical and we would need to look at that history. Text-based performance is arguably more accessible than some other performance forms, but that is because of the way that it is taught in school. The way that we are taught to engage with text is a bit more solid, so there may be a question there. Also, some things cannot exist in the way that others can. That was one of the questions for the strategic touring fund. It suggested that to make an application artists should have a minimum of 12 venues to which they thought they would tour the work. However, that is not possible for an aerial artist, because there are not necessarily 12 venues that can take an aerial rig. We need to sit back a little, which is where I would hope that a national funder could step in and say, "We have looked at what exists and what we want more of, and we are going to direct funding to that without letting other things slip."

Kirsten Gow: I agree with the national funder looking at what exists and what else could exist.

There is perhaps an opportunity to take a health check, look across the country and ask how we feel about the provision of theatre versus the provision of visual arts versus the provision of more craft-based arts such as ceramics and glass. In order to answer that question, we need to do a health check and ask why some areas are thriving more than other areas.

On whether there should be organisations that look after specific genres of artists, there can be positives to that. However, some areas will need more support than others. Some areas, traditionally, are more reliant on volunteers. If you suddenly said to the Scottish Glass Society, "We are going to let you look after the glass sector in Scotland—here is some money to do that," it would not have the skills to do that straight away. I am not against allowing genre-based support from specific organisations, but money needs to come with backing, training and support.

Jamie Greene: We are short on time, so I will try something different and ask you some yes/no questions. That will help me, because a lot has been said and I have some specific questions. I will fire them at you. Feel free to respond.

Do you think that applying for funding has become a box-ticking exercise that is about what is trendy? Do you say that you will do something that is aimed at a certain audience because that is what is in this year, so you are more likely to get money, although it does not truly reflect the value of the art that the funding is required for?

Emma Jayne Park: I do not think that that is a yes/no question.

At the base level, my answer is no, it has not become a box-ticking exercise. There are people who want it to be more than that. At the top level, my answer is possibly yes.

Katriona Holmes: My overall answer is no, but there is a zeitgeist thing. If something is in, we have a feeling that the application is more likely to be successful if we can tap into it. However, a lot of people who really care and know about their art forms are sitting in funded seats, so my answer is no.

Kirsten Gow: I agree with the other witnesses.

Jamie Greene: That leads nicely to my next question. At our evidence session on 30 May, we heard from some folk who said that they lie on the forms because they need the money. They also said that the application process is often geared to make them fail from the outset. They cannot answer all the questions because they physically do not have the information or because creative people are not always great at forecasting revenues or audience numbers for shows, for example.

Should the application process change? Should it be less one size fits all and more tailored to different art forms?

Katriona Holmes: Sometimes we have to be slightly creative with the truth, because funders ask for information that we do not yet have, especially when the project is at the early development stage. They ask questions to which we do not know the answers because the project has not yet got to that point. However, as I mentioned in my submission, a two-stage process might help us cut down on having to be so creative with the truth, because we would not be asked for so much information so early on in the process.

Emma Jayne Park: Creative Scotland is particularly good at getting us to go back to it to say, "This is what we predicted but the information has changed." The difficulty lies in the fact that few people know that they have permission to do that. That is where it feels as though there is a lack of transparency. Once people are aware that they can say, "I said that we would reach 100 people but now that we have moved on with the project, we have realised that it is for an intimate audience of two," that is fine. We are told to feed that back.

Kirsten Gow: I agree that a two-stage application process would help. I would not say that I have ever been creative with the truth on an application form, but I have a different perspective on it. I recognise that I do not have a crystal ball any more than the next person does. It is not just arts and creative people who cannot forecast revenue or audience numbers; nobody can. As long as there is a recognition that it is an estimate, I see that not as being creative with the truth but as being as honest as I can be.

Jamie Greene: I appreciate your honesty.

On Monday, someone commented to me that, at the moment, funding is dictating the art and not the other way round. Do the witnesses agree or disagree with that assessment?

Katriona Holmes: I do not agree. Although there are definitely challenges in the funding environment, funding is not dictating the arts—there are a lot of people with integrity in the sea.

Emma Jayne Park: Although there are people with integrity, I agree with the statement, because we have a sector in which the only people who have long-term employment opportunities work in administrative positions or positions of power, or are funders. There is no such role for an artist, and that will be the way that it is until that balance is reached.

Kirsten Gow: If I consider the whole swathe of funding that is available, not just the funding that is available from one particular funder, I agree with the statement. I often see people deciding to put a

project on the back burner until a fund that is relevant to the project—for which they had the idea three years ago—comes up, which they can apply for. It is ridiculous that people have to wait that time for a specific project funding stream to come up. However, I know of instances where people have had to do that, and I therefore lean towards agreeing with the statement that, at the moment, the art fits the funding rather than the other way round.

Annabelle Ewing: I thank you all for coming today—it is great that we also have Kirsten Gow live on videoconference from Jura.

I could ask lots of questions but we are running out of time. I will therefore ask one quick question. We have heard that making an application is very time intensive. How quickly do witnesses tend to hear back? What is the length of the process from start to finish? Somebody on the previous panel said that it could take three weeks to make an application. How long does it take?

Emma Jayne Park: It depends on the funder. Open project funding takes eight weeks for a grant of less than £15,000.

Annabelle Ewing: Is that eight weeks to hear back?

Emma Jayne Park: It takes eight weeks from the application being accepted—and 12 weeks for a grant of more than £15,000. The touring fund has a much quicker turnaround; it is fairly speedy compared to a lot of things. With other funders, it can be from three to six months.

Kirsten Gow: It took two years—using pro bono and volunteer time—to develop the application for the Scottish Glass Society funding that I recently got. We were supposed to hear back within three months but I think that the timescale was slightly longer than that.

That gap could be addressed by microfunding with quicker turnaround times. For example, just the other day, I was invited to attend something at the end of this month. I need to find £250 from somewhere to cover a couple of nights of accommodation plus all my travel. That is additional cost for me. The chances of finding funding to help me to cover that within the timescale of a couple of weeks is minimal, because there is nothing with that turnaround time at the moment.

Katriona Holmes: I have never been able to develop a project in three weeks. It is not just about getting quotes from people and putting numbers down; it is about talking to artists, developing ideas and building a whole project. It takes from six months to a year—at minimum—to develop a project, and it can take up to two years.

Annabelle Ewing: It sounds like a very cumbersome process at the micro end of activity, with a lot of time being wasted on bureaucracy, which uses resources.

Katriona Holmes: It is also exciting, because the development of the project is part of the creative process—it just takes time.

Emma Jayne Park: Another point is that timelines do not add up, so an artist really struggles to get ahead of themselves. All that I ever wanted to do was get ahead of myself. Unfortunately—in lots of ways—I was very ill and had to delay a project for almost a year. I thought that I was finally a year ahead, that I could plan the next project and that it would be plain sailing. However, that was not the case—if an artist is too far ahead of themselves, their funding application will be rejected, because something that is happening sooner is seen as a priority. An artist therefore cannot ever get into a stable funding turnaround where they can plan long term. That leads me back to strategy—artists cannot have one.

Kirsten Gow: It is cumbersome and takes time to develop a project. However, I do not want people to think that it is horrible. I love that part of the process—looking at the potential, how it could work and the impact that it could have. However, it takes time, and there is a lack of support for that stage of the project. I love that part of the job, but I do not get paid very much for it.

The Convener: Thank you. We have to stop there as we are almost at half past 11. I thank all three witnesses for giving evidence; it has been very helpful to our inquiry.

11:30

Meeting continued in private until 11:32.

This is a draft *Official Report* and is subject to correction between publication and archiving, which will take place no later than 35 working days after the date of the meeting. The most up-to-date version is available here:
www.parliament.scot/officialreport

Members and other meeting participants who wish to suggest corrections to their contributions should contact the Official Report.

Official Report
Room T2.20
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Email: official.report@parliament.scot
Telephone: 0131 348 5447
Fax: 0131 348 5423

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

Friday 5 July 2019

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers
is available here:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
Email: sp.info@parliament.scot



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba