



'The Time for the Arts'

**A submission from the
Arts Council of Northern Ireland
for the
Comprehensive Spending Review 2007
Executive Summary**

Updated April 2007

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in Northern Ireland takes place in the context of the ongoing reform of public administration which is bringing about unprecedented changes in the structures for the delivery of public services across central and local government.

This document sets out the Arts Council's proposal to the CSR for revenue funding for the arts. It includes outline plans supporting submissions previously made by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) on our behalf. Moreover, the proposal has been informed by an extensive consultation process with the arts sector and other key stakeholders as we sought to develop '*Creative Connections*' - our new five year plan for developing the arts 2007-2012 (see attached Annex). This was completed and launched on 29 January 2007 along with the Council's 3-year rolling corporate plan. Taken together these 2 documents summarise the Arts Council's proposals to develop the arts sector over the next 5 years and, in particular, during the period of the CSR.

We currently contribute to achieving government's priorities in the programmes that we undertake. Increased funding will ensure that, through the arts sector, we can deliver even more effectively on these priorities.

1.2 Key Messages

Now is ***the time for the arts*** in Northern Ireland to receive a more appropriate level of funding and greater equity with other regions in these islands.

- Per capita spend on the arts in Northern Ireland is the lowest across the UK and Ireland. This year, Northern Ireland received £6.13 per head of population compared with Scotland which received £11.93 and the Republic of Ireland the equivalent of £12.61.
- There is a substantial gap between what arts organisations require and what funding has been available. In the last three years alone, arts organisations have faced a shortfall of £5.6m.
- Our individual artists have also received limited support. Over 60% of applications have been turned down primarily due to lack of funds. Those to whom we offer support could genuinely benefit from greater investment.
- Nevertheless, we make a significant contribution to the achievement of government objectives:
 - Every £1 currently invested by the Arts Council returns over £3.60 into the local economy.
 - Arts funding maintains over 2000 jobs and is a significant contributor to employment within the creative industries sector.

- Our activities support the delivery of the ‘*Shared Future*’ agenda. Two thirds of arts activity supports cross community participation.
- We support the development of children and young people through a range of innovative programmes. 75,000 school children enjoyed arts workshops last year.
- Arts are good for health and aid recovery. 88% of people surveyed at the Mater Hospital, Belfast said that arts activity was beneficial. In a study in Chelsea & Westminster Hospital it reduced patient stay by one day.
- Northern Ireland's poets, writers and musicians have brought the region significant international acclaim including the Nobel Prize for Literature, the International Tchaikovsky Prize and even Oscars.
- Nine new arts centres have been built in the last ten years. With others under development, more investment is required to sustain them.

Therefore:

- We are seeking an increase in funding for the arts of £26m for the 2008-2011 CSR period.
- This extra funding will raise the level of per capita spend to an average of £11.55 per annum over the CSR period; it will introduce near parity funding and end the flat lining of arts funding that started in 2004/05.
- We can return 93% of new funding directly to the arts sector. The Arts Council already achieves excellent value for money by keeping operating costs to a minimum.

It is essential that Northern Ireland is seen to promote the arts consistently with the rest of the UK and Ireland. The arts are not just for London, Dublin, Liverpool, Cardiff, Cork and Glasgow: the people of Northern Ireland have the same cultural entitlement and levels of demand as their neighbours in these islands. Research we conducted revealed that 73% of respondents had attended an arts or cultural event within the last 12 months¹. This is directly comparable with participation levels in England.

1.3 What the extra £26m will deliver:

- A stronger creative industries sector by developing artists professionally, exploiting employment and business opportunities.
 - By delivering £3.66m, per annum, of funding to arts organisations and a further £350k for individual artists; by stabilising core arts organisations; by stimulating the market with a projected 400,000

¹ Stevenson, G (2004) Arts and Culture in Northern Ireland – 2004 Baseline Survey

additional arts attendances; by providing 10 high quality professional training placements in film, television and the music industry, and by encouraging specialist skills to remain within Northern Ireland.

- Increased confidence, improved behaviour and more positive attitudes to learning in our children and young people.
 - By delivering up to 332 projects which will impact on 15,790 children and young people and involve 156 artists.
- More confident and outward looking communities by enhancing the integration of migrants, tackling sectarianism and contributing to a more inclusive society.
 - By delivering 70 additional projects bringing new approaches to expressing cultural identity.
- Growth in cultural tourism by providing an on-line ticketing service for tourists; developing our people through welcome host training; and offering an enhanced visitor experience.
 - By delivering a single ticketing and information point; by increasing 'hits' to the combined websites by 10%; by training 150 front-of-house staff through the 3 stages of Welcome-Host; by developing 5 Cultural Trails.
- A more robust arts economy by stimulating private investment, enhancing opportunities for the public to buy art and, on an international level, attracting increased investment and visitors to Northern Ireland through developing a high international profile for the arts.
 - By participating in International Showcasing events – Smithsonian 2007 and Venice Biennale 2007, 2009 and 2011; by delivering a high quality tailored training programme on private investment; by providing c. £450,000 worth of sales through 'Own Art' and c.£400,000 worth of sales through Musical Instrument Incentive Scheme.

FINALLY, artists and arts organisations are at the heart of all of the above plans. It is imperative we invest in them to ensure that they do not simply survive but that they thrive and flourish.