

Education and Culture Committee
Scotland's Educational and Cultural Future
Culture Counts

Culture Counts welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Education and Culture Committee's call for written evidence.

Culture Counts is a unique group which brings together over 40 of Scotland's major umbrella bodies, groups, associations and national bodies across the arts, culture, heritage, screen and creative industries with the common aim of positively and progressively highlighting the value of culture. We believe that ***culture counts*** and aim to ensure that its importance is reflected in the stated policies and objectives of both the Scottish Government and local government.

In its first three years, the primary focus of the group has been on promoting the positive benefits of continued investment in arts, culture, heritage, screen and the creative industries. A number of key actions have taken place including contact with all MSPs, local authority councillors, a cultural hustings event and ongoing dialogue with Scottish Government and opposition culture spokespeople, civil servants and agencies such as Creative Scotland and VOCAL.

The arts, culture, heritage, screen and creative industries make a significant contribution to the economy, shape our national identity and expand Scotland's international profile and engage communities across Scotland, promoting active citizenship, cohesion and wellbeing. We believe culture has a major contribution to make to all aspects of civic life in Scotland, but that this potential has not yet been fully realised and is not currently reflected across all aspects of policy, government and society.

We also believe that having the opportunity to access and engage with culture is a fundamental human right which has implications for how we plan and fund cultural activity in the future and that the principle of public funding for culture, both for its instrumental and intrinsic value, is vital.

We believe that for culture to flourish and to contribute more to the wellbeing of Scotland, a future Scottish Government (whatever the outcome of the independence referendum) should draft a statement of principles which asserts: the value of culture in society in all its manifestations; a human rights framework which empowers local communities to access and engage with culture; a commitment to embed culture across public policy areas.

Culture Counts
c/o Federation of Scottish Theatre