

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee

Creative Scotland – Regular Funding 2018-21

Written submission from Fèis Rois

We are delighted to have been successful in our application for Regular Funding at this time when applications for funding far exceed the funds available.

As a relatively small organisation (4.8 FTE members of staff), we found the process of applying for Regular Funding manageable. We found Creative Scotland to be approachable and helpful. However, we do think that the process could be time consuming and challenging for smaller organisations and individual artists.

Regular Funding is vitally important to the success of Fèis Rois. It enables us to offer a broad programme of work that engages deeply with people of all ages in our local community, as well as nationally and internationally. It also allows us to lever in match funding from other sources. Already, having been awarded RFO funds for 2018-2021, we have submitted an application to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for match funding for a specific project.

We would like to highlight that, although Fèis Rois is an organisation, we have a significant impact on many individual artists and creative practitioners living and working in Scotland. A significant percentage of our annual expenditure goes directly to artists. In 2016/17:

- More than half (57%) of our total expenditure of £691,583 went directly to artists and creative practitioners as fees and reimbursing expenses.

The remainder of our expenditure includes: staffing, including two paid graduate internships (20%); overheads (5%); and the remaining 18% covers things like maintaining an accessible instrument bank, accommodation for young people taking part in our residential courses, developing resources, etc. etc.

- 458 musicians and artists benefitted from paid work with Fèis Rois. This includes 5 musicians commissioned to write new work, 208 who delivered our creative learning programme, 214 who had paid performance opportunities and 31 who were paid to deliver training and CPD events;
- A further 281 artists and creative practitioners accessed free training and continued professional development opportunities provided by Fèis Rois.

Whilst the Regular Funding portfolio aims to ensure an art form spread and a geographic spread for supporting the arts across Scotland, given the limited funds available to Creative Scotland, and the enormous pressure on these funds, there will undoubtedly be gaps in provision. However, we still believe that the RFO portfolio provides considerable support to the arts across the country with many organisations, like Fèis Rois, working Scotland-wide. In 2016/17 our work reached 17 of Scotland's 32 Local Authority areas.

In our opinion, the way that Creative Scotland's funding streams are currently presented, leads many artists and organisations to eagerly pursue the Regular Funding route as they, rightly, perceive that it will give them some degree of financial stability for three years.

However, this might not always be the best route for an individual or organisation. There needs to be a change in the communication around Creative Scotland funds to remove the perceived hierarchical structure.

To address the challenge that Creative Scotland faces in supporting individual artists and organisations from different areas of the arts, it might be useful to look to the recently launched Arts Council England £14.4m R&D fund where individual artists can apply for £2,000 - £10,000 each to support periods of research, develop new ideas, attend training or network.

Finally, there is no shortage of evidence highlighting the significant social, economic and environmental contribution that the arts make to public life in Scotland. For example, it is widely recognised that participation in the arts leads to improved attainment, and that children taking part in the arts and cultural activity do better at school. Whilst we recognise and value the 21.2% increase that the Scottish Government gave to Creative Scotland in the 2018/19 budget, we would always argue that there is a need to invest further in culture across all areas of public life.