

Culture Collective and the National Partnership for Culture

This summary aims to feed learning from the Culture Collective network (2021-22) into the themes and recommendations identified in the NPC [recommendations](#) (published April 2022). It uses evidence gathered via the Culture Collective [Starting Points events series](#) (November 2021) and the resultant [Future Culture podcast series](#) (February - March 2022), as well as network events with Project Coordinators, leadership teams and artists.

Education and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There ought to be equitable access to creative skills, expertise and knowledge for all communities across Scotland, and investment into widespread and diverse participatory arts projects like those supported by Culture Collective could be one route towards achieving a more equitable cultural future for the nation.• Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says “We all have the right to get involved in our community's arts, music, literature and sciences, and the benefits they bring.” This concept of access to cultural participation is dear to many Culture Collective projects, and centring this belief as a Human Right has educational and societal implications that would deeply benefit Scotland going forward.• Education isn't just for the young. Access to coaching and mentorship programmes for and by creative freelancers would support their professional development throughout their working life.
Community and place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A coordinated approach to taking forward recommendations on community and place is welcome, and we are excited by the very early-stage conversations with Creative Scotland about an Advisory Group on culture, place and communities. Whatever its final format, we would like to see this group being made up of people with direct lived experience of working in communities, on grassroots projects, across a diversity of Scotland's geographies and demographics.• A consideration of place-based activity must include a consideration of supporting spaces for creativity - especially spaces such as libraries, community centres, scout huts, community flats, parks, gardens and schools. Investment in these spaces is vital to communities coming together. Community ownership is one part of this picture, but should not be used as a 'cure all'; not all communities have the desire or capacity to assume responsibility for the spaces they need to come together.• Culture Collective illustrates the impact and power of connecting local initiatives in a national network. Connecting local projects to regional and national conversations can certainly help to amplify the learning and knowledge of local activity. Care should be taken to avoid an approach that aims to either scale up or

	<p>replicate local activity, but rather to connect and share learning from local projects across Scotland, allowing each community to create the activity that is suited to its own needs and population.</p>
<p>Health and wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The impact of climate change will be fundamental to the health and wellbeing of our communities in the years to come. Culture can play an important role in helping people to engage with the realities of climate change, and to imagine and realise place-based responses to our changing environment. ● Our experience aligns with NPC recommendations that a) long-term funding and b) initiatives to tackle inequalities are vital to realise the potential of culture to support wellbeing. In particular, the impact of poverty and class inequality cannot be overestimated as a barrier to the potential wellbeing benefits of creative and cultural activity. ● There is a mental health crisis amongst many artists and freelance creative workers, who are simultaneously expected to address crises in health and wellbeing amongst the communities in which they work. The Fair Work recommendations (below) are intertwined with those on health and wellbeing. ● We recognise that discussing recommendations for culture in the context of health and wellbeing, when there are people in this country having to choose between heating and eating may seem like a privilege. We believe that cultural participation is key to the health and wellbeing of a nation, but it should not act as a sticking plaster for deeper societal issues that require significant investment in order to even begin to be addressed.
<p>Fair work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The need for centralised free support for freelancers and artists - especially to access HR and legal advice - has been repeatedly flagged as a key need for the sector, and we are hugely supportive of this recommendation. Could this also involve the creation of a union for creative freelancers? ● Access to (presumably free) training opportunities is also welcome, and we welcome the recognition of the double cost of training to freelancers once loss of income is taken into account. We would highlight that training needs of freelancers can take hugely varied forms - going to see other practitioners, access to coaching or mentoring, or training in areas that are adjacent to their artistic practice may be just as valuable as more traditional training offers or themes. Allowing individuals to dictate their own training needs is vital. ● A demand for Universal Basic Income (for all, not only for creatives) is raised repeatedly by those connected to the Culture Collective, and should be considered as part of a fair work agenda. ● The setting of minimum and guide rates of pay (including rates that recognise the skills of experienced and

	<p>established artists) are important, and should be extended to all creative freelancers, not just practising artists. They should be enforced by funders, and minimum rates should not be used in practice as maximum rates.</p>
<p>Data and evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The sharing of data between funders, with the intention of simplifying repeated requests for reporting, is welcome. However, this should not be used as an opportunity to increase the demand for data gathering on projects which by nature are complex, experiential and / or qualitative, or to increase the labour required by smaller projects. Funder reporting requirements should welcome and embrace - not just tolerate - explorations of challenges, setbacks, delays and complications. This does not typically lend itself to data gathering. ● Measures of success used by funders and government should not rely merely on qualifiers such as how widespread cultural engagement is, but on how meaningful and sustainable that engagement has been with its participants. The old adage of 'quality not quantity' rings true here, and new measures of the success of cultural participation should be developed in order to be more representative and indicative of 'the true measure of success'.