

Call for the NI Executive to Introduce a Basic Income for Artists Scheme

This Council notes that:

The arts, culture and creative sectors are central to Belfast's social fabric, wellbeing, identity, and local economy.

Many artists, performers and creative workers in Belfast and across the North continue to experience insecure, low and irregular incomes, worsened by the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

The Irish Government introduced a Basic Income for Artists pilot in 2022, providing an unconditional weekly payment to artists and creative workers, which has been independently evaluated as improving financial stability, wellbeing, and time spent on creative practice.

The Irish Government has now committed to making this scheme permanent, recognising the structural precarity faced by those working in the creative industries.

This Council believes that:

- Artists and creative workers should not be forced out of their professions due to financial insecurity.
- Belfast's creative sector is a vital public good, contributing to community cohesion, regeneration, tourism, mental health, youth engagement and cultural life.
- A Basic Income for Artists scheme in the north would help protect creative livelihoods, retain local talent, and strengthen the city's cultural ecosystem.

This Council resolves to:

- Call on the Executive to introduce and fund a Basic Income for Artists scheme, modelled on the Irish Government's programme, providing regular, unconditional income support to eligible artists and creative workers.
- Request that the Minister for Communities lead on the development of this scheme, in partnership with the Department for the Economy and the Department of Finance, engaging directly with the arts and creative sectors in its design.
- Write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister urging that this proposal be treated as a priority within the Executive's Programme for Government and budget-setting process.

Proposer: The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty)

Seconder: Councillor de Faoite