

From: The Private Secretary

Louise McLornan
Committee Services Officer
Legal and Civic Services Department, Belfast City Council
City Hall,
Belfast

Via email: mclornanl@belfastcity.gov.uk

Dear Louise,

CALL FOR THE NI EXECUTIVE TO INTRODUCE A BASIC INCOME FOR ARTISTS SCHEME

Thank you for your correspondence of 11 March 2026 to Minister Lyons regarding Belfast City Council's motion to call for the Northern Ireland Executive to introduce a Basic Income for Artists scheme. He has asked that I reply on his behalf.

The Minister fully recognises, understands, and values the work of artists and the vital contribution they make to the quality of life of people across Northern Ireland. He recognises the need for additional support for the arts and has been very clear about his commitment to strengthening the level of public funding provided to the sector. He has also been clear in his commitment to widening participation in the arts and ensuring that opportunities are extended to those from traditionally underrepresented communities.

These priorities will be central to the new arts policy being developed through the Department's Heritage, Culture and Creativity Programme. This work will address the current policy gap, strengthen the evidence base, and support the case for increased

investment, including from beyond the Executive. While future funding will depend on the Executive's overall budget, as Minister, he will continue to press for greater support for the arts and wider cultural activity.

However, in terms of a basic income for the arts model, the position is that there is no provision within the Executive's budget to establish a comparable scheme here, and there are no plans at this time to replicate it.

The Department appreciates the Council's interest in this issue and your commitment to supporting artists, and I hope that this information has been helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Louise Anderson', written in a cursive style.

Louise Anderson
Private Secretary
Department for Communities