



Department for
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Mr Nigel Price
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Dear Nigel,

Thank you for your correspondence of 17 February, to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP, regarding the challenges being faced by grassroots jazz venues. I am responding as the Minister responsible for Creative Industries. Your passion for the performance and promotion of jazz as a musical genre is palpable from your letter, and the commitment and adaptability you and your fellow musicians have demonstrated during the pandemic is remarkable. Please accept my apologies for the delay in you receiving a response.

You note in your correspondence that organisations without permanent premises or that were not registered as an organisation could not apply to the Cultural Recovery Fund (CRF). It is true that organisations had to be formally constituted (e.g. as a registered business or charity) to apply for most strands of CRF support. However, operation of a permanent performance venue was not a condition of CRF support.

In summer 2020, the CRF ran a scheme specifically targeted at grassroots music venues, explicitly including jazz venues. The criteria for this scheme encompassed sites from dedicated music venues through to community venues or village halls with significant live grassroots music programmes. This scheme managed to offer grants totalling £3.36 million to 135 venues before the end of August 2020. Since then, the total CRF funding in grants and loans for music organisations has risen to over £240 million.

The Government chose not to make the CRF open for individuals to apply for. This was based on several factors including that cross-economy support was in place for freelancers through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). According to the latest statistics (published 16/12/21) self-employed people in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector had made 312,000 claims across the five grants, with the average value of claims from self-employed in the sector being £2,600.

The CRF has had significant indirect benefits for freelancers by supporting organisations to survive, reopen, and restart performances and therefore to provide meaningful opportunities to freelancers. These organisations are supporting freelancers through activity that has been made possible because of CRF investment.

I note that you have copied your letter also to Darren Henley at the Arts Council England (ACE). Your observations on the technical application processes are the domain of ACE, and I recommend that you refer those queries to ACE by emailing crf@artscouncil.org.uk. With all funding applications, there is a balance to be struck between ensuring application processes are as simple as possible, and ensuring that funds are correctly distributed and that public money is invested wisely.



As the Government emerges from the pandemic, I am aware that different organisations will experience the recovery at different speeds, and the next year or so may remain very challenging for many organisations and individuals. In your letter, you recommend setting up a grant fund for grassroots music promoters who are not constituted as companies or charities. I am pleased to say that ACE has just such a funding opportunity open at the present time.

Mindful of the challenges faced by grassroots music venues, the ACE has explicitly invited funding applications from the organisations and people involved in the hosting and promotion of live music events in venues, and has ringfenced £1.5 million in the 2021-22 financial year for this priority. This has been put in place specifically to support more organisations and individuals in this sector to be confident in applying to the main Project Grants programme in the future.

This is being delivered with National Lottery funding, and is open to individuals as well as organisations. Applications for Supporting Grassroots Live Music projects will not be in competition with everyone else applying to Project Grants. As the budget for this time limited priority is ringfenced, these applications will only be in competition with each other. Further information can be found [here](#).

For organisations interested in further funding opportunities, I recommend that you continue to monitor the [ACE website](#) where all funding programmes are posted.

Thank you for writing on this important issue. I hope my response is helpful and that your constituent is reassured that the work of the CRF and ACE prioritises supporting organisations and individuals in this sector.

With best wishes,



Julia Lopez MP
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