



**Findings from
Artists' Survey
3–13 April 2020**

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Introduction

Artists and arts organisations have been playing their part in helping people get through the current crisis – the public response to, and engagement with, this work has been overwhelmingly positive.

The value of the arts has never been more evident.

The arts will maintain this central role in Irish life by contributing to a national recovery beyond COVID-19.

This report sets out the findings of an online survey carried out with 1,853 professional artists between 3–13 April.

The report provides a sense of the scale of the impact of the crisis on the arts sector and the steps necessary to ensure a strong sector emerges out of the COVID-19 crisis.

This work is one part of a **Planning for Recovery** research programme to provide evidence for the design of responsive and targeted actions that will support arts organisations and artists.

A related survey of organisations was undertaken in March and this additional information will also be important in framing decisions in the weeks and months ahead.

Research actions include:

- **Forecasting** based on projected figures supplied by organisations as part of their 2020 funding agreement. Arts Council on 23 March estimated that organisations will lose €2.9 million in income for each month of shut down.
- **Survey of 265 organisations week of 23–27 March** to identify impact on audiences, employment and finances for March, April and May. Survey data estimates economic impact is €10.25 million, which is 18% more than Arts Council forecast on 23 March. We will continue to refine our projections as more data becomes available.
- **Survey of artists 6 April–11 April** to identify detail on cancelled contracts and economic impact on individuals
- Survey of strategically funded organisations on **Revised Plans & Budgeting Process 23 April–1 May** for remainder of 2020 in response to COVID-19.

Methodology

- An on-line survey of professional artists undertaken 3 – 13 April using Surveygizmo, with the link distributed via social media only (no direct invitations to participate issued).
- Survey comprised approx. 40 questions across eight sections.
- Submitted surveys received from **1,853** artists.

Data quality

- We have a high number of submissions and a high rate of engagement across all sections of the survey.
- The proportionate spread of ‘artforms’ represented in submissions is consistent with that estimated at the time of the 2010 LWCA report (within **3%** in all but one case).
- On gender – the response rate of F 60%/M 34% has parallels with artist applicant award data over the past 8 years.
- Geographically – responses were received from artists across all **31** Local Authority areas.
- These and other factors mean we can have a high degree of confidence that the data is representative of the professional artist population in Ireland.

Findings

Cancelled activities

- **90%** of artists report being impacted by cancelled or postponed public events.
- Cancelled performances affected **50%** of all artists.
- Artists report a significant level of uncertainty about the status of cancelled activities – **55%** report having events cancelled outright, **70%** report provisional postponements (no fixed date) and **42%** don't know or are waiting to hear.

Disrupted creative work

- Over **90%** of artists report that restrictions have impacted their role in the development or creation of new work.
- Access to workspaces and ability to meet with partners /collaborators are the main barriers.
- The **6%** that report not being impacted are primarily in the artforms of literature and visual arts.

Disruption to workspace

- **44%** of artists (**811**) report having a fixed workspace to which access has been disrupted. Of these, approx. **half** have an on-going rent commitment of which only $\frac{1}{4}$ (**100** artists) have reported receiving some form of rent relief. Approx. half of renters rent from a private landlord.
- **Ongoing work** – over half of artists report being able to plan and research for future activities or having some opportunity to create/develop work.

Financial impact

- **Personally perceived impact** - We asked - *On a scale of 1 to 10 what impact has the crisis had on your personal financial position? Where 1 is no impact and 10 is severe impact.* Responses reveal - **30%** of artists rated the impact as **ten**; **5%** reported no impact; average rated at **seven**; median score allocated was **eight**.
- **Days lost** - Artists were asked if they were able to calculate any lost income (from artistic work) in terms of a set number of days work lost which they would have been scheduled to have been paid for. A total of **856** artists (**46%**) confirmed they were able to do this (artists from the performing arts were more able to make this calculation). These artists reported a total loss of **19,000** days lost averaging **23** days per artist.

- **Personal investment lost** - Over **870** artists (**48%**) reported that they had personally invested financially in the development of work that has now been cancelled or postponed. Amount invested was reported in bands and reveals an estimated personal loss by artists in the region of **€2.5million**.
- **Other work** – **45%** of artists report losing other paid work (aside from artistic work).
- **Payments due** - We asked how payments due have been effected. Just under $\frac{1}{4}$ of artists report that they have received/been informed that they will receive all payments due to them. Over 20% of artists report having payments withheld. Who is withholding these payments varies by artform. There is also a high degree of uncertainty with 33% reporting they are waiting to hear and a further 10% not sure what payments they are entitled to.
- **Payments for online work** - Almost half of artists report being asked to create, provide or share content for online consumption. However, **57%** of those report that they have not been offered any payment in this regard. A further 18% reported payment offered only in some cases.
- **Covid payment** – Over **835** artists (**45%**) report applying for the Covid unemployment payment or short time work support. Of those that have applied more than **half** report they are satisfied with the process, less than $\frac{1}{4}$ are dissatisfied, the remainder are neutral.

Main challenges

We asked - *what are the main challenges you envisage in the medium term?* Respondents were asked to rank a list of 6 responses. *Financial* and *the on-going uncertainty* were the two highest ranking issues.

Arts Council support

We asked - *how can the Arts Council best support artists right now?* Artists were able to select up to three responses from a drop down list. The highest ranking answers were:

- New funding programmes for artists – 59% (1,089)
- Supporting arts organisations to honour existing commitments to artists – 48% (882)
- Supporting flexibility around existing funding offers to artists – 40% (733)
- Ensuring that the critical arts infrastructure is maintained – 37% (679)