

and wellbeing. We enclose a summary of a recent project, VIP Night Out, as an example of what can be achieved through collaborative working.

We know that this is a tight spending round, but the proposed allocation for the arts falls desperately short of DCAL's request, based on the Arts Council's assessment of need, for an additional £26 million over the three year period. In the grand scheme of the Executive budget, this tiny amount for the arts could deliver so much throughout the region.


If the allocation is not increased, the arts in Northern Ireland will continue for the foreseeable future to be consigned to the bottom of the league table of funding in the UK and Republic of Ireland. Surely the people of Northern Ireland deserve the same cultural entitlements as our neighbours on these islands.

The importance of financial stability for artists and arts organisations cannot be underestimated. This budget will leave many people working in the arts facing immediate difficulties. Their future is, at best, uncertain, and confidence is at an all time low. Without meaningful investment, it will not be possible for the arts to contribute fully to vital wider agendas and PfG priorities, such as health, social inclusion and education, or to capitalise fully on the great economic potential of cultural tourism and the Creative Industries.

Audiences NI is uniquely placed to initiate and progress collaborative projects, bringing together arts organisations across Northern Ireland to broaden access to a wide range of audiences. The impact of the proposed budget will deplete the capacity of many arts organisations to engage in such projects and broaden access and inclusion.

The arts impact on so many aspects of our lives, and should be something to celebrate, not stifle. I hope that the final budget will result in the level of public investment that will enable the arts to make their vital contribution to building a better, more dynamic and competitive Northern Ireland.

Yours *sincerely*



Steven Hadley
CEO