

New plan announced for transforming Creative Scotland

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Creative Scotland (CS) has taken a major step towards addressing concerns about the organisation raised by Scottish artists and arts groups since spring 2012 with the publication of an Annual Plan for 2013/14.

The plan comes exactly a month after Janet Archer took up the post of chief executive at the embattled arts funding body, and follows months of criticism of what was seen as the organisation's business-oriented approach to arts support, as well as its opaque, corporate language and an overly complex funding applications process.

In her covering statement to the new plan, Archer admits: 'This is a transitional document. It reflects feedback that we have received over the last year and begins to present our purpose and the main parts of our work in a more simplified way.'

The document sets out CS's four objectives in noticeably clear and simple terms: to support artistic excellence; to improve access to the arts; to develop a thriving environment for the arts; and to deliver its own services efficiently and effectively. It also clarifies the body's five existing ways of funding arts organisations, and reveals that CS is redesigning its funding programmes, for launch in 2014/15, 'to ensure that they more closely support the needs of those we are here to support'. The document also announces a new artist bursary programme, which will be partly peer-reviewed, whose aim will be 'to provide artists and other creative professionals with the time and resources to develop their practice'.

The plan details the ways in which CS itself can be held to account, and addresses head-on the criticism made by many artists

Moving forward: Creative Scotland's new chief executive, Janet Archer



that the body had conceived arts funding as an investment that required a financial return. The document explicitly states: 'We know that not everything is measurable. We understand that arts, culture and creativity can have transformative benefits for individuals and communities, often in ways that are not quantifiable.'

The document goes on to detail the breakdown of CS's annual £97.5m budget, and lists the funds it supplies to Scottish arts organisations. It also points towards a wider-ranging review of CS's objectives, taking notice of artists' concerns and hinting at a wholesale reevaluation of the organisation's values, to be published in April 2014: 'This will replace the existing Corporate Plan and will reset the overall purpose of Creative Scotland and our values in line with the feedback we have received over the past year.'