

# Creative Scotland drops 'flexible funding'

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**Scottish music organisations including Aberdeen's sound festival, the Hebrides and Red Note ensembles, and the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, are facing an uncertain future following a financial review by funding body Creative Scotland (CS). From the 2013/14 financial year, 47 arts companies will be required to apply for funding on a project-by-project basis, rather than enjoying the previous agreement, known as 'flexible funding', which guaranteed grants over two years.**

This change follows a rebalancing of CS's own revenue sources. The Scottish government will reduce its funding of the body by £2.1m in 2014 to £33.4m, a reduction offset an increase in funding from the national lottery from £18m in 2010 to £32.3m in 2014. However, although lottery funds can support specific projects, they cannot be granted for general revenue funding.

Scottish arts organisations have reacted

with alarm to these changes, drawing attention to a potentially huge increase in funding applications as well as a reduction in long-term financial security. John Harris, chief executive and artistic co-director of the Red Note Ensemble, said: 'We have a programme that covers 25 to 30 events per year. If we have to apply project by project, it's going to be a nightmare – we'll have to either radically rethink Red Note or just pack up and go home.'

Mr Harris also points to a lack of detail on what the changes will mean: 'There was so little information that came out of CS, and we got an awful lot from press releases and newspaper articles. It may well not turn out to be a completely negative thing: there's more money available, but there's more uncertainty as well.'

A second tier of companies, including the St Magnus Festival and Celtic Connections traditional music festival, have seen their guaranteed funding period reduced from two

years to one. Tanya McGill, manager of the St Magnus Festival, is more positive about the changes, however: 'It doesn't feel more precarious, nor more onerous – it doesn't seem like we'll have more paperwork to do. We have detail on the services we're expected to deliver, so it shouldn't mean us having to reapply each year, as long as we meet the objectives of our agreement.'

In a blog on the CS website, chief executive Andrew Dixon said that retaining two-year flexible funding would have meant that 'we would have had to cut 20% of the organisations we currently support'. He also highlighted CS's priorities for its funded organisations: 'We want to invest in their international potential and to find cultural ambassadors from within these organisations. We want better and deeper public engagement. We've also set aside funds for organisations to work together in areas such as education and equalities.'