

12 October 2007

The wait is over, and not over. The Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 settlement for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has been announced and Arts Council England and directly funded museums have received above inflation increases. But it's never that simple...

- Comprehensive Spending Review settlement announced
- Northern Ireland Assembly culture questions
- Building Reputations conference in association with NCA – one month to go

Comprehensive Spending Review settlement announced

After well over a year of sustained advocacy for the arts, in the face of projected cuts of five and even seven percent, the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR 2007) settlement for arts has been broadly welcomed. Arts Council England (ACE) and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) funded museums will receive above inflation funding for the next three years; other organisations have yet to hear about their settlements. This is good news, especially in the context of a tight spending review, even if it cannot solve large scale problems such as the lack of acquisitions budgets for museums. However, given the diversion of Arts Councils Lottery funds to the Olympics, the response is one of relief that matters are not worse, rather than of jubilation.

The DCMS settlement was published on Tuesday as part of the pre-budget report entitled [Meeting the aspirations of the British People](#). This cites increased Government investment in the arts over the past 10 years, announces a settlement for the DCMS of 6.6 percent annual average real growth. The resource budget is to increase from £1.6 billion in 2007-08 to £1.8 billion by 2011-12 and capital expenditure is set at over £2 billion during the CSR 2007 period. This includes contributions to the costs of venues and infrastructure for the 2012 Olympic Games. In his speech to the House of Commons, the Chancellor of the Exchequer guaranteed an inflation increase for the arts and ongoing free access to museums and galleries.

At a press conference at Battersea Arts Centre today, the Minister for Culture, James Purnell, announced further details of the settlement for Arts Council England and DCMS funded museums, all of whom are receiving an above inflation increase. The Minister acknowledged that the arts had presented a strong case based on the success of the past ten years. The Minister reported that the DCMS would be adopting a less prescriptive approach and giving organisations greater freedom to decide how they spent their money. However, DCMS priorities include creating successful flag-ship projects for the Cultural Olympiad and these will have to be paid for out of the increased funding. A [summary of the press conference](#) is available on the website.

The NCA issued a [press release](#) on 9 October and commented in [The Independent](#) and [The Stage](#). For more information about the NCA's CSR campaign, click [here](#).

Northern Ireland Assembly questions to the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Responding to questions on 8 October, Culture Minister, Edwin Poots set investment in the infrastructure of existing arts organisation as the priority for facilitating the performing arts in Northern Ireland. He cited investment in theatre, opera and arts centres and encouraged more organisations from rural areas to apply for grants, adding that city councils needed to play their part in funding the arts. The Minister expressed an ongoing commitment to the Belfast Festival at Queen's and an interest in further work with universities.

Questions were also asked about the breadth of participation in the arts and funding for minority ethnic arts projects and events. The Minister believed that all sections of society were included and encouraged to participate in the arts and that significant grants were made to minority ethnic arts. He agreed that the Belfast Mela 2007 was a useful model for promoting integration and added that "People from other countries bring fresh cultures to Northern Ireland and that this ha[d] been to the good". The full text is available at: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/ni/?id=2007-10-08.8.10>

Building Reputations – all about media, influence and reputation

A reminder that there is just a month to go to "Building and Sustaining Reputation", a conference for the cultural sector. The NCA has teamed up with conference organisers, the Campaign for Museums, to produce an interesting, informative and challenging programme. Tate Britain is the setting for this event on Thursday 8 November. Our expert speakers on media include Nick Higham, BBC, Jonathan Drori (formerly Culture Online), Neil McIntosh, *Guardian Unlimited* and James Warren of Weber Shandwick, amongst others.

The line-up on lobbying is equally impressive with Baroness Morris of Yardley (formerly Estelle Morris, Shadow Minister for the Arts) and David Barrie of the Art Fund in a session chaired by NCA Director, Louise de Winter. Also, find out about how to turn disaster and change in your favour from speakers including Stephen Archer of the Cutty Sark and Liz Thompson and Kate Horton from the Royal Shakespeare Company. And are we really going to change our behaviour as a result of global warming?

Book online (not by post) at www.campaignformuseums.org.uk and click on 'current conferences'. NCA members can attend at a discounted delegate rate of £165 per delegate. For more information contact Ylva French, The Campaign for Museums, on 020 7233 6789.

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The NCA is the UK's only independent campaigning organisation representing all the arts. It provides a voice for the arts world in all its diversity. It seeks to safeguard, promote and develop the arts and win public and political recognition for their importance as a key element in our national culture.

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