



National Theatre of Scotland, summary response to the Scottish Government Budget 2025/26.

National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) welcomes the Scottish Government's budget for 2025/26 with its focus on investing in public services and growing the economy, tackling the climate emergency and eradicating child poverty. We are particularly heartened by the value put on culture as a driver for improving the nation's health and wellbeing, and with the Scottish Government's stated aim of increasing the cultural budget by £100m by 2028/29.

We recognise the financial constraints within which the budget is presented, and value the investment levels proposed not just to the culture sector, but to the broader landscape necessary to support a thriving cultural programme – education, transport, rural communities, health and social care and local government.

Whilst NTS is not directly supported by Creative Scotland, our ability to deliver against our creative and organisational priorities are directly linked to the confidence and ambition of our peers and colleagues across the cultural sector, for whom Creative Scotland is the primary funder. We are therefore heartened to read that CS's overall budget will increase from £66.5m in 24/25 to £89m in 2025/26, and to know that £20m of this will go towards Multi-year funding (MYF) in 2025/26. With an indication of a further £20m for MYF in 2026/27 we can start to anticipate a period of stability after such a long phase of reduced activity and operational uncertainty.

Of equal importance to NTS, is knowing that individual artists and small companies will be supported to generate new work and to share outcomes with audiences and participants across Scotland. We look forward to hearing how Creative Scotland plan to use its additional funding, including its National Lottery funding, to sustain activity beyond its multi-year funded organisations.

We also welcome the SG's continued investment in EXPO funding and in sustained funding for Scotland's festivals, along with investment in the cultural estate including in the Citizens' Theatre – a long-term partner and collaborator with NTS.

We recognise, however, that the Scottish Government is not able to make future funding commitments whilst it continues to receive an annual settlement from the UK Government. For the National Theatre of Scotland, along with all the National Performing Companies (NPCs) and all our cultural sector colleagues, this represents a

significant threat to our ability to plan for and maximise future opportunities for artists, audiences and investors. We hope that a commitment to multi-year funding for the cultural sector will be an outcome of the multi-year spending reviews planned between the UK and Scottish Governments.

At NTS we welcome the uplift to our core funding for 2025/26. However, as acknowledged in the budget statement, whilst cost pressures continue and with the increased national insurance contributions, this uplift provides a small but valuable contribution to our increasing operating costs rather than enabling growth.

Of critical importance to NTS is the additional funding we receive from the International Touring Fund for the NPCs. This enables us to take Scotland's artists to the world. We are pleased that this funding is set to continue but we would like this aspect of our funding settlement to be articulated separately from our core subsidy, to avoid distorting our baseline funding in the budget figures.

Beyond the budget figures, we look forward to contributing to the review of Creative Scotland and the wider context in which it operates. Our hope is that this review delivers recommendations for a sustainable cultural framework for Scotland that results in further increases to the culture budget in 2026/27 and beyond.

Lucy Mason
Interim Executive Director
7 January 2025