

Manifesto to ensure effective and resilient public leisure and culture services

for communities in Scotland

The next Scottish Government has an opportunity to recognise, value and support public leisure and culture services and ensure their sustainability, enabling them to not only survive, but thrive. These community facilities and services are at the heart of villages, towns and cities across the country and have a critical role to play in supporting the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of communities throughout the Covid-19 recovery period and beyond.

The services offered by many leisure and culture charities deliver important health and social outcomes that go beyond recreational value. There has been a progressive shift and increasing recognition that leisure and culture charities are a wellness service.

This manifesto has been produced in consultation with our members and reflects their key priorities and asks of the new Scottish Government.

Charities delivering public leisure and culture

The charitable trust model offers an important vehicle for local authorities to deliver their leisure and cultural services, where surplus revenue generated is reinvested to deliver charitable aims by cross subsidising programmes, access and facilities.

These are transparent, independent and accountable organisations governed by skill-based Trustee boards made up of local people, with commercial astuteness to adapt and diversify. As charities, they offer sustainability and resilience through agile decision making reacting to market forces.



Challenges and the impact of Covid-19

The leisure and culture sectors are currently facing the most significant threat in terms of their survival and ability to contribute to the health of the nation. Like many other sectors, they have been devastated by the impact of the Covid pandemic, and face a precarious future and long recovery period.



£ However, prior to the pandemic, our members were already facing immense challenges as a result of reduced funding, increased costs, ageing facilities (lack of capital investment), and a cross-subsidy business model which is predicated on being able to compete with the private sector.

It is essential that these inherent structural issues within the sector are addressed to ensure that we do not return to the same issues and that the opportunity to make a positive difference to the health of the nation is optimised.



With reserves expected to be depleted by 94% by the end of March 2021¹, increasing costs and uncertainty over future lockdowns and restrictions, 2021/22 will be an equally, if not more, challenging year for our members. The already fragile landscape is in urgent need of support from Scottish Government to ensure its survival in the long-term.



Opportunities

Public leisure and culture possess the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of wider public policy outcomes, specifically reducing health inequalities, educational attainment, safer communities, economic development and climate change.

ISPAH's eight investments that work for physical activity², as shown below, provide best evidence on the most effective areas for physical activity to contribute to distinct priorities. These link to Scotland's National Performance Framework Outcomes³ and highlight the valuable contribution of physical activity across a range of policy areas. There is an opportunity, through the Active Scotland Delivery Group, to raise awareness of the value of physical activity and sport, and to work collaboratively across portfolio areas to embed and invest in physical activity.



ISPAH Eight investments that work for physical activity

¹ As compared with pre-Covid levels. Community Leisure UK January 2021 Covid impact report.
² ISPAH's Eight Investments That Work for Physical Activity - ispah.org/resources/key-resources/8-investments
³ nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes

Our asks of the Scottish Government

In order to overcome these challenges and make the most of the opportunities Community Leisure Scotland members' key asks of the Scottish Government are as follows:

HEALTH

1

Recognise culture and leisure as essential services, contributing to health and wellbeing, and embed these sectors in Scotland's recovery plan from Covid-19.

2

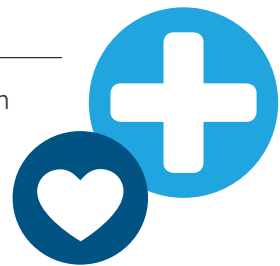
Assess the impact of the pandemic on participation in and access to culture, sport and physical activity and work with the sector to equalise participation and access.

3

Fund the nationwide rollout of social prescribing across culture, sport and leisure to maximise the contribution that this makes to health and wellbeing, including mental health.

4

Involve culture and leisure charities in the creation of a National Care service, which are uniquely placed to play an important role through promoting and enabling equality and wellbeing.



PLACE

5

Ensure the inclusion of charitable culture and leisure charities in local and regional planning initiatives, including regenerating town centres to ensure culture, sport and leisure are a part of our everyday lives.

6

Incorporate 20 minute neighbourhoods in all planning commitments, and work with the public culture and leisure sector to ensure access to public culture and leisure activities, especially for early years education and school pupils. Equally, there should be consistent access to the school estate for the wider community.





PARTNERSHIP

7

Strengthen partnerships, both within the sectors and across different sectors (including Health, Education, Transport and Environment), including leisure and culture charities representation at Community Planning Partnerships.

8

Cabinet-led direction on using culture, leisure and sport to improve community health and wellbeing, education and the economy through Culture Convenors meetings and the Active Scotland Delivery Group.

INVESTMENT

9

Perform an audit of building stock and provide recommendations and funding for a national and local facilities strategy to ensure an appropriate asset base for the next 20 years and a reduced carbon footprint.

10

Resource local authorities to enable them to adequately fund their leisure and culture charity partners, for example, allowing local authorities to maintain current funding arrangements without further reductions in management fees for the next few years.

11

Invest in digital development across culture and leisure, to build on the current learning and innovation and to widen access to services. This will require investment in hardware for organisations and training for staff to provide community digital inclusion projects and services.



Community Leisure Scotland

Community Leisure Scotland is a members' association representing registered charities delivering public leisure, sport and/or culture services for communities across Scotland. Members provide physical activity, cultural engagement and social opportunities and are significant partners within their local communities.

In Scotland we have a total of 27 members, operating over 1400 facilities, including:



232
LIBRARIES



197
LEISURE CENTRES



466
OUTDOOR SPORTS
COURTS & PITCHES



139
PARKS



39
THEATRES



213
COMMUNITY
& TOWN HALLS

The collective social value for our members in Scotland is £354.6m⁴, which demonstrates that the impact of sports, leisure and culture and the value that they generate, far exceeds the level of public money invested in these services. For a relatively small amount, a huge social value can be generated for the people of Scotland.

Our team

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Executive Board

The Board of Community Leisure UK is entirely comprised of non executive directors who are all Chief Executives of member leisure and culture trusts across the UK. The Board give their time to Community Leisure UK for free, for the purpose of furthering the community trust model and ethos.



communityleisureuk.org

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⁴ Global Datahub