



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Impact Survey

Makers explore the impact of the UK
Lockdown in April/May 2020

*Prepared by Craft Scotland
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Contents

Makers introduction.....	
Key quotes	
Survey.....	

Makers introduction

The economic impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Scotland's makers and the craft infrastructure was immediate and the effects may be evident for years to come.

Our Coronavirus (COVID-19) Impact Survey for Makers shows the emerging impacts of the pandemic on Scottish makers detailing; the loss of income, challenges of accessing studios/equipment and pivoting to online selling, and their experiences of the funding/grants landscape.

Looking to the next 3-12 months, respondents conveyed the potential future impact on their practice and what kind of support they might need to recover.

This survey was issued on Thursday 16 April and closed Friday 22 May 2020, there was a total of 44 respondents from all across Scotland.

Key quotes

"...it's the loss of potential that is the killer"

"...we are just firefighting at the moment"

"hard times ahead but craft is a 'happy place' for people interested in craft."

Survey

I. Respondents worked across a variety of materials/disciplines that Craft Scotland represent. Top 3:

- Textiles
- Jewellery
- Ceramics

2. Respondents sell their handmade objects in a variety of ways. Top 4:

- Direct to the public from their studio, workshop, home
- Through craft fairs
- Word of mouth
- Commissions from general public

3. What was the immediate impact on makers' practice and/or craft business due to Coronavirus (COVID-19). Collated answers:

a. Income & Sales

- Income has significantly decreased due to cancellation of trade shows and events being cancelled
- Income has significantly decreased due to retail outlets being closed (museums, galleries, shops etc.)
- Cancellation of wholesale orders
- Reduced commissions from the public (due to wedding business slow down)
- Loss of income from their own private classes/public workshops being suspended
- Loss of income from other portfolio working
- Loss of investment as pre-paid accommodation or travel for cancelled shows/events has not been refunded

b. Studio Access & Making

- Challenges of working from home with restricted workspace and access to tools/materials (ranging from no access to working space to restricted space)
- Reduced income has affected their ability to purchase new materials, this in turn affects their ability to generate an income from selling work
- Additional caring responsibilities (i.e. home schooling, lack of access to other caregivers) has affected time/headspace available for making and business activities
- Some respondents could still access their studio as it is within their home or they could safely walk there with no human interaction

c. Promotion

- Exhibitions/shows/events cancelled or postponed
- Loss of passing footfall / visitors as place of business is closed

d. Funding & Grants

- Funding decisions postponed

e. Research & Creative Development

- Uncertain cash flow has impacted on research trips and also meant cost cannot be recouped through selling new work
- Any paid for research and creative development associated with being selected for exhibitions has been cancelled or postponed

f. Online Selling

- Whilst some respondents saw reduced website orders, some also a rise in web orders and a rise in Instagram sales
- Issues with slow/expensive broadband/Satellite internet in rural setting
- Limited access to postal service affecting selling online in rural setting
- If respondents online selling platforms were not established prior to the pandemic, pivoting to selling online is more difficult

g. Basic Living Costs

Many respondents were concerned with how they will be able to cover their basic living costs (immediately or after using up their savings)

4. What do makers foresee will be the challenges in the next 3-12 months for their practice and/or craft business? Collated answers:

a. Income & Sales

- Low consumer spending on non-essentials will affect sales and cash flow
- Turbulent economic times ahead for global art and craft market

- Slowdown in the tourism industry will significantly affect their footfall and sales
- Retail and wholesale businesses will be significantly affected
- Managing teaching of private classes/workshops with social distancing rules
- Selling work whilst socially distancing – craft is innately tactile
- Respondents ranged from believing they would make no income to see a reduction in their income in 2020

b. Studio access & making

- How to safely travel to studio on public transport
- Social distancing in shared studio spaces
- Generating enough income to afford studio rents
- Supplier being closed or shut down

c. Funding & Grants

- Reduction in funding and grant schemes

d. Online Selling

- Developing their online platforms and social media fast enough to replace income
- Keeping a presence in an increasingly busy online marketplace
- How to remain safe when posting orders at the post office

e. Mental Health & Resilience

- Effect of being isolated for 6-12 month on mental health

f. Basic Living Costs

- Many respondents were concerned with how they will be able to cover their basic living costs (immediately or after using up their savings)

5. What support do makers believe might be helpful to their practice and/or craft business?

- 71% Funding & Grants
- 42% Online selling training
- 15% Research and development support
- 14% Mental health and resilience
- 8% Business training

Additional ideas for support included:

- Advice on financial assistance
- Advice on how to run social distance workshops
- Insights into a re-imagined economy post-Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Advice on social media growth and engagement
- Universal Basic Income
- Creating a loan scheme for public to purchase work

6. Feedback on the various new grants and sources of funding that were launched during the pandemic.

- Concern and confusion that some makers are not eligible for the majority of funding
- Issues with extremely short turnaround timeframes from launching the fund to the funds closing
- Some makers feedback that the process of applying for some of the grants was quick and easy
- Some mention of successful applications:
- Business Rates Relief (through local authority)
 - Furlough scheme
 - Corra Foundation
 - Bridging Bursary, Creative Scotland
- Some makers mentioned not applying for schemes (despite being eligible) as they wanted to ensure it reached the most in need
- Difficulties with the application forms or gathering evidence for them (for example, not having invoices for future workshops, or only invoicing on delivery of work)
- For Directors of Limited Companies, there is not much personal support
- Difficult to navigate if you have other PAYE income
- Rates relief is not available if you sub-let your studio
- Grants based on profits is penalizing to companies that are in a growth phase and a reinvesting in their business
- Limited help for students and recent graduates

- None of the grants allow for compensation for loss of associated costs (fees, pre-booked accommodation, travel)

7. Additional feedback

- A respondent mentioned that it will be hard to understand the full impact of the pandemic until the year has finished
- A respondent mentioned they felt that artists/makers were overlooked in the support package as they have a unique set of circumstances due to portfolio working
- “Would be helpful if Craft Scotland could keep directing people to individual makers through inspiring articles etc.”
- “Banks could be doing a lot more to help small designer makers like myself - not charging us for our credit card machines that are currently not in use.”
- “I love reading your emails (newsletters) seeing what others are creating it”
- “Really grateful to Creative Scotland, Craft Scotland and others for trying to put the case of artists to Scottish Government.”

Craft

SCOTLAND

Craft Scotland

Supporting Makers, Promoting Craft

Craft Scotland is the national development agency for craft.

We put makers at the heart of all we do, championing diverse and high-quality contemporary craft.

We help people learn about, appreciate and buy craft, promoting the contribution of craft to Scotland's cultural, economic and social well-being.

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Through our exhibitions and events programmes, digital platforms and strategic partnerships, we provide leadership for the sector.

We create opportunities for makers to develop their creative and business practice, and to exhibit and sell work in Scotland and beyond.

We are a registered charity supported by Creative Scotland.