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Our Reference: 202000021143
Your Reference: COVID19

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Dear Anna

Thank you for your letter of 13 March asking that the Scottish Government make funding available to help the third sector in these difficult times. You also wrote to Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance in similar terms and I will reply on her behalf as I have responsibility for the third sector.

This is a time of great uncertainty and concern for all of us, especially the third sector, so I was pleased to be able to announce in Parliament on 18 March, an additional £350 million will be made available to those most affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This includes the £20m Third Sector Resilience Fund.

I know that you and colleagues, both in the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and across the sector have been involved in supporting our efforts, to implement the Third Sector Resilience Fund in such a short time. The creation of a Covid-19 Third Sector Information Hub by SCVO to provide up to date official guidance and report on emerging issues is also very welcome.

These actions we have taken together echo my words in Parliament that unless we work with local partners, the impact of our investment will not be felt by those who need it most.

Across Government we are working to ensure that payments to third sector organisations are made promptly, that grant conditions and reporting deadlines are relaxed where possible and that we all consider actions we can collectively take to keep funds flowing to sustain Scotland's third sector.

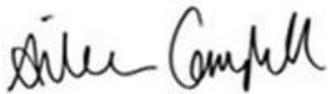


In consideration of the challenging period ahead, core funding has also been approved for SCVO, on an indicative basis and at the same levels, for 2021-22.

Furthermore, all non-domestic properties in Scotland will now automatically get a 1.6% rates relief during 2020-21. Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, which includes charity shops, will be eligible to receive 100% rates relief during 2020-21. Those with a Rateable Value of £18,001 up to (and including) £50,999 will also be able to apply for a one-off grant of £25,000.

I am committed to such actions and know that our partners will tell me their solutions or ideas to help those most in need, then we can work together to provide at pace the support that is required to do that.

Kind regards



AILEEN CAMPBELL

