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What Northern Culture needs to rebuild, rebalance and recover: ‘First of its kind’ Northern Culture Parliamentary Inquiry launched

The Northern Culture All Party Parliamentary Group, supported by Northumbria University, will today launch its first Inquiry into what Northern Culture needs to rebuild, rebalance and recover.

The Inquiry will shine a light on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Northern Culture and call for evidence from key voices and stakeholders

across the North on how to increase diversity, sustainability, accessibility and resilience in Northern Culture.

The six-month Inquiry will gather evidence and produce a bespoke 'State of the North' report on Northern Culture, which will include recommendations to help inform, shape and influence future Government decision making and a Post-Covid Action Plan for Northern Culture.

Northumbria University, which has been chosen as the Inquiry's academic partner, will co-ordinate and support the Inquiry. **Professor Katy Shaw**, Director of Cultural Partnerships at Northumbria University said:

"The North's cultural industry has been hit hard by Covid-19 and faces an historic challenge as the global pandemic continues to affect our everyday lives.

"The strength of the North lies in its diversity. With that in mind, we would like to encourage everyone and anyone who wants to give evidence to step forward and speak-up. The Inquiry needs to hear your voice, your perspective and your thoughts on the future of Northern culture.

"Northumbria University has a long and proud history of working with cultural partners and stakeholders across the North and beyond, and I have seen what can be achieved when academia and the cultural sector align in pursuit of a shared vision.

"This important Inquiry will help influence thinking and shape the debate on Northern culture and drill-down into what is needed to level-up social and economic opportunities for the North. It will work to reframe the role of Northern culture in a post-covid world."

The Inquiry is led by the Northern Culture APPG's Co Chairs, Labour MP for Sunderland Central Julie Elliott and Conservative MP for Bury North James Daly.

Julie Elliott MP said: "I am proud to be the co-chair of the APPG Northern Culture as we today launch our Inquiry into how the Cultural Sector in the North can recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

“In our towns and cities across the North which once buzzed with activity, from live music shows, to theatre productions, to art galleries, and to nightclubs, it all, very suddenly, went quiet. Tickets weren’t sold, shows weren’t attended, opportunities disappeared, and ultimately, jobs were lost.

“This is why the return of the cultural sector post-Covid is so important. Not only does it enrich our everyday lives, but it provides highly skilled jobs to so many people, through the work of technicians, producers, electricians, stage managers and a range of different roles on all different levels. It’s a sector in which the UK is world renowned, exporting these incredible skill sets right across the world, with big industries seeking out those who have developed in the creative industries of the North of England.

“We cannot let the Cultural sector in the North fall by the wayside – and the best people to tell us how to stop this from happening, is the very people who made the sector so strong in the first place. Our APPG inquiry is an opportunity for the sector to make itself heard, and I hope that as many people can get involved and submit as possible.”

James Daly MP said: “Northern Culture has been hard hit by the Covid-19 crisis and if it is ever to fully recover from the acute impact of the pandemic, Northern Culture needs immediate and long-term support to safeguard and protect its future.

“MPs and Peers from across the North are supporting the Northern Culture APPG Inquiry and we are determined to provide a strong voice in Parliament for Northern Culture, not just the cities of the North but smaller towns like my constituency of Bury North, who have great potential to flourish in the cultural sector but we need rebuild and recover from the pandemic.

“No matter your background or where you are from, you should have access to culture. The Northern Culture APPG is determined to make a difference and make sure Northern Culture has a roaring voice in Parliament. I look forward to hearing evidence from voices across the North and building consensus and collaboration on what the North needs to level-up.”

As the academic partner, Northumbria University will play a key role in the Inquiry – helping to facilitate the exchange of ideas between academics, cultural organisations and MPs, with the aim of informing future policy and decision making.

As **Professor Tom Lawson**, Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences at Northumbria, explains: “Our role in the new Northern Culture APPG is a signal of our continued commitment and investment as a civic institution of the North.

“Partnership working is a stylistic trait at Northumbria in the region, the UK and overseas. Northumbria’s academic input into the Inquiry and the resulting report will help leverage knowledge exchange between academia and the cultural sector and generate new policies that position the North to take on the opportunities and challenges of the post-Covid world.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

To get involved in the Inquiry or submit written evidence please register your interest by emailing northerncultureappg@devoconnect.co.uk.

[The deadline for written evidence is 1700 on 10th May 2021.](#)

[Please click here to read more about how you can get involved.](#)

The Inquiry Launch, Oral Evidence Sessions and key questions are as follows:

March 18th 14:00 – 15:30

Inquiry Launch

Northern Culture in Recovery: Outlining the key issues facing Northern Culture in the immediate recovery of Covid-19

This event will launch our Inquiry and call for evidence on the impact of Covid-19 on Northern Culture. We will hear from key voices from across the Northern cultural sector, MPs and Peers on the scope of our Inquiry and the session will kickstart the debate on what the North needs to rebuild, rebalance and recover.

13th May 2021 14:00 – 15:30

Evidence Session I

Increasing the North's Access to Culture: How do we support and encourage young people's creativity and cultural job opportunities post-Covid?

1. How do we support and encourage young people's creativity and cultural job opportunities post-Covid?
2. How do we boost skills, create equal opportunities for all, promote diversity and support ambitions to empower future generations?
3. How do we help develop a supply chain for talent and harness what many towns and cities in the North have always done – acted as a 'pool of talent' with pathways into the creative sectors?
4. How do we increase higher levels of engagement with culture?

9th July 2021 14:00 – 15:30

Evidence Session II

Levelling up Cultural Infrastructure in our Northern Towns & Cities: How do we ensure a fair spread of funding for culture across our Northern communities?

1. How do we ensure a fair spread of funding for culture across our Northern communities?
2. How do we level-up investment to help restore and rebuild cultural institutions?
3. How do we improve the physical barriers to engagement with culture, be that inaccessible venues or poor transport links?
4. Should more powers and funding be devolved to build back culture in the North?

23rd September 2021 14:00 – 15:30

Evidence Session III

Getting Northern Culture back on track: What are the opportunities for Northern Culture?

1. What are the opportunities for Northern Culture?
2. How do we get confidence back in our audience post Covid-19?
3. What has been the impact on communities and welfare?
4. How do we promote a strong and cohesive brand for the North, building recognition of its' world class reputation?

TBC November 2021 - Findings Session and Launch

A showcase of the APPG's Inquiry Findings

The purpose of this session is to highlight the findings, proposals and suggestions to Government and launch the final APPG report. The report will reflect a strong pan-Northern coalition of voices, banging a collective drum for the North's cultural sector, making sure it is being heard and not left behind.

There will be no evidence collected for this session. Date TBC by the Secretariat in due course.

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