

# BASIC INCOME FOR THE ARTS IN IRELAND

## QUALITATIVE REPORT

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## Executive Summary

This qualitative report explores the impact of receiving a basic income for artists and creative arts workers in Ireland. It adds to, and can be read alongside, the quantitative insights on the Basic Income for the Arts pilot scheme produced by the *Basic Income for the Arts Research Team* (Feldkircher and O'Donnell, 2024; and Feldkircher, Ó Cuinn, and O'Donnell, 2023).

The primary ambition of the pilot scheme 'is that by addressing the issue of low pay and income instability in the sector, arts workers can focus on artistic and creative work and be able to increase their earnings from their creative practice, remain in the sector with a viable career path, and reduce the need to supplement their earnings through work in alternative sectors' (Ó Cuinn and Feldkircher, 2023 p.4).

To understand how receipt of the Basic Income for the Arts (BIA) payment impacts their professional and personal lives, one-to-one interviews with recipients took place to thematically explore different areas of interest (see Methodology section). These themes included: Income stability; Practice Development; Community and Social Impact; and Reflections and Future Orientation. Aspects of precarity are prevalent within the accounts of respondents, however, the subjective and emotional response to experiencing greater income stability speaks to a broader picture of insecurity (Taylor, 2023b) than specifically the precarious nature of work within the cultural and creative sector.

For recipients, the financial support of the BIA enables time for intrinsic and psychic rewards from their creative pursuits, time for familial and community relationships, a significant impact on mental health, and a hopeful disposition towards the future is borne out in the majority of recipients' stories.

### Overall findings:

1. Providing a basic income for the arts significantly impacts the subjective experience of financial uncertainty in the lives of recipients.
2. Reduced anxiety around making ends meet has increased time as a resource for creative pursuits.
3. Increased time for creative pursuits has resulted in greater artist autonomy - greater ability to plan and navigate their own creative paths.
4. Recipients articulate greater self-efficacy. They feel validated, empowered and confident to exert personal agency within their creative profession and their broader social relationships.

## Thematic Insights

### Key findings: Income stability

#### *Income security:*

1. The stability of the payment has significantly reduced underlying financial stress to provide relief and peace of mind that allows recipients to experience a reduced sense of anxiety about meeting their basic needs.
2. The BIA payment is primarily considered a supplementary income, the majority of recipients did not live off the basic income alone. For most, the BIA is allocated towards rent and bills (tax, groceries, business expenses, running and maintaining a vehicle, caring responsibilities).
3. Recipients, including those with disabilities, who reported the BIA as their primary source of income remained in a financially uncertain situation struggling to get by and subject to hardship should adverse events occur within their lives.
4. Recipients with disabilities report reductions to their medical and disability support as a result of accepting the BIA payment and obstacles around accepting work that impacts welfare thresholds.
5. For young and recently qualified artists the ability to pay their rent means that they can commit to renting longer term which enables them to retain their network, remain in proximity to work opportunities, and reconsider emigrating.
6. Recipients describe the basic income as a 'buffer' or 'safety net' (in situations where they have not been successful in, for example, selling a particular work, landing a particular role); supporting them financially to take the time to reassess their options or opportunities and importantly, try again.
7. Recipients spoke of being able to generate savings and invest in their future for the first time.
8. Those who identified as female, or a gender other than male, reported financial insecurity around maternity benefit, affordable childcare, and managing caring responsibilities alongside their art practice.
9. Recipients spoke of the importance of the basic income as a 'buffer' or 'safety net' for 'unexpected financial costs' like having to move house, or adverse life events including illness, relationship breakdown, family bereavement, or unfortunate events like the theft of equipment.
10. Recipients emphasised their effort to reflect and reprioritise their work practices. Saying no to work opportunities reflects greater artistic autonomy as they prioritise their own creative development and focus on higher quality, more meaningful, and long-term projects, commissions and collaborations.

### *Social Impact:*

1. Recipients acknowledge that the BIA payment makes them feel 'legitimate' and validated, that '*I am an artist*' and that being an artist is now a valid and valued profession.
2. Recipients across age groups report an increased ability to connect with their networks, to socialise and participate in cultural and community activities.

### *Mental Health:*

1. Recipients report better sleep quality and reduced stress levels which positively impact their physical and mental health.
2. Many recipients report feeling calmer with greater clarity and self-confidence to engage in their creative process and the future of their career.
3. Recipients report accessing free mental health support through Minding Creative Minds and, in some cases, continuing private mental health support.

### *Physical health, Leisure and self-care:*

1. Recipients describe having more time to consider focusing on their health as well as the resources to improve specific areas of their health including regular health check-ups, dental care, reproductive healthcare, trans health care, and addressing minor health concerns.
2. Leisure activities were often connected to recipients' creative and professional interests; however, they now have more freedom to explore these interests for personal enjoyment rather than solely for work.
3. Travel was considered an important part of leisure. Time that was not dedicated to producing work enabled recipients to plan trips that often combined work with time off.

## Key findings: Practice Development

### *Time and Focus:*

1. The opportunity to focus more on their specific creative interests opened new possibilities and career trajectories.
2. The BIA has enabled artists to dedicate more time to their artistic practice with less pressure to take on additional projects or work. This sense of 'time to make art' is especially important for disabled artists who often require more time to create work, or who operate at a pace in accordance with their impairment.
3. Recipients with young children found it extremely difficult to find time for their art practice due to a lack of affordable childcare.
4. While some recipients reduced the level of alternative work and some quit altogether, others report the way in which they structure creative labour according to the payment

i.e. working two or three days a week on writing, researching, preparing, making or practising for projects etc.

5. For young and emerging artists being in receipt of the BIA has enabled them to learn what it means to be self-employed as an artist and to develop and improve their self-discipline.
6. Time for artists who are more established, is bringing a shift in momentum and confidence enabling them to overcome insecurities in releasing completed work.
7. Recipients who have a specific commercial side to their art practice report focusing more of their time on learning new techniques to develop new designs.
8. Recipients also describe developing their critical awareness by travelling to experience important shows or exhibitions, gigs, performances or cultural events and often connect with other artists after the event.

#### *Artistic output and quality:*

1. Recipients report their ability to take on larger-scale more ambitious projects that were previously not feasible due to financial constraints.
2. Recipients articulate how less mental strain around finances has improved their focus, concentration, and mental well-being, which positively impacts their creative process.
3. They report that the time devoted to researching, experimenting, taking risks and failing has improved the quality of their work.
4. Recipients report that their ability to access and invest in resources to support their work contributes to an improvement in quality.

#### *Creative risks and experimentation:*

1. The financial stability provided by the BIA has encouraged recipients to feel more confident to invest time and resources into learning new skills, trying out different techniques, and collaborating with others in ways they couldn't before.
2. Recipients have used the BIA to pursue projects, residencies, and opportunities that involve more risk-taking, whether that's working in new mediums, exploring different genres, spending time on funding applications, or presenting work in unconventional spaces. The easing of financial pressure has given recipients the creative freedom to fail, learn, and grow, without the fear of jeopardizing their livelihoods.

## Key findings: Recognition and opportunities

### Professional growth and opportunities:

1. Recipients discuss the courses they have taken, ways in which they have upskilled or '*added strings to their bow*', and invested in quality materials, equipment or professional platforms linked to their creative practice.

2. Recipients describe new possibilities of investing in online and in-person courses, workshops and residencies to expand their career options, increase their level of income and ensure continuity of artistic labour.
3. Formal networking opportunities, often held during working hours, were impossible for some recipients to attend, especially those that had full time jobs or even worked part-time prior to receiving the BIA. Now, established recipients discuss accepting opportunities to network whether to promote a specific piece of work, acknowledge an award, or gain knowledge in a specific area without undue financial strain.
4. Recipients with a migrant background, and those with disabilities, face barriers in accessing formal networks and networking events. For migrants, it can take time to discover the network relevant to their field, with a lack of support to navigate access, participate and learn from it. For disabled artists, networking events can be inaccessible both in how the communication is mediated, the physical environment of the event space, and how the event is structured.
5. Being part of a collective enabled recipients to establish peer support and have greater social power to contribute to local politics and advocate for access to community spaces in locations where cultural centres or interdisciplinary spaces are lacking.
5. Recipients in urban locations spoke of the limited availability of studio space, the cost of studio space, and some formed collectives around specific identities to ensure greater social power in advocating for space and recognition of their art and identities.

#### *Collaborations and partnerships:*

1. Some have been able to hire more established professionals for collaboration while others use the BIA to subsidise payment to collaborators that would otherwise go unpaid or be underpaid.
2. Recipients also reported the importance of 'giving back' to their community by purposefully forming collaborations or partnerships they feel were lacking.
3. Artists with a migrant background experience barriers when navigating their inclusion to already established communities.

## Key findings: Community engagement and social impact

#### *Community Engagement:*

1. Recipients describe ways in which they engaged their local communities e.g. sourcing local crew, hosting reading groups, organising fundraising events, and directly connecting with community groups through facilitation, or specific State funded events such as Heritage Week or Culture Night.
2. Many recipients responded that their engagement has remained the same, or that they have been too focused on lining up successive work projects, that it was never really a part of their practice, or audience engagement (which is often a criterion for funding) is not one of their strengths. For artists with disabilities, particularly those who are neurodivergent or autistic, socialising and being around big groups of people can be challenging and instead they will interact sporadically with online groups or platforms.

3. Those who receive funding to engage with communities describe the difficulties of the way in which time is structured within funding models, that without continuity of funding the groups that are formed can easily dissipate once the project outcome is achieved.
4. Recipients described the importance of being allies to minority communities creating collectives for artists with minority identities, and gaining further training or mentorship to ethically facilitate their interactions with specific groups.

*Relationship with other artists:*

1. Being in receipt of the BIA has stimulated increased self-belief and confidence for many recipients which is encouraging them to reach out to other artists or their artistic community and participate in events.
2. Some recipients have received great support from fellow artists while others describe their relationship with those that did not receive the BIA as tense. While friends and family are delighted for recipients, many do not declare being in receipt of the BIA beyond these closed circles.
3. Recipients express a feeling of guilt, knowing the level of scarcity, deprivation and desperation that fellow artists operate at.
4. Those who encountered other artists in receipt of the BIA talk of sharing experiences and monitor the ways in which it is working for each other to share the benefits with others when appropriate. It is also creating synergies and connections among artists through work that is being created.

## Key findings: Reflective and future oriented aspirations

*Personal reflections:*

5. Many recipients talk of feeling empowered, of in control of the choices within their lives, and envisioning a viable career path longer-term.
6. The feeling of basic financial security was prevalent for most, the reduction in stress and the ability to pay bills, while the self-belief and sense of validation it has instilled for others to engage and participate with renewed energy was considered life-changing.
7. For those who are mid-career and in relationships, being able to fulfil personal and social expectations for their shared future has been hugely significant, for example, purchasing a home, or starting a family.
8. For those later in their career, the experience of being validated as an artist, that their work and effort up to now has meaning, has significantly empowered them to continue.
9. For others, the chance to reflect on their work practices and realign their creative labour towards more long-term goals without having to heavily supplement with alternative work has increased their confidence to experience their creative practice as a profession and acknowledge their identities as professional artists.
10. Being able to afford to care for their physical and mental health was significant. The ability to afford preventative health care such as visiting the doctor or dentist, make

better lifestyle choices, or focus on investing and supporting their mental health were all reflected as significant factors that improved in their lives.

*Unexpected benefits:*

1. The sense of being validated through the scheme, assigning value to what they do as artists brought unexpected benefits across their finances and personal and professional development.

*Unexpected challenges:*

1. Across art forms recipients report concerns about financial stability and sustaining the momentum of their careers when, or if, the basic income scheme ends.
2. Overall, recipients found it difficult that some applicants received the payment while others did not. As a result, they found it challenging to navigate relationships and conversations with those not in receipt of the BIA.
3. Recipients pointed to the challenges of the broader socioeconomic context such as increasing costs of living, especially rent, making it difficult to remain in desired locations.
4. Recipients who moved from social welfare benefits to the basic income found the transition from one system to the other difficult at the start of the scheme citing a lack of knowledge of the BIA scheme from Social Protection, and of welfare benefits being stopped weeks before the first BIA payment began resulting in recipients being without support for a number of weeks.

*Continuation of the BIA:*

1. A continuation of the scheme could provide the potential for some to earn a sustainable income and develop to full-time artists, and potentially enable savings towards their future.
2. The positive impact on mental health and wellbeing is acknowledged if the scheme were to continue.
3. Many worry they will return to precarious work situations which will once more limit their time and energy for their own creative practice, if the scheme is not continued / if their payment is not continued.

*Future plans and aspirations:*

4. Recipients reported a range of priorities specific to what they have managed to achieve thus far on the scheme and their future goals for their creative practice.
5. Despite feeling encouraged and supported to dedicate more time to developing their creative practice, recipients also articulated financial hurdles in getting their work beyond the development stage.

It's just a much freer and more contented way of life, being able to do the thing that you enjoy and have a passion for, and get the book deals and so on, and go to the festivals and all the rest, and work on your follow up novels, and just being able to do it without the financial stress, that is ultimately the most, the largest and most overriding benefit of this whole thing.

**(Male; Literature; Midland; Rent; 45-54)**

I think I'm eating better and I'm mentally better and I think it really shows also through my capacity to take on work and to create more work, or to have time to think about it, and read and inform myself better.

**(Female; Dance; West; Rent; Migrant; 25-34)**

Not always feeling I have to leave my career. Yeah. That as soon as there's a gap between jobs that I'm not in the, 'oh god, is this it?' I think that's the biggest. Just able to step away from that deep fear of 'I am responsible for working my way into an unliveable situation if I keep going with this work'. And I've seen it happen to people who are close to me.

**(Female; Dance; South-West; Rent; 35-44)**

I think it's basically been for me and [Wife], we've been able to get a house and plan a family and I think that definitely comes before my artistic world. It's my personal life, it's such a privilege now to be able to plan things together and we just didn't have the chance.

**(Male; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

Actually, if I give you one answer, at 56 going on 57 for the last couple of years, I believe in myself and I believe in what I do. For the first time in my life ever. So, it's taken me five and a half decades, but I believe in myself.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

## Background

This qualitative report explores the impact of receiving a basic income for artists and creative arts workers in Ireland. It adds to, and can be read alongside, the quantitative insights on the Basic Income for the Arts pilot scheme produced by the *Basic Income for the Arts Research Team* (Feldkircher and O'Donnell, 2024; and Feldkircher, Ó Cuinn, and O'Donnell, 2023). The Basic Income for the Arts (BIA) pilot scheme was introduced in Ireland in 2022, following the recommendation by the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce in the report *Life Worth Living* (2020) to pilot a universal basic income for 3 years (from August 2022 – 2025). The primary ambition of the pilot scheme 'is that by addressing the issue of low pay and income instability in the sector, arts workers can focus on artistic and creative work and be able to increase their earnings from their creative practice, remain in the sector with a viable career path, and reduce the need to supplement their earnings through work in alternative sectors' (Ó Cuinn and Feldkircher, 2023 p.4). The *Arts Work Conditions & Perspectives* statistical release as part of "A Portrait of the Arts Sector" highlights the circumstances of participants' working conditions and some of the inequalities experienced by the participants within the arts sector prior to the basic income payment (Ó Cuinn and Feldkircher, 2023). The BIA is a weekly payment of €325 to 2,000 recipients, paid in monthly instalments. The BIA payment is a reckonable income for the purposes of tax and social protection payments and is treated as earnings from self-employment.

To be eligible for the scheme applicants had to demonstrate that their creative practice met the definition of art in the Irish Government's Arts Act (2003) which is:

Any creative or interpretive expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and includes, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus, and architecture, and includes any medium when used for these purposes.

The scheme includes three strands: artists, creative arts workers, and recently trained artists or creative arts workers. Artists make up the majority of applicants, while creative arts workers (defined as '*someone who has a creative practice and whose creative work makes a key contribution to the production, interpretation or exhibition of the arts*') incorporate those within the creative industries whose work makes a key contribution to the arts sector e.g. light design, stage design, costume design etc. The recently trained stream for applicants enabled those who had completed their arts-related studies to be included, particularly important considering that they would have completed their studies and entered the sector during the pandemic. Applicants were required to provide proof of their eligibility as an artist or creative arts worker by uploading two pieces of evidence from the possible categories: (i) evidence of membership of a relevant resource or representative body, (ii) proof of income from their work as an artist or creative arts worker, and/or (iii) proof of active engagement with their creative field/art form<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Proof of active engagement included for example (non-exhaustively): 1) having undertaken an arts residency, 2) having had work included in a curated exhibition; 3) having been represented by a gallery, promoter, or agent; 4) had work produced by a recognised theatre/film/dance company; 5) had had work reviewed in the press; 6) had been credited for film or theatre work; 7) had received or had been shortlisted for an award by a recognised arts organisation; 8) professional references (on letter headed paper) for engagement/employment/work in a creative field; 9) had received a minimum of two unsuccessful

## Introduction

The findings in this report may read as overwhelmingly positive as the effect of being in receipt of a 3-year, unconditional monthly payment initiated towards the end of the Covid-19 pandemic significantly impacted the lives of recipients in different ways. Indeed, these responses need to be contextualised by the socioeconomic conditions of insecurity (Taylor, 2023b) that frame artists and creative arts workers professional and personal lives. As such, a broader and more extensive literature than what is touched on here is required. A review of current cultural policy in Ireland (Barton et al., 2023), the nature of work within the cultural and creative industries, and artists and creative workers subjectivities would contextualise the work of the Basic Income for the Arts research.

In brief, most recipients, despite the circumstances of the pandemic, already experienced insecurity (Taylor, 2023a; Taylor, 2023b), precarity (Gill and Pratt, 2008; McRobbie, 2009; 2018), 'hustle culture' (Bellini and Lomazzi, 2022), and ontological precarity (Duarte, 2020). Banks and Hesmondhalgh (2009) describe the circumstances of creative work in the following way:

creative work is project-based and irregular, contracts tend to be short-term, and there is little job protection; that there is predominance of self-employed or freelance workers; that career prospects are uncertain and often foreshortened; that earnings are usually slim and unequally distributed, and that insurance, health protection and pension benefits are limited; that creatives are younger than other workers, and tend to hold second or multiple jobs; and that women, ethnic and other minorities are under-represented and disadvantaged in creative employment. (Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009 p.420)

In addition to the above, workers that experience income instability also experience broader challenges in their lives regarding time. Neilson and Rossiter (2005) quote Alex Foti's (2004, np) notion of precarity "being unable to plan one's time, being a worker on call where your life and time is determined by external forces". This challenge of being unable to plan one's time effects one's perceived self-efficacy<sup>2</sup>, that is, the belief about their capabilities to exert personal agency or exercise control over their own lives, as well as plan for a future (Taylor, 2023; Hitlin and Johnson, 2015; Hitlin and Kwon, 2016; Rosa, 2019). One of the primary aims of the BIA pilot was to help artists deal with income instability and low pay within the sector. Aspects of precarity are prevalent within the accounts of respondents, however, the subjective and emotional response to experiencing greater income security speaks to a broader picture of insecurity than specifically the precarious nature of work within the cultural and creative sector. For recipients, the financial support of the BIA enables time for intrinsic and psychic rewards from their creative pursuits, time for familial and community

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grant applications from a recognised arts organisation; 10) had worked with local arts via Local Authority Arts Office or other community organisation such as local school, community centre, library, local arts group; 11) website/digital presence for artistic work; or 12) a relevant qualification or training in the arts; and expenditure on resources for creative practice

<sup>2</sup> "The core idea is that human beings' ability to act and learn, to enter into and maintain social relationships and to be satisfied in life – in short: the overall quality of human relationships to the world – ultimately comes down to subjects' ability to be confident in themselves, to master challenges, to influence their environment in a controlled manner, and thus to accomplish things in an organised way". (Bandura, 1977 in Rosa, 2019 p. 159-160)

relationships, a significant impact on mental health, and a hopeful disposition towards the future is borne out in the majority of recipients' stories.

When recipients were asked to describe what their lives were like prior to receiving the BIA, many spoke of experiencing them as unstable, unpredictable or precarious. The struggle to ensure continuous income within their creative field and from their creative practice within a sector of highly educated individuals (86.5% have attained a third level education, compared to 53% in the general population (Ó Cuinn and Feldkircher, 2023) but earning low-pay meant that the nature of their employment included a mix of employment, self-employment, part-time or casual work, often topped up with grants or funding awards (Arts Council, 2010). Alongside this, recipients viewed their lives as '*operating in survival mode*', in a constant juggle of working multiple jobs or hustling to gain freelance work, short-term contracts, or gigs to pay rent, bills and other living expenses all the while fearful of gaps that may occur between such modes of employment that would stymie development or require interaction with Social Protection. Many spoke of taking jobs that were unrelated to their art practice or somewhat related but not creatively stimulating, just to survive, acknowledging that this compromised their ability to focus on their creative practice. Major life events such as relationship changes, caring responsibilities, health issues and the COVID-19 pandemic further destabilised recipients' circumstances prior to receiving the BIA. Recipients that were in relationships where they were financially supported i.e. partner earned a sufficient and reliable income that supported the household, or who had a relatively successful commercial practice alongside their art practice, described more stable circumstances and instead reported broader sectoral issues such as getting work beyond the developmental stage and accessing funding.

We know that social differences impact the distribution of precarity within the arts sector and that precarity tends to be experienced more acutely by those artists who have come from less advantaged social backgrounds (Serafini and Banks, 2020 p. 352). Unpaid labour, or what is also termed 'hope labour' (Mackenzie and McKinlay, 2020), is often the basis of forging a career or portfolio within specific artforms for exposure, showcasing one's ability within sectoral networks e.g. film or theatre, taking unpaid internships, or doing work in the 'hope' that it will pay in the future, is not feasible for those already experiencing disadvantage (Brook et al., 2020a; Brook et al., 2020b). Notwithstanding generational disadvantage, artists are more likely to work multiple jobs, work part-time on their art practice, or withdraw from their art practice altogether. For others, their creative practice may also be precarious and not fulfil their social expectations, that is, what they consider to be the norm among their class and peers e.g. being granted a loan by a financial institution, owning their own home, running a car, enjoying a holiday, and even starting a family. We also know of challenges and discrimination within the arts sector experienced by specific ethnic and minority groups (Arts Council, 2023; Safe to Create, 2024).

Given this backdrop, with some evidence emerging of UBI within the creative industries (Pöldver, 2018; Wijngaarden et al., 2024) along with broader evidence of the effects of a universal basic income on recipients' financial, health and mental well-being (Hamilton et al., 2024; Silver and Zhang, 2022; McDowell and Ferdosi, 2021; Banerjee et al. 2020; Wilson and McDaid, 2021; Roosma, 2022; Simpson et al., 2017; Jauch; 2015) as well as interactive data and resources provided by the [Basic Income Earth Network](#) (BIEN) and the [Stanford Basic Income Lab](#) we now explore the experiences of Irish artists and creative workers.

## Methodology

This section outlines the methodology of the qualitative research including the research questions; the research approach and method; and participant information. The qualitative themes selected in this part of the pilot research aimed to compliment the [quantitative research](#) and explore thematically the subjective, professional and societal impacts of receiving basic income support for artists and creative workers in Ireland.

Research Topics	Survey data	Qualitative Themes
Arts work viability	Artist demographics	Income stability
Well being	Income sources	Practice development
Income stability	Spending habits	Recognition and opportunities
Practice development	Financial well being	Social Impact
Sectoral retention	Work and job quality	Reflective and future aspirations
Recognition and opportunities	Perception of the arts sector	
	Time use	
	Health and well being	
	Experiences of discrimination	
	Care work	
	Household work	
	Well being and free time	

**Table 1:** Research topics, quantitative data and qualitative themes.

### Research questions

The central research questions were devised to compliment the quantitative themes addressed bi-annually through the survey including gaps in the data. They included:

- How does basic income support affect the financial stability of artists and creative workers?
- What changes occur in the artistic output and creativity of artists and creative workers receiving basic income?
- How does basic income support influence the well-being and mental health of artists?
- What are the broader social impacts of providing basic income to artists?

## The research approach and methods

From the research questions a guiding thematic framework was devised to structure the interview process as set out in the table below:

<b>Income Stability</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Income stability</li><li>2. Everyday life</li><li>3. Health and well being</li></ol>
<b>Practice Development</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Time and focus</li><li>2. Artistic output and quality</li><li>3. Creative risks and experimentation</li></ol>
<b>Community engagement and social impact</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Community engagement</li><li>2. Social perception and relationships</li></ol>
<b>Reflective and future oriented questions</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Personal reflections</li><li>2. Future plans and aspirations</li></ol>

**Table 2:** Guiding thematic framework

All basic income recipients were contacted with information about the qualitative research through the BIA portal. They received a participant information sheet (see Appendix 1 Participant Information Sheet) that explained the nature of the research. They were invited to register their interest in participating in the qualitative interviews. 295 recipients registered their interest to take part in this research. Of the 295 applicants, 80 recipients were selected to consent (see Appendix 1 for Consent Form) to the interview process based on their different art forms, BIA stream, demographics, and intersectionality. The 80 recipients were broken down into two rounds of interviewing, first 40 and second 40. From these groups 52 recipients in total consented to be interviewed. (Please see Appendix 2, tables 1-7 for participant breakdown). Semi-structured in-depth interviews were then carried out with artists and creative workers receiving basic income who provided consent.

## Consent process

The participant information sheet and consent form provided details on the voluntary nature of this research process and that they could withdraw at any stage prior to publication of

insights. Participants were assured that their BIA income was in no way impacted by participating or not participating, and that all data is anonymised and scrubbed of identifying data prior to publication. Consent forms were issued through the BIA portal, signed and resubmitted by the participants. Participants consented to the interview being recorded and transcribed for analysis.

## Data collection and analysis

Participants were given the option of online or in-person interviews to ensure flexibility. They were then contacted by the researcher to organise a date and time for the interview to take place. Online interviews lasted from 1-1.5hrs, while in-person interviews lasted 1-3hrs and took place in a location convenient for the participant. The interview recordings were transcribed for analysis and coded inductively using MAXQDA software.

## Focus group on Disability

A focus group on artists with disabilities in receipt of the BIA was held to understand how the BIA impacted artists with disabilities. Like the interview process, recipients that registered 'Yes' to having a disability were contacted through the BIA portal, provided a participant information sheet (see Appendix 3) including Easy-to-Read format, and asked to register their interest in taking part in the focus group through the portal.

Following the ethos of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 'disability' is understood to include "those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UN, 2006). This statement is viewed as an open-ended inclusive approach to the question of 'who counts' as disabled. Terminology in relation to disability is evolving. While the UNCRPD refers to person-first language e.g. person with disability and is the preferred option across legislation and policy, identity-first language is often used by Disabled People's Organisations (DPO's) to represent the social model language e.g. disabled people. I use these terms interchangeably throughout to refer to persons with disabilities / disabled people, or artists with disabilities / disabled artists.

10 recipients across a range of impairments and art forms were selected to participate in the focus group that took place in-person. Recipients completed a consent form (see Appendix 3) prior to the focus group commencing, with 6 of the 10 selected participants attending the focus group on the day resulting in some perspectives not represented. Participants of the focus group experienced sensory and psychosocial disabilities as well as chronic pain.

In addition, an in-person meeting and an online meeting were organised with disability advocates and representative organisations to explore further the experience of disability and the basic income. While 8 organisations were invited to participate in such a discussion, 3 organisations (Disabled Artists Disabled Academics (DADA); Safe to Create; and Equity) participated.

## Limitations of the research

The scope of this research was to identify gaps within the quantitative research and to qualitatively explore the impact of the BIA on recipients' creative practice and their everyday lives. Future research will be needed to synthesise the quantitative and qualitative research and contextualise the findings within the regulatory infrastructure and socioeconomic conditions of the arts sector in Ireland.

## Income stability

This section explores the impact of the BIA on recipients' financial stability, as well as any changes to meet cost of living expenses. It will highlight the primary themes occurring within recipients' narratives when asked to discuss their sense of financial stability. These themes include their sense of security from the BIA; the BIA as a safety net; reassessing work practices; and underpaid or unpaid work across the art forms. It also explores how recipients perceive their financial stability has impacted their daily life and routines, physical and mental health, and routines of self-care.

Recipients across art forms described receiving the basic income payment '*like winning the lottery*', providing '*a real comfort*', that it has enabled savings for the first time, it has been '*life-changing*', of feeling in charge of their lives, and for the first time feeling like they have a stable financial situation. The consistency, security, and longevity of the payment means that it acts as a 'safety net' in recipients' everyday lives enabling them to plan into the future. It also has no conditionality attached to it, meaning there is no external expectation on the creative output nor outcomes of recipients.

Yeah, it's quite significant because ... it was the first time I had like a real stable income in my life, because having worked in the music industry ... before, through a major label scenario, [y]ou ... would get these big lumps of money and you don't, it kind of dwindles over a period of time and you don't know when the next one is going to come. And it's a very hard way to live financially, but when I started getting this basic income it felt like I could actually plan things out and allocate funds. And it's helped me to start saving money effectively for the first time as well, because when I do other jobs ... I have enough coming in that I can put some aside and I know where everything is and where it's going, and beforehand I didn't really feel like it was that way, I felt like it was just scrambling to make ends meet, so in that way it's been really good.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; Mid-West; Rent; 25-34)**

Yeah. It's a safety net, really – I'm even putting my hands out gesturing. Because you always just feel like you're just going to fall through at some point. It's going to cover your basics, and everything after that feels like... that you have the freedom to pursue it, because the basics are covered. So, that would be the main thing – it's security. And in that security, is the freedom to keep going, really and truly.

**(Female; Multidisciplinary; Mid-West; Mortgage; 45-54)**

Receiving the basic income payment each month over the course of 3 years provides a strong sense of security including the ability to pay basic bills, to have a safety net or buffer when work is sparse or when adverse life events unexpectedly occur, and to generate savings. It has also enabled some recipients to turn away from work that does not align with their principles or values to concentrate more time and energy on their own creative practice, and for others it has increased their confidence to negotiate their fees or rates. However, providing a basic income payment has not removed the precarious nature of

employment nor the structural inequalities within the arts sector. Instead, the BIA provides basic financial support to recipients enduring these adverse conditions.

## 1. Security and stress

Security within recipients' narratives is experienced in two primary ways: in one way the stability of the payment has significantly reduced underlying financial stress to provide an enormous amount of relief and peace of mind that allows recipients to experience a reduced sense of anxiety about meeting their basic needs. One recipient described how, on a physical level she could feel her shoulders drop at the relief of having to do less '*ducking and diving and dealing with things*'. Relieving the constant underlying financial stress, especially for those in precarious creative professions, enabled recipients to budget and plan with a relative amount of certainty, to embrace the 'healthy stress' around creative work, and focus on developing their creative process without constantly worrying about making ends meet.

Yeah, I think all artists are [stressed] – it's stressful to create work, it's stressful to make money, it's stressful to be accepted, it's stressful to be acknowledged, and all these things feed on your insecurities, like 'Am I an artist at all?' that's a big part of it, like how do you know? Are you deluding yourself? And I don't think I'm imbued with too much arrogance, but I find that every time I get a rejection letter there is a sort of a sense 'What am I going to do now?' That's been taken away. I can say 'Oh I'm going to do this now, because I got that rejection letter.' So that has affected... but if I get a positive response to an application, it also means 'Oh' that most of that money can go into the project, because I now have the buffer zone to keep me alive in the meantime. So yeah, from a stressful sense it's allowed that space to not be as stressful, so it's not the main concern, the main concern is probably creative stressful rather than financial.

**(Male; Disability; Film; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

...a huge change, it's just been a big relief on financial stress, as I said, it was the anxiety about getting certain payments and not knowing when the next one is going to come, and when stuff like your car insurance pops up or whatever, that would have always given me a pang of - oh no, this is coming up now again, what am I going to do? Whereas now I'm ready for it and I know I'll be able to cover it and it'll all be normal.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; Mid-West; Rent; 25-34)**

In another way, recipients report the practical ways they use the basic income payment to ensure security in their lives. In this sense, the BIA payment is allocated towards rent and bills (tax, groceries, business expenses, running and maintaining a vehicle, caring responsibilities). For young and recently qualified artists the ability to pay their rent means that they can commit to renting longer term which enables them to retain their network, remain in proximity to work opportunities, and reconsider emigrating. Recipients that could no longer afford to rent in Dublin spoke of their initial fear of losing work opportunities by relocating, however, being in receipt of the BIA lessened the impact of relocating and enabled recipients to retain strong ties to their old network while adjusting to a new one. Recipients who lived with their parents were aged from 25yrs - 42yrs and from all regions of the country. They spoke of rent as extortionately high, or suitable properties being

unavailable and that returning home to where family dynamics were supportive was an ‘embarrassing’ but viable option. They contribute a nominal fee towards the household and try to save money for when the broader housing situation improves.

## 1.2 Safety net and buffer

Success, in any measure, within the arts sector and among artists is highly competitive e.g. an acting role, a funding application, or having work selected for a curated exhibition etc. When operating in ‘survival mode’, succeeding in the competitive nature of the field is tied to the necessity to meet their basic needs, and also to one’s sense of self-worth. Recipients describe the basic income as a ‘buffer’ or ‘safety net’ in those situations where they have not been successful, supporting them financially to take the time to reassess their options or opportunities and importantly try again.

I think it’s like a buffer, that you know if you don’t sell a painting that that’s coming in and that you are going to be able to pay the [electricity] bill, you are going to be able to get diesel for the car, you’re going to be able to buy a uniform for your child.

**(Female; Visual arts; West; Rent; 45-54)**

...there's been bits and pieces here for a TV show, I got down to two people and the other person got it, so trying to keep your mind focussed on the fact that okay it's not about your talent, so, having an anchor in being able to do my own thing every day so the BIA helps me not fall into like beating myself up because I didn't get a job whereas if I was worried about money and having to make money to survive, not getting that job would have impacted whatever I was doing to survive, which would have impacted me, so it gives me a psychological balance I think and the ability to take time out and reassess.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; Mid-East; No fixed abode; 45-54)**

Now the other part of it was when you make an application to any... the Arts Council, the Screen Ireland and whatever, there's a good chance you won't get it, because it's just a numbers game, you know? It's whatever reasons, it's impossible to find out at times, and maybe [I'm] no good, that's a possibility too, but I'll accept that. This has taken away all that and it's created a line of continuity – you can... no matter what happens, you fall into that – so that is the safety net thing I talked about earlier.

**(Male; Disability; Film; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

The steady income encouraged recipients, where possible, to budget and plan to create a safety net in their everyday lives. For the first time, recipients spoke of being able to generate savings and invest in their future.

In this year I have managed to kind of save some of it. This year is going to be, because of the different work that's rolling out, ... a lot of that basic income will go straight into savings.

**(Female; Disability; Theatre; Dublin; Rent; 45-54)**

It has definitely improved my savings and my ability to save. And me thinking about saving and thinking about times when I might not be able to work or God forbid anything happened to my main job or anything like that. So, it definitely has improved my ability to save, it has lessened my worry level about money to a very large degree. I mean I obviously still think about it and I'm considerate of it, but I don't worry the same way I used to, the pit of your stomach kind of.

**(Female; Theatre; South West; Rent; 35-44)**

Social differences impact the ability of recipients to save. Depending on their social background, life stage, the nature of their creative practice, level of alternative work, and household income, some recipients spoke of the BIA as supplementary income i.e. when earnings from their creative practice or alternative work was sufficient, it enabled them to put money aside into savings. For most, the income is not enough for major financial commitments like a mortgage, but it does create a foundation for recipients to build on. Recipients regarded their savings as an opportunity to build credit; to mitigate against poor working conditions such as lack of pension, sick pay or maternity benefit; for healthcare; to begin a pension; or be more generous and supportive towards family and friends.

I think the main thing for me has been I've been actually able to save money, before that was never really an option, but this has just given me that little bit of savings that then in the back of my mind there's a rainy-day fund or there's funds there that we can start to think about purchasing. We are in the process of purchasing a house in [Mid-West], an old cottage in [Mid-West]. So, you know I don't think I'd be there actually if I didn't have the BIA, so it's just given that little bit of freedom to forward plan as much as anything else on the day-to-day.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; West; Rent; 35-44)**

It gave me some financial stability. There just wasn't really financial stability there, and since getting the BIA I've been able to save some money for the first time in my life basically.

**What would you see those savings for? What do you think they're for?**

What are they for? I suppose for the option of maybe having a family. Even the thoughts of taking maternity leave, was just something that I couldn't afford and now what I have in mind with the money I've saved is perhaps I would be able to take a couple of months off if I wanted to have a baby. So, that was a huge thing for me. That was quite a life changing thing.

**(Female; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

For others, the precarious nature of their creative practice meant that the BIA supported them during breaks in contracts or quiet times within the industry. This was particularly prevalent from recipients within the film, music, and animation industry where at the time of interview both film and animation were considered quiet (August-October 2024). A few even reported that the BIA was their sole income and that they scraped by each month. In these cases, recipients had previously engaged with social protection for support. It would be important that recipients are informed of the way in which they can interact with social protection should their circumstances deteriorate while receiving the BIA.

So for example, I've worked with [Animation studio] for the last 11 months, and my contract ended at the end of July, and since then I haven't... there has been a huge gap in the industry now with jobs. There hasn't been one offer on the table from any studio, and it looks like I might be out of a job 'til March, so because of the BIA I'm actually able to survive in between searching for another contract.

(Female; Film; Dublin; with parents; 25-34)

Recipients spoke of the importance of the basic income as a 'buffer' or 'safety net' for 'unexpected financial costs' like having to move house, or adverse life events including illness, relationship breakdown, family bereavement, or unfortunate events like the theft of equipment. In these incidents, the BIA acts as a buffer towards what could have caused hardship, including debt. As example, one recipient spoke of living on a boat, which then took on water while he and his young family were on it. Despite investing in getting the boat fixed, he no longer felt that his family were safe living on the boat and so they spent almost a year trying to find an affordable home to rent. However, before they had found a new home a family member suddenly passed away, incurring more financial cost including time for caring responsibilities towards family members. Nine months later a substantial amount of his equipment was stolen. He reflects:

None of these things I would have been able to take care of without that money coming in... but the thing that was the greatest effect was ... I never worried about money. I had an incredible amount of worries in that two years, but I never worried about money... I don't understand how I kept going, but I was still able to support myself, and especially when all my gear was taken, I didn't have a way to support myself... the fact that it [BIA] was there was such an unspoken support or sense of solace

(Male; Film; Mid-West; Rent; 35-44)

### 1.3. Reassessing work practices

As indicated in section 1.1. there is a sense of security and an easing of external pressure around finances and meeting one's basic needs. As a result, recipients emphasise their effort to reflect and reprioritise their work practices. Some laid out a 3-year plan with specific goals to achieve over the course of the pilot while others refocused on their creative practice. Saying no to work opportunities reflects greater artistic autonomy as they prioritise their own creative development and focus on higher quality, more meaningful, and long-term projects, commissions and collaborations. While some articulate adopting a more '*business mindset*' i.e. weighing up the amount of time and energy involved against the rate offered, others spoke of taking work only to contribute towards savings or work that aligned with a sense of creative freedom or artistic integrity. In this vein, they also negotiate better rates and terms, rather than feeling desperate to take any available work. This in turn develops more long-term planning and can build lasting work relationships with clients and other artists. Recipients also articulated reasons for turning down or turning away from specific work including maintaining integrity, prioritising health, developing clear boundaries around their role and responsibilities, feeling less '*need to be out there hustling to earn money*' and saying '*no to things that were pulling them in different directions*'.

And especially then because I've learned to say no to things as well. Especially the first years of the income thing. I could say no to things that weren't going to benefit me as an artist or... Not even financially. As in they wouldn't be very well paid, so there wouldn't be benefit in terms of the amount of work I'd have to put in, so that's a thing as well.

**(Female; Multidisciplinary; Border; with parents; 25-34)**

Yeah, I was thinking about this interview and that was one of the main things, it's brought a sense of stability in many facets of my life, financially one, it's sort of been revolutionary ..., so I was always lucky enough to have money coming in and if there wasn't maybe enough coming in I could sort of hustle for work and take on more teaching or take on more wedding gigs but now I have the freedom to not feel the need to do that or always feel the need to say yes to whatever is going to come in, so that is one of the main sort of ... things that I felt has changed.

**(Male; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

## 1.4. Unpaid or underpaid

The response to whether recipients engaged in unpaid work varied with prevalence depending primarily on career stage. Recipients who were mid or later in their career stated that at the beginning of their careers, particularly in film, music and theatre, there is an expectation to work for free to demonstrate their passion towards their profession and to establish their experience. As an emerging film director states, work is often completed in the expectation of results that are not guaranteed:

Yeah, I think unpaid work is a huge issue in film. I think there is the expectation that you love this, so it's okay for you to work for free sometimes, and for me working for free might just mean developing without pay, like I did with the TV show, and I was told that if we did get funding that I would be reimbursed for my work, but I think without this money I would have thought about that a lot more, but I felt like I didn't have to worry about it so much.

**(Female, Disability; Film; Dublin; with parents; 25-34)**

Visual artists gave examples of submitting work to exhibitions without being paid or having a solo exhibition show in a highly rated space where the pay was meagre for the work involved. They also acknowledged that it is unsustainable and a privilege to undertake unpaid work. Early career recipients that were living at home were at an advantage to explore more short-term unpaid options while in receipt of the BIA. The BIA for emerging artists has provided financial support when developing new projects or when undertaking unpaid opportunities to expand their portfolios or experience in their creative field.

"It's had such a huge impact in that I can work on my own projects but also, I can take on unpaid projects that are like just really good experience and another credit to have. Or even, like, something that's really low budget. So, I've been able to make, direct, some music videos that I wouldn't have been able to do otherwise and I made, a piece with a fashion designer as well, and then I also produce, which I know isn't like a craft for this scheme but I also kind of do that so I was able to produce for a short film that's done well in festivals. And

I've just been line producer on a music video for a big up and coming artist which is really exciting..."

**(Female; Disability; Film; with parents 18-24)**

Those who were mid-career spoke of instilling boundaries around unpaid work and only took on '*personal projects*' that may bring benefit longer term. Receiving the BIA did not encourage recipients to work for free, rather it supported recipients to make informed decisions regarding work opportunities and to set a rate for their work that they felt reflected the value of their work in terms of time and quality.

The promise of exposure and working for free that hopefully something... that may eventually turn to paid work. Now, again, it makes a difference whether that's my own personal choice, things that I... let's say if I start a new band or if I record new music and I send it out there, I record it and publish it, that's my own personal decision and I take the risk. But the moment I'm asked to do work as a professional. It has to... there has to be kind of monetary compensation... there has to be money being paid... I think it's important that as artists we get paid fairly and we put ourselves in the position of accepting payment, making sure that as a professional we're... so, basically, the fact that I'm getting the basic income scheme has never been an incentive for me to say okay, do you know what, I can do this job for this person for free because I'm getting the basic income scheme. I don't think that's the purpose of it.

**(Male; Music, West; Rent; Migrant; 45-54)**

Recipients that were involved in community arts or socially engaged art e.g. facilitating workshops within schools or communities, spoke of the unrealistic expectations around the rate of pay and the work expected, and having to renegotiate what is possible within stated budgets. Those who relied on funding to support their creative practice spoke of the hours that go into generating and writing an application that is unpaid as funding is focused on the work that will take place.

Yeah. Writing an application, that's unpaid work. ... for an example of what my application... I need to have five or six partner bodies, like five or six members of staff all signed onto it, so it's chasing them, emailing... getting [Local Authority] on board on a project ... you're not getting funded by them, but you're trying to find someone in an office ... so chasing them and writing a 60-page document, getting letters, signing off on locations, on equipment, ... putting together a project is [curse] months of work ... and then you've got to itemise your budget items ... but that's just for the day of making the project.

**(Male; Film; Mid-West; Rent; 35-44)**

I spent six weeks writing an application recently – and I've just realised, I think what the BIA has allowed me, the biggest gift it's given me – and it's a double-edged sword – is a reality check. That again, our conditions are just too hard in a way. That you have to have so many very specific capacities to... I don't know, meander through. And I was quite shocked that it took me so long to put together an application – but it just did. ... And then I was unsuccessful in it, just feels like a waste of time. And the problem is that there's too many of

us applying for too little funds. And that's the problem across the board everywhere. But I can't help... I start trying to get organised and think, well can we not just go on rotation, we choose who gets it and then everyone else spends however amount of time they would have spent on writing the application, doing something else. It just feels like a ginormous waste of people's time and energy. And there's something about this lack of transparency for accessibility levels for slowness or what language you have, depending on how you put these big whopping applications together.

**(Queer; Visual arts; with parents; 35-44)**

Both extracts above exemplify the level of the work that goes into submitting a funding application. In addition, the later extract illustrates the way in which the funding model for the Arts in Ireland adds to the precarity of artists working lives as well as the inaccessibility of written applications for mainstream funding by recipients with disabilities or those for whom English is not their native language.

## 1.5. Everyday life, health and wellbeing

When asked how the BIA has impacted their daily life and routines, many recipients responded by describing their way of life as frugal. They describe how over the years they have become so used to being cautious, or living a 'simplistic' life and surviving on 'very little' or as one recipient put it – *'scraping by, but also grinding'*.

We're so used to not spending and saving for projects that you learn to be kind of frugal, or that discipline of not wildly spending, because you don't have it first of all, and two, anything that you have, you just... I think in terms of recording costs nearly all the time. I just do.

**(Male; Music; South-West; Rent; 55-64)**

Similar to section 1.1. recipients reiterate the relief from financial stress within their day-to-day lives, the removal of the underlying anxiety and their ability to let that stress go to focus on their work. Saying that, the anxiety of the scheme ending does remain with some recipients who worry about what will happen, or how things will change again if, or when, the scheme ends. For now, the peace of mind experienced in the relief from financial stress enables recipients to engage more with their social networks and their broader community.

### 1.5.1. Social Impact

The increased resources of finance and time have reduced feelings of guilt and the pressure to be constantly hustling. This has enabled a more balanced and healthy lifestyle that increases their social capital<sup>3</sup>. Recipients across the age groups report an increased ability to connect with their networks, to socialise and participate in cultural and community activities, particularly important for those who are older, to prevent isolation. For example, they report affording to go out for drinks with friends, have the occasional meal or other

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<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu carried out the first systematic contemporary analysis of social capital. He defined it as: "The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition." (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 248).

social activities with friends. They can attend shows, exhibitions, concerts and other cultural events. They can support and attend events of friends and community members, all of which have the potential for opportunities to collaborate with others in the arts community.

I am able to do a lot of lifestyle changes to be more social, therefore be a lot more mentally healthy, because that's also very important after Covid, to stay in contact with other people. So that's had a huge impact for my day-to-day, and just in general just an ease, I don't have a weight weighing me down of pressure.

**(Female; Film; Dublin; with parents; 25-34)**

I don't think there's anything specifically or a routine that I've gotten into that was helped by the payment but definitely kind of the things that come along every once in a while that you know there's, somebody's organising something, you say, yeah I can do that, I can go to that, going out, being able to pay for meals, buy a round of drinks, whatever it is, that has suddenly become not an issue, not an issue I'd have to think about or worry about.

**(Male; Literature; Midland; Rent; 45-54)**

I try to be a lot more sociable...Because I have money to afford it, I can actually, like, go out and eat food, drink with friends, and not just be like, well, I got money for the bus and money for the bus home.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; Dublin; With parents; 25-34)**

It was my nephew's 40th there two weeks – I couldn't believe it, 40 – and I was able to get him a gift. And that was lovely to be able to do, without kind of... just saying, there's something I knew he'd like. And then next week I've a friend who's doing a show in The Fringe, so I'm able to buy tickets for that. And then there's another show that I want to see, so that's two shows in one week – that would rarely happen. Now, they're in The Fringe, so they're not extortionate – but I can afford it.

**(Male; Street Arts; Dublin; Rent; 55-64)**

You can make different choices ... I just think it changes how you are around people. Like you know, you're not thinking about 'Well who's going to pay the bill?' or 'How is the bill going to get paid?' or 'Am I going to be able to go to that work event that I was invited to go to?' or you know, etcetera. So I think there's really interesting and obvious ramifications in our life so far.

**(Female; Visual arts; South West; Rent; 25-34)**

Alongside the capability to be more active within their social and cultural networks, some recipients articulate a shift in their perception of self and their social status. Recipients acknowledge that the BIA payment makes them feel '*validated*' and '*legitimate*', that '*I am an artist*' and that being an artist has value and is a valid profession, not a hobby nor lifestyle choice. While economic capital may not be on par with their peers working in other professions, the financial support positively impacts their ability to interact with those of a

similar status, or class background. It enables some to feel that they can achieve a 'normal' (in line with social expectations) life.

I mean I'm in my 50s now right so for the first time I didn't have to worry, I could be a little bit more similar to friends I have and not be thinking, oh they're going to do that, I can't do that or if I do that, I can't do this over here, it gave me a little bit more freedom to be more social.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; Mid-East; No fixed abode)**

An increased sense of balance and of a healthy lifestyle is also reported in the choices that recipients make in their everyday lives including 'healthier' food choices, buying better quality clothes, purchasing gifts for family and friends, contributing proportionally to household expenditure, running and maintaining their car and with one recipient reporting he now provides a weekly Sunday roast. In addition, younger recipients have restructured their working day to develop a 'consistent' routine. Again, the sense of validation that recipients experience as a result of the BIA enables them to view themselves and their work as a full-time profession:

And routine wise I have kind of settled into, I am now a full-time, I'm not working full-time hours but I am thinking full-time hours, if that makes sense? So, I write every day, I get up at the same time every day, like every day I'm producing something. And because it's only a pilot scheme I kind of wanted to try get as much work done in that time because I don't know what's coming down the line and that's really frightening. So, I'm trying not to look at it but in terms of what I can do here I've secured another book deal and I'm constantly working, I'm trying to get my next thing done and it's made me excited about being a writer, but also it has allowed me to feel legitimate in claiming my day and my space and also because I don't have to, because again my partner, he would never think this but I don't have to feel like I'm playacting at something, I'm legitimately being financially supported to do what I'm doing every day, and I think that's made a massive difference in how I perceive myself in my own work as well.

**(Non binary; Disability; Literature; West; Rent; 25-34)**

Oh boy, absolutely, yes. I mean, we are not having to watch what we buy from the supermarket, you know, we can have the occasional nice meal.

**(Female; Theatre; South West; Rent; Migrant; 65-74)**

## 1.5.2. Mental Health

In section 1.1. we acknowledged financial stress and uncertainty as challenging in recipients' everyday lives. When asked about the impact of income stability on their mental health recipients described it as '*transformative*' and '*life-changing*' in reducing the level of anxiety they experience in making ends meet. We know that artists face challenges in dealing with the precarious nature of their employment and that financial support e.g. funding, is highly competitive. They can also experience a range of mental challenges around the nature of their creative practice e.g. 'the solitary nature of much creative practice, critical feedback of

audiences and gatekeepers, or the general pressures associated with maintaining artistic relevance or integrity' (Siddins et al., 2016 p.25-26).

Many recipients reported feeling calmer with greater clarity and self-confidence to engage in their creative process and the future of their career. For young and emerging artists trying to establish themselves, the basic income has encouraged a sense of belonging within their creative field and enjoyment in their creative process. Amidst unpaid work, short-term contracts, and working to improve their creative practice, receipt of the basic income validates that effort to strive within their field. For those that are mid-career, the mental challenge of often having financial considerations take precedence over artistic integrity or autonomy can accumulate despair. Instead, some talk of a reprieve from such mental anguish while others struggle under self-criticism and internal pressure to *'make the most of it'*. A recipient that has parented solo for over 10 years reflects on the impact of maintaining her career on her mental health and parenting and the relief she has experienced in receiving BIA:

I think that there was just a permanent level of anxiety in my life, and it wasn't until maybe six months into the grant I realised, when that started to slowly ebb away, that I realised how much pressure was there permanently. And also you can't help but get emotional when you think about it. It impacts everything in life. When [Child name] needed stuff for school, you're constantly flipping the coin literally twice. Can I afford this, where does this little penny need to go to, and it's a habit. It's a thought process that becomes part of your life. And when that is not necessarily [the situation] anymore, is when I learned under how much pressure I've been living, you know? And it's still, there's still, you know, it never really goes away obviously because it's only a three-year trial period. So, at the background of my mind, it is that little voice that says, just be careful because it might not continue after three years. So, I do work with that a little bit and prepare myself for that day a little bit. Yet, allowing myself to be creative. So, it's finding the right balance. Yeah, so I've been... as my mental health has dramatically improved, even my [Child] will notice the difference. I mean he grew up with a painter so he's very sensitive to my moods. And he knows that I'm a different person. I'm just completely different. Yeah. ... like I said, it's a life changing experience.

**(Female; Visual arts; Border; Mortgage; 45-54)**

For those who were experiencing mental health challenges or who had a history of mental health challenges the impact of BIA was more nuanced. For instance, many recipients engaged with free short-term therapeutic interventions such as those provided through Minding Creative Minds, with some continuing therapy sessions privately if they could afford to.

...my mental health and I've more time to do that on a regular if not daily basis and yeah, the mental health thing as well, I get counselling every week now, it started during COVID and there was I think is it Mind?

#### **Minding Creative Minds?**

Yeah, so there were X amount of sessions available for artists and workers etc and they were very helpful. And now I continue to do it privately like weekly, I could say it's life-changing, it's amazing to have that check-in every week and I sometimes think of it as a luxury but I think it's also very important for me so yeah, that has been a huge benefit and it costs me a

hundred quid or maybe it's €110 a session and I wouldn't have probably let myself – I would have been like, I can't pay that out, I can't justify that.

**(Male; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

When I was trying to work as an artist without the basic income, I experienced really low mental health and really poor mental health ... it was very in a bad way and like very anxious, depressed, confused about what I was doing or what, how to do anything. And this has given me so much validation and self-esteem and it's... I suppose it just means that I can actually... you know, it's given me the ability to actually do it and build up confidence and like also just build up knowledge and learn, which in turn grows self-esteem and confidence and stuff, so yeah, night and day.

**(Female; Literature; Border; Mortgage; 25-34)**

So I definitely feel more confident in my art practice, and I feel like I've had more time to give myself peace, which ... having struggled with mental health, through anxiety and depression and things like this, ... I've kind of reflected on the last year in particular as kind of the first time that I have given myself a bit of peace.

**(Female; Visual arts; South West; Rent; 25-34)**

My mental health has improved so that obviously has a big impact on my work. Self-confidence to paint what I actually really want to paint and put out there has improved. Everything has improved. I'm a different person. I'm a different artist.

**(Female; Visual arts; Border; Mortgage; 45-54)**

Within the focus group on disability, recipients with long-term mental health challenges described the therapeutic benefit of producing creative work while coping with mental health experiences. In addition, those with long-term mental health experiences that accepted the BIA reported being unable to find affordable rental accommodation and of reduced welfare support including reduction to their disability benefit and removal of their medical card. They also experience difficulties in taking up part-time or additional work, which can be subject to welfare thresholds, and are at greater risk should their mental health fluctuate over time (see section on Disability and Basic Income).

### 1.5.3. Physical health, leisure and self-care

In terms of effect on physical health, recipients describe having more time to consider focusing on their health as well as the resources to improve specific areas of their health. For instance, they report the ability to purchase gym membership or attend fitness classes and even use a personal trainer to address specific physical issues. More importantly, they report being able to access healthcare including regular check-ups, dental care, reproductive healthcare, trans health care, and addressing minor health concerns. Recipients also report better sleep quality and reduced stress levels which positively impact their physical health. For recipients with chronic conditions such as chronic pain or diabetes, they report being able to better manage these conditions. Dancers, whose practice is embodied, reported the

importance of time as a resource to train for their art, and recover from the physicality of performance as well as enabling regular access to healthcare to avoid pain. Neurodivergent recipients acknowledged an improved work/life balance that has helped them to reduce symptoms of burnout, allowing more time for self-care and creative pursuits.

Leisure activities were often connected to recipients' creative and professional interests; however, they now have more freedom to explore these interests for personal enjoyment rather than solely for work. They reported taking language classes, exploring other art forms, reading, yoga, and walking in nature.

The things that I would do for leisure are really the things that deeply nurture my creativity. So, it's allowed me to, like, buy a tin of watercolours. And I ... live in the city but there's this beautiful old sweet chestnut tree and I have been going down and painting sitting just next to it, maybe every second day in the last two weeks. Because I've dropped into a different pacing. It really is now, like, in the last two weeks. And I've planned for that pacing in the next few months. ... And, I know I have a desperate tendency for everything to be about my art, but it is my way of life, and those moments after being very production orientated. Yeah, I was wondering, God, nature was always really important as part of my creativity and that's just... Is it gone? And now I'm realising no it's not, it's just it needed to happen in leisure time. So, it's that going back in.

**(Female; Dance; South West; Rent; 35-44)**

I'm learning Arabic and I do a ceramics class and some kind of gym classes, circuitsy gym classes sometimes as well. ... I feel like everybody should be able to do nice things for themselves and have hobbies and that was not possible when I was trying to be an emerging artist and didn't have the income.

**(Female; Literature; Border; Mortgage; 25-34)**

Travel was considered an important part of leisure. Time that was not dedicated to producing work enabled recipients to plan trips that often combined work with time off. Recipients reported taking trips to galleries around Ireland and Europe, visiting European cities such as Paris and doing some gigs while there, getting to see important shows and meet with colleagues, or attend a wedding taking place abroad. For migrants, being able to visit family in their country of origin was crucial to maintaining family ties. For others, being able to travel internationally was important to reach international markets for their specific creative practice.

I'm getting to travel a little bit more, which is nice, because I just had paused that as well for a while, whereas I've been doing lots of little trips around Ireland to see galleries and stuff and different places around Ireland. And I've gone over to Scotland to see exhibitions and stuff like that, which has been really, really lovely.

**(Trans M non-binary; Disability; Visual arts; Dublin; Rent; 25-34)**

Definitely I suppose travel. When I first got the payment, I took myself off to Edinburgh on my own. So, I pleaded with the husband and said, is it okay if I go because I wanted to do the

galleries and I wanted to do the different exhibits that were on. And he was like, once you're safe. And that was just brilliant. It was just a sense of escape and then I had this money that I could just put it towards travel and get the knowledge of looking at other artists and seeing [] brilliant.

**(Female; Visual arts; West; Rent; 45-54)**

Just the idea of being able to travel or even if it was a short weekend sometimes. Even in Ireland, sometimes if there's a big exhibition in Sligo or Carrick-on-Shannon. I went a few times and I don't think I was able before that because I always had small jobs to do...

**(Female; Visual arts; Dublin; Rent; Migrant; 25-34)**

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## Practice Development

This section focuses on the primary ways in which the BIA has impacted practice development. Practice development considered the ways in which recipients experience a change in the use of their time and focus, whether they have experienced any change in the quantity or quality of their work since receiving the support, and if receiving the BIA has allowed them to take more creative risks or experiment with new ideas.

Time is perhaps the most precious commodity when it comes to establishing and maintaining a professional artistic career. Serafini and Banks (2020) explored time in artistic labour and developed three temporal contexts: 'the artistic career'; 'the time of making art' and 'the temporality of the work'. They explored this complex temporal aspect of artistic work and how it is impacted by who the artist is, how they work, and what kind of relations they have to the social world around them. They acknowledged that social differences impact the social distribution of precarity including those who have come from less advantaged social backgrounds such as working class artists (who might lack the support of family, spousal or partner finances or inherited wealth), artists from minority backgrounds (who struggle for recognition and legitimacy in an art world dominated by whiteness), women (long ascribed subordinate status to male artists) and artists with disabilities who experience greater barriers to the challenges imposed by a low-pay and unstable labour market (Serafini and Banks, 2020 p. 352-353). It is important to keep this positioning in mind as we go through the impact of the BIA on their experience of time in their practice.

### 2.1. Time and focus

Time and temporality in the life and work of an artist is complex. While the artists that participated in these interviews experience precarity to different degrees or in different ways, they also exerted different levels of agency in the choices they could make about how they spend their time (Serafini and Banks, 2020). Time, as a resource, opened a reflexive space for them to evaluate and reconsider the nature of their creative process. This is coupled by a shift in their identity and subjectivity as artists. By this I mean that most recipients experienced an increase in their self-worth, of feeling validated as artists, that they *are* artists and that this is now valued by state and society.

When given time through financial support all recipients appeared to reflect on what is meaningful within their creative labour for them to spend time on. This primarily reflects the context of time in artistic labour described by Serafini and Banks (2020) as the 'the time of making art'. Of course, this question is constrained and enabled by the structural factors in which the participant is situated i.e. caring responsibilities, class, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, financial reward, stability, or success. It also resulted in many artists thinking more long term about their career and career trajectory as well as validating and encouraging their identity and status as artists. In this section I will address the similarities across the art forms and identify social differences briefly where possible.

Recipients were asked to consider whether the BIA affected the amount of time they could dedicate to their artistic practice. Interestingly, many recipients chose expansive words like '*exponentially more time*' or '*unquantifiable*' and '*excessive*' amounts of time. Of course,

when explored further, what recipients articulate is greater creative freedom and creative space to dedicate to their creative process to improve their creative practice without the underlying worry of making ends meet. This was particularly prevalent for those who have explored 'lateral' ways of being a creative artist (Jonathan Meth in Cooke, 2011) meaning those who have engaged in other types of creative work to have several streams of income. The opportunity to focus more on their specific creative interests opened new possibilities and career trajectories. In the quote below we hear from a composer who in a normal working week would commute around the country teaching music classes and playing gigs. When interviewed he recounted how he has reduced that work to focus more on his original compositions. This focus is opening new possibilities that are more aligned with his vision for his future career.

I'm still busy, I'm still very busy and thankfully so, but I feel like on a daily basis I've more head space for the art that I'm doing, I'm writing a lot more original things and I just recorded my first ensemble recording there last month or during the summer. So, I had time and space to work towards that. So, that was like on a daily basis I could give some time to my compositions and also administratively, contacting fellow musicians and contacting a recording studio and engineers and stuff that I don't think I would have necessarily had the head space to do... also that I can sort of self-justify it, it's like, okay I can do this, I'm giving myself permission or the BIA, or whatever Gods or whatever are giving me permission to go and do this now, because otherwise I was giving myself permission to do three or four wedding gigs a week and go into as many schools as possible and fit in all the teaching and conducting and try and do a bit of composition and other things on the side and now it's not on the side, it's like it is one of the main things that I do.

**(Male; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

The BIA has allowed artists to dedicate more time to their artistic practice without the pressure of having to take on additional projects or having to balance their creative practice with other work. This sense of 'time to make art' is especially important for disabled artists who often require more time to create work, or who operate at a pace in accordance with their impairment (Safe to Create, 2024).

I do feel because I'm disabled, and I'm always feeling like I could be doing more when I physically can't do more. There's only so much I can do and sometimes I look at other writers who aren't [] who are like I've got six books coming out in the next five years and I'm just a bit like I can only do one a year. But one a year is huge as well.

**(Non binary; Disability; Literature; West;)**

Neurodivergent and autistic recipients spoke of their difficulties in structuring time, however, the peace of mind that the BIA was creating helped to create space to work through ideas and develop their creative practice. While not recipients of these interviews, we know from other research that 'time to make art' is also a significant factor for artists with intellectual disabilities (Safe to Create, 2024). Recipients with young children found it extremely difficult to find time for their art practice due to a lack of affordable childcare and were focused on finding ways to incorporate their art practice within their home environment to facilitate caring responsibilities.

While some reduced the level of alternative work and some quit altogether, others report the way in which they structure time according to the payment i.e. working two or three days a week on writing, researching, preparing, making or practising for projects. In addition, they consider the BIA as motivating and encouraging for this type of work that is otherwise unpaid when considered against external measures of 'success', 'impact' or 'output'.

And I think it just creates time, you know. Which is probably the most valuable resource. I mean for a lot of things but especially in something that you're kind of... you have to do a lot of figuring out and a lot of learning and researching and going down different avenues and stuff, you know, and the validation of that time was so transformative for me. I genuinely don't think I would have managed to get my own routine going without it.

**(Female; Literature; Border; Mortgage; 25-34)**

The BIA really just gave that freedom to continue what I'm doing, but also not feeling guilty then if I go off and read a research book, or do something like artistic, that I'm not wasting time on the stuff that is supposed to be the money maker. So, it's given me a little bit of freedom to understand that actually it's very important to keep continuing to do the research and keep continuing to learn about the practices and processes that we're trying to bring into the groups. So, I think that's the main benefit for me that ... everything that I do is work, it's just how we value things I guess is the challenge and why we value certain things over others is a big wider question, I guess.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; West; Rent; 35-44)**

In fact, recipients who engaged in funding applications spoke of subsidising the time required to complete a project with the BIA payment as only a certain amount of preparation time is factored into funding models. For example, a theatre actor spoke of how he moved into writing and succeeded in a funding application. However, the time dedicated within the funding model to write the script was 8 days whereas in real time it took 3 months to complete. A dancer gave a similar example of the BIA enabling '*a step back from the funding model to negotiate independently*'. She was able to subsidise more practice and preparation time for a funded project as well as negotiate longer rental of a dance space to undertake the required preparation. As she says:

I got a project award to make it and included some of that time in the project award which was great and I was again thrilled to be funded and that need was taken into consideration by the panel who were awarding me the funding. But I do need extra time to make work and I negotiated... This definitely came from the basic artist income. Because I knew I had income, I need studio space to make work. Often access to studio space is attached to funding. So, it's like, OK, we'll give you two weeks because you're making this project award application. But because I had the basic artist income, I could kind of step back a bit from funding model way of working, and I negotiated studio hire... And that meant I could, A, afford to pay for it where it didn't have to come from a funding application, and B, that I had regular studio practice that I could go into the studio two or three times a week at least and mull over, move, choreograph.

**(Female; Dance; South West; Rent; 35-44)**

For young and emerging artists being in receipt of the BIA has enabled them to learn what it means to be self-employed as an artist and to develop and improve their self-discipline. Many report how they structure their day and have developed specific routines and work practices to complete work. Time for artists who are more established, is bringing a shift in momentum and confidence enabling them to overcome insecurities in releasing completed work. Time to make art has also encouraged those with an established practice e.g. film producers, writers, composers and content creators, and documentary makers to focus on more long-term goals as well as the 'temporality of the work'. They articulate the possibility of creating art with greater longevity both for themselves, for those who collaborate in creating the work, as well as those who may appreciate the art over time. As an example, those who engage in socially engaged art, where they create art with specific groups, are particularly conscious of the temporality of their work because their engagement creates a shift not only in themselves but also in those that have participated in the co-creation of the work. Socially engaged art is primarily about developing a relationship and understanding in the hope that knowledge and engagement around a theme or practice continues. This intense type of work is laborious, it is difficult to gauge the length of time it can take to invest in developing the engagement to a productive level. Often, funding supports the output of the engagement, however the process can be considered extractive once the temporality of the work and the relations of the group dissipates, which can be discouraging for recipients. Instead, recipients with the BIA discuss an ability to hold that space and engage with groups.

I hadn't applied for funding for myself to do a documentary in years, and I did it with a [disability advocacy group] but... working with a group like that, you're never paid to work with the group, you're paid to make the thing, and I don't like taking advantage of the group, I don't like making a thing about a group. I want the group to feel like they made the thing. So yeah, so I hadn't in years gone for funding like that because of the emotional toll that takes, because I've got to spend so much time with people not being paid to do something, it's very hard... you've got to sit with them for days and talk to them about why they're valuable or why this is good for them or why this might be good to do or might be fun for us to do, and then you also, ... you're kind of making a friend, so that really sits in my soul. I can't walk away from that ... so I hadn't done that in maybe about ten years, because I can't maintain them... I feel a responsibility to them, and after the fact as well.

**(Male; Film; Mid-West; Rent; 35-44)**

For those who have a specific commercial side to their art practice e.g. an Etsy site or a collective space that also sells products, they report focusing more of their time on learning new techniques to develop new designs rather than recreating versions of what were already selling well.

It allowed me to spend that time as I said instead of focusing on what needed to sell. Focusing on, hey, I want to create this thing, I want to try this new technique, and I'm able to do that without feeling like I've taken away from my day of work. Because I suppose before I had often felt like ... Whatever product was selling well at the time, that I had to spend all of my work time trying to create new versions of that, or work towards a shop update or work towards this. And they had to be things that were going to sell. Like, that sold before that were popular that people were looking for, and so often they were recreations of my digital

prints. So, I make cushions using vinyl versions of my prints and stuff like that and we made all those ourselves at home. So, it would be focusing on those because people loved them, but it wouldn't be creating new work. Whereas now I have the time to create new designs, to play with those new designs, to... You know what I mean?

**(Non-binary; Visual Arts; South-East; 25-34)**

Well, it means to me, that I can take a step back at times and look, I don't have to produce the whole time to sell, that's what it means. And it means that I can also concentrate on developing my practice further through upskilling or through promotions or a promotion myself or I'm looking at developing some income streams for myself. So, it gives me the space to do that and the confidence to do it as well.

**(Female; Visual Arts; Mid-East; 55-64)**

Recipients also describe investing time in their practice by developing critical awareness, travelling to experience important shows or exhibitions, gigs, performances or cultural events and often connecting with other artists after the event.

Well, it's changed everything, I mean it's put me in a situation where I don't actually have to worry about money, I feel guilty for saying that because I never had that before but it is actually true where I can actually take more time in what I'm doing and that has many different folds to it, many different areas of it, it's not only just not having to worry about money, it's being able to do things, so for example, for the first time in 30 years I went to the [Theatre Festival] this year, so that was great, so I was able to do that because of the BIA, right, I never could have done that otherwise and I was able to catch up with friends there, one guy I hadn't seen in 20 years, I was able to meet an actor there, that we're trying to write something together, we were able to have a conversation with the person I hadn't seen in 20 years who's a director and a writer and then we met a couple of other people and saw some other shows that were inspiring to what we want to do, so I don't think that ever would have happened, if it had happened, I would have been now scrambling to get back to where I was before to justify the fact that I spent money doing it, if it makes sense.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; No fixed abode; 45-54)**

I suppose I'm more willing to invest in myself going to see shows, see other work because there would have been times before this period of my life that I would have said - no, I can't afford to go up to see that.

**(Female; Theatre; South-West; Rent; 35-44)**

## 2.2. Artistic Output and quality

Time and financial support are once more important dimensions that impact the quantity and quality of creative work. While some recipients reported the quantity of their work increasing others felt it remained steady. Interestingly, in responding to whether the quality of their work has changed, recipients referred to a number of factors (as well as quality being subjective). Recipients articulate how less mental strain around finances has improved

their focus, concentration, and mental well-being, which positively impacts their creative process. In addition, the time that they have devoted to researching, experimenting, taking risks and failing they consider to have improved the quality of their work.

It's freed up things. There's a sense of, like I said, risk taking, and risk taking is very important. Lack of fear of failure, like I mentioned. These are very important elements, so yes, it has increased the quality, because I think it's directly fed into that sense that I'm free to take risks.

**(Male; Disability; Film; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

Yeah, totally. Like again, you know, even this year in comparison to last year, like the sort of rate at which I can output is like exponentially increased. And again that was because I was learning how to do it. But if you don't have the time to learn how to do it, it's going to take way, way longer. And like quality-wise, two and a half years ago before the basic income started, I was just enrolling on my first short stories for beginners course and I had all this creative process training and some kind of critical writing in my background, but hadn't been able to apply it. And now I'm ... so happy with the quality that I'm delivering at the moment. Obviously you're always wanting to be better but I'm really happy with it. I won a prize.

**(Female; Literature; Border; Mortgage; 25-34)**

Recipients also reported that the BIA enabled them to access and invest in resources to support their work which in turn contributed to an improvement in the quality of their work. For example, they report sourcing a higher quality production team or investing in better resources to showcase their work. For some, they link the quality of their work with a feeling of greater confidence and self-belief which has enabled them to put themselves forward for work in their area of interest.

Yeah. I'm a much better actor. I'm not saying that as a... I am. ... I've gotten more work, by the way, since I've got the BIA because mentally, I'm not hiding behind... I'm not ducking down behind the screen. It's a confidence thing. But I'm a much more comfortable actor.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

Recipients also spoke of their ability to take on larger-scale more ambitious projects that were previously not feasible due to financial constraints.

The financial stability has also allowed me to kind of select artistic work towards a more kind of I suppose higher quality or future, like long-term projects because I do actually work from my studio, I have the studio here that I'm using for client work. It's a small commercial enterprise, and the financial stability I have been receiving through the BIA has allowed me basically to develop my self-employed activity as content creator through the studio as well. So, has allowed me basically to plan long-term, I suppose.

**(Male; Music; West; Rent; Migrant; 45-54)**

## 2.3. Creative Risks and experimentation

The financial stability provided by the BIA has encouraged recipients to feel more confident to invest time and resources into learning new skills, trying out different techniques, and collaborating with others in ways they couldn't before. Recipients have used the BIA to pursue projects, residencies, and opportunities that involve more risk-taking, whether that's working in new mediums, exploring different genres, spending time on funding applications, or presenting work in unconventional spaces. The easing of financial pressure has given recipients the creative freedom to fail, learn, and grow, without the fear of jeopardizing their livelihoods. This has led to more diverse, innovative, and authentic creative outputs.

The risk is exciting now. It's not fear based. It's not a fear around it. It's exciting and I'm more confident in taking risks to say bring a work out of a theatre into a community hall. Even to rely on people who aren't in the arts field, like in the community hall that I presented my last piece. Having that confidence and having, you know, a slight risk being exciting rather than creating fear meant that I could invest in the relationship with the manager of the community centre, and then we were meeting each other in a different place ...then there was no risk. You know?

**(Female; Dance; South West; Rent; 35-44)**

It made me more confident to take risks, because I wasn't... I didn't feel that muted shadow that you might be judged. It took the judgement element out of it and I felt a little bit more confident that I could do work that might have been out of my safety zone, and fail. Like failure is a big part of creativity, and if we're allowing ourselves the space to fail, then more interesting work comes from it. It's... failure is the building blocks to art. I was looking at a video of a guy painting, and I film... I work a lot with artists, and the looseness that can come from the lack of fear or failure means the work is imbued with more life, because in the end that's the universal truth – we all are engaged with a life that could be considered a failure, because [laughs] do we ever get our goals, do we ever achieve our dreams, you know?

**(Male; Disability; Film; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

I've developed a new technique this year, and it's not brand new or anything, but it's new to me, where I love painting and I love traditional painting. Abstracts and stuff. And so I've started creating jewellery out of those, like out of the watercolour paper and stuff. And so having the time to develop new things that I'm interested in is really important for me.

**(Non-binary; Visual Arts; South-East; Rent; 25-34)**

Yes, definitely. Yeah, creative risks - so with the EP, I paid someone to mix the songs who it turned out I didn't really like the mixes so much. So, then I had to, now I've to find another person to mix it. So, basically, I'm paying double the money for the songs to be mixed. So, that was a big risk that didn't really go my way unfortunately. It didn't pay off but I mean luckily, I have enough money saved, I can still afford to go with the next person and I've kind of learned my lesson from it. So, yeah, it's something that I, it's a risk that I took that didn't pay off but luckily it wasn't the end of the world for me because if that was the only money

that I had then that would be colossal. But luckily, I'm able to pick myself up, find another person, still get it mixed and still be able to live and eat.

**(Female; Music; South-East; Rent; 25-34)**

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## Recognition and opportunities

This section explores how the BIA impacts recognition and opportunities for recipients. It focuses on the opportunities undertaken within their field, and the ways in which recipients have engaged with broader workshops or courses to continue their professional development. It also explores new collaborations or partnerships that recipients attribute to the support of the BIA.

### 3.1. Professional growth and opportunities

The BIA is supporting artists to invest time in their professional development. Following on from the previous two sections, we learned that income stability and ‘time to make art’ enable recipients to think more expansively about their possibilities and their potential. In addition, the increased level of self-worth and confidence is enabling them to ‘*put [themselves] out there*’ and ‘*really be able to engage*’ with the ‘*time and energy to do it*’. With more time to seize opportunities, recipients discuss the courses they have taken, ways in which they have upskilled or ‘*added strings to their bow*’, and invested in quality materials, equipment or professional platforms linked to their creative practice.

Recipients describe new possibilities of investing in online and in-person courses, workshops and residencies (that are only part funded) to expand their career options, increase their level of income and ensure continuity of artistic labour. These interactions also function as peer networking opportunities or peer support where artists share knowledge and support one another. These connections are particularly impactful for niche creative practices and these groups often continue to support one another when the formal time frame has ceased. For example, a novelist describes how a writer’s group that he joined at the beginning of his writing career has fortunately continued to work together on the basis that it is mutually beneficial for all:

Well I’ve been lucky in that I’ve attended a writers’ workshop for pretty much all the time I’ve been a novelist, I started out, so I’ve written a [genre] book, wanted to move into fiction writing and there was a historical fiction workshop in the Irish Writers Centre, so I went along to that and the group that we met there, we just hit it off and we became good friends and we’ve maintained that workshop since, so like we’re meeting tomorrow evening again, ...so I’ve always had that support group and we’ve supported each other in terms of reading each other’s work in progress and critiquing them and making suggestions and so on, supporting each other when we get to the point where we have to go out and look for agents and publishers and the like so I’ve looked at that as more of a support group of kind of a mutually beneficial group, I suppose like there’s a barter in that we are helping each other and critiquing each other.

**(Male; Literature; Midland; Rent; 45-54)**

Workshops also enable creatives to think expansively and connect different threads of their work. For example, a theatre actor describes a week long course that he did in the West where he met new people and had new experiences that encouraged him to move beyond

considering, and being considered, for specific roles within his field. In relation to the course, he said:

...it does, it helps build your process I suppose because when you've been in your arts field for a very long time you can just become this is what I do...And I think when you're forging your career out of necessity, going from job to - I need this job, I need this job, blah, blah, blah, you nearly have to rely on what you sell, what's your unique selling point. So, I'd be booked for certain kind of roles because people know, oh he can do that. Doing this course shows me that I can do an awful lot more and take more risks. Whereas if I wasn't afforded this opportunity, I wouldn't be able to take the risk and I would just have to keep on doing the same thing over and over again.

**(Male; Theatre; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

A vocalist gave the example of a voiceover acting class with the aim of getting different types of work as a vocalist and has made a showreel. A playwright travelled from the South of the country to the East seven times over the course of two months to take a playwright programme and although the costs of the programme were refunded after six months, the participant could invest in the programme upfront without too much pressure. A dancer has started a part-time course in neuromuscular therapy to understand more about soft tissue therapy which is *'helping me to upskill in a lot of different areas, dance and non-dance but they're all interlinked'*. A film producer spoke of taking courses with the National Talent Academy and travelling West to learn how to do multi-camera directing while paying for fuel and accommodation. Writers spoke of taking courses in the Irish Writers Centre, or taking painting courses to follow their interests. Musicians and music producers took music lessons in instruments that they would have played for pleasure over the years. The list really goes on – pottery, glass painting, wool felting, podcasting, training, printing, accent coach, movement workshop, clown workshop, life drawing classes, music composition for gaming. Saying that, it is important to keep in mind that recipients who relied primarily on the BIA felt that workshops and courses were beyond their means. However, among all the above examples were recipients who expressed a genuine belief of *'I can do this now'*, of the freedom to follow up on opportunities. While gaining experience and increasing knowledge and skills, recipients also noted the importance of their visibility, of *'being around, and showing up'*. The opportunity to branch out and meet others through courses expanded recipients' connections in an industry that often operates on word of mouth.

...I was in the UK for a four-month residency this year – I could not have done that only for the BIA, because the residency was not funded for accommodation. So, I had to use my BIA income every month to pay my rent over there.

**(Female; Visual Arts; South-East; with parents; 35-44)**

Formal networking opportunities, often held during working hours, were impossible for some recipients to attend, especially those that had full time jobs or even worked part-time prior to receiving the BIA. Now, established recipients discuss accepting opportunities to network whether to promote a specific piece of work, acknowledge an award, or gain knowledge in a specific area without undue financial strain. A novelist explains the impact of being able to set aside work to embrace an award:

...there was a situation when one of my novels was chosen for something where I had to dedicate a month to go to events and participate in readers groups and so on. And again just being able to block out that month and being able to do it was a huge help and it meant that I was able to engage with that award I suppose in a much more dedicated sense which obviously helped my profile and it helped the whole month be a success and again it's something that I would have been able to do, I would have been able to block off that time anyway but I was able to do it now without any kind of worry about what am I going to do afterwards.

**(Male; Literature; Midland; Rent; 45-54)**

Networking events are hugely important for those at all stages of their career, particularly those who were establishing their career. Many spoke of finding mentors or learning specific steps for their creative process from presentations and conversations at networking events. Some declared that *'if you don't network, you don't get into the circles. Nobody knows you.'* Emerging artists were more likely to use informal peer support networks within their locality than attend formal networking events. Recipients with a migrant background, or artists with disabilities, face barriers in accessing formal networks and networking events. For migrants, it can take time to discover the network within their creative field, a lack of support to navigate access, participate and learn from it. For disabled artists, networking events can be inaccessible both in how the communication is mediated, the physical environment of the event space, and how the event is structured.

But now I know where to go and I didn't know before. I didn't know how exactly you do this. I just knew I wanted to, and I was trying. But it's really hard and I think when you have that opportunity to learn and you have that opportunity to network and to go to those events and to talk to the other producers and to really go in there, you learn so much and you also surround yourself with a network of people and you kind of go okay, who can I go to ask this thing. You know? And now you know, and you have that network now, and you can go to them and they're all helpful. They're so lovely, you know, everybody's willing to kind of answer your question and, you know, help you out, because they know how hard it is and it's just such... it's a small industry but it's a tight-knit industry. So, having those opportunities to network, having those opportunities helps massively in my own development as well, and I know who to call upon now and I know who to ask for that.

**(Non binary; Disability; Film; Mid-East; Rent; 35-44)**

So, that's made it possible to meet people, again at different events and workshops. there's a really amazing community and you learn so much from being in the same room as people and again, ... you wouldn't have the time or ... the money to engage in as many workshops or launches, even the literary festivals, things like that, and being at those things has really helped me in understanding how to approach things and how to do things and ... I suppose I've made connections, I'm going to be getting mentoring from two novelists ... I got an [Arts Council Funding] from the Arts Council this year, so I only met those two novelists through being at these workshops/the literary festivals. So, there's all this I suppose domino effect that has to happen and networking that has to happen because it's kind of impossible to get

anywhere if you're just completely solitary. And having the basic income has given me the time to attend these things.

**(Female; Literature; Border; Mortgage; 25-34)**

Recipients spoke of forming, and being part of, collectives in rural areas (see Mahon et al. 2018 for rural context). Being part of a collective enabled them to establish peer support and have greater social power to contribute to local politics, and advocate for access to community spaces in locations where cultural centres or interdisciplinary spaces are lacking. For example, an early career literature participant living in the border region spoke of starting a book club, forming a community of local artists interested in meeting in spaces other than pubs. While local cafés were supportive, working together they were advocating for suitable community space that would enable the group to grow and support one another in other professional ways. Recipients in urban locations spoke of the limited availability of studio space and affordability of studio space. They also formed collectives around specific identities to ensure greater social power in advocating for space and recognition of their art and identities (Bain and McLean, 2013).

I have a practice and a career now and it feels really nice to take myself seriously. And it means that I'm going for things that I wouldn't before. So I've been in a bunch of group exhibitions and I had the confidence to apply for them. And ... I am part of a studio, [names studio], and I just got a mentorship award from [Arts Council] as well, so again, I wouldn't have known how to put together the application for that, even. But now I can apply and get it and it's really nice... I can feel the impact that it's having being taken seriously and also then getting to meet with all these people who are a bit more advanced in their careers and can give me guidance. And applying for grants as well, which I just had never done, which [Art College] was great but they really did not prepare us for how to practically be an artist in Ireland. So, things like the [Arts Council Award] from the Arts Council I applied for, for the first time ever, and I got it and I was so shocked. I was like, oh, hmm, so other people can also see that I'm doing art and it's like a serious thing? I was like, oh, this is so nice. And yeah, I just wouldn't have had the confidence or the time or the motivation to do that if I wasn't on this scheme. You know?"

**(Trans M non-binary; Disability; Visual Arts;)**

Those who were engaging in their creative practice on a part-time basis prior to receiving BIA talk of renewing elements of their creative practice to increase opportunities for work within their field.

So, when you're out of the loop for a long time you need to [] your skills, particularly with a lot of auditions are now self-taped, so you have to get used to what are casting directors looking for. So, I've done one acting to camera workshop, specifically designed for auditions. I've done a poetry writing workshop, which isn't quite related to my practice, but in terms of developing relationship of words and building on collaboration was really, really useful. A lot of the time it's been about going back to my own roots – things I would have learned in drama school that just fell by the wayside. Going back to notes, going back to vocal exercises.

**(Female; Multidisciplinary; Mid-West; Mortgage; 45-54 )**

While it is clear that recipients have been adding strings to their bow in relation to various skills, many have also invested in quality materials, better equipment and subscriptions to professional online platforms such as Vimeo Pro, Fishpond or Spotlight. This ability to invest in creative materials or platforms is not only linked to increased financial support but is also tied to their identities as artists and feeling validated to be a professional artist. Recipients gave examples of buying new hardware or software to improve the quality of their outputs such as laptops, computers, graphic tablets, professional microphones, cameras, plug-ins, art supplies, and office furniture. Below, a visual artist describes their experience of investing in their art and the way in which it has enabled a shift in work / life balance:

Oh my God, massive change, huge change. Just from a comfort perspective being able to actually afford to invest in things like, I was able to buy a new drawing tablet which massively improved my productivity, my ability to actually make [names art], because I had a much better hardware to work with. Being able to buy a desk and a chair as well, so I'm not just doing it... Like, before I was doing it on the couch or on my bed just trying to make it all up. So, actually being able to invest in the infrastructure for a workspace has been huge. Now, it's a spare room in my parent's house, I don't rent a studio or anything but even that has been completely transformative to like being able to treat it as an occupation and come in and do the work and then leave the room and be like now it's my social time. Whereas before it was like those two things were always blended, so I never really had any kind of work-life balance because I felt a lot of pressure - oh I have to be working every second of the day because I'll never make it as an artist or I'll never be able to sustain myself as an artist if I'm not working from the moment I wake up to the moment I go to sleep.

**(Non-binary; Visual arts; West; with parents; 25-34)**

It is clear that the majority of recipients are able to make small investments to improve the quality of their art or creative practice. However, many are still unable to make a significant investment for fear of their future stability and feel in limbo as regards to their career trajectory.

I was looking at either doing up the old ... house that I've been using as a kind of a class or workshop room, I was looking at doing that up or buying a shed where I would have proper lighting and insulation. That would have been a significant spend – it would have been about ten thousand euro. So, the amount of money I have in my bank account now is the most I've ever had in my life, because of the BIA. Now, I am in a different position to some people, where I'm living at home so I'm not paying a regular rent every month. I don't have any other dependents, I don't have children, I don't have a husband- so there's not this kind of social life maybe or these other expenditures. So, I'm very lucky that the money that I'm getting in is literally either just on me or on buying messages here for the house or whatever... And it's kind of like, when you have it then it's like, shit, what am I meant to do. So, I was very much going, now, spend it – buy the studio. And I haven't, because it's like, if all that money is gone, what are you going to do? So, I'm kind of caught in limbo. And I told myself, if you're buying a studio, investing or renovating, you're investing in yourself, you're backing yourself. And that's not enough for me, because it's like, the doubts kick in, like, are you worth backing!

**(Female; Visual arts; South-East; with parents; 35-44)**

### 3.2. Collaborations and partnerships

When asked about new collaborations or partnerships that they have engaged in, recipients spoke of these occurring primarily from within their network of support or communities i.e. those that they have worked with previously on specific projects or have sought through connections they already have, leading to further opportunities. Some have been able to hire more established professionals for collaboration while others use the BIA to subsidise payment to collaborators that would otherwise go unpaid or be underpaid. Recipients also spoke of giving back to their community by purposefully forming collaborations or partnerships they feel were lacking.

I'm trying to organise the other young dancers to come together and have workshops. But this is all the time that I'm using voluntary, because I have BIA, I can use that time and do something for the dance community. And to try and organise intergenerational meetings with another dancer. So, I'm using also a lot of the time to give back to the community and get us more together and to train and learn from each other. And that takes a lot of time and it's something that I've been always interested in that I didn't have time to do before.

**(Female; Dance; West; Rent; migrant; 25-34)**

Recipients in dance and film were working on international partnerships or collaborations. Recipients with studio space spoke of collaboration occurring from within studios with more established artists supporting and encouraging younger or less established artists to participate in group exhibitions or apply for funding. Film producers spoke of developing feature films, while a novelist has had his novel optioned by a TV company which has progressed towards other 'hope' work. He explains:

Yeah, kind of a deeper engagement because they've bought the rights to the novel, which was great and fantastic and again, I've heard that it's very hard to get these things over the line in terms of producing them, so I've kind of put that at the back of my head, if it happens, fantastic but to be able to deepen that relationship when they said, we've got another script here and we'd like to turn it into a novel, would you be interested and to be able to jump on that and do it and they were happy with the results, they haven't been able to find a home for it but they were pleased with the results, we had good back and forth, we Zoom called, you know between LA and London, so that was fun and so again, something else might come of it with future projects, it's kind of kept my name in their inbox in terms of my own novel and what they're working on for that, so it was a definite help and I was able to grab that because the knowledge that the income support was there.

**(Male; Literature; Midland; Rent; 45-54)**

Multidisciplinary recipients had numerous arms of collaboration which are often interlinked with other pieces of work that are current or just completed. A recipient below illustrates the interdisciplinary nature of collaboration and the importance of accessing existing communities and community spaces to collaborate.

Yeah, and the improvised collective that I work with [name] like a collaboration with [Visual Arts Organisation], I've also done that art tech work with [Cultural Resource Centre].

There's a new artist space in [Mid-West], it's an artist run space. And I would work with them on a number of events. And the festival I'm involved with, it's called [name] and my involvement in that has gone up. And there's been more and more collaborators being involved in that as well. And I've also joined a couple of local music projects as a musician, as a live member. There's a songwriter who I'm playing with and there's a band that I'm playing with, and I think all those things have arisen since the start of the BIA to be honest.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; Mid-West; Rent; 25-34)**

However, artists who are immigrants experience barriers when navigating their inclusion to already established communities. While the BIA has relieved financial stress and enabled them to focus more on their artistic practice their visibility is growing online, rather than in-person. Online platforms can provide greater anonymity, curation of content, and flexibility for conversations around a participant's working day or family life.

I definitely felt like as an immigrant like there... I didn't feel like the art community in particular was very accessible to me at the time, and like navigating how to access that was kind of hard, and I don't really know what about this changed that, but it definitely changed when I started receiving this money, and I don't know if it was just maybe I was able to take some of the stress of maybe just thinking about bills and, you know, the day-to-day, and focus it onto other things, but I have like an online community now of like artists in Ireland that I am in conversations with.

**(Female; Disability; Visual Arts; South-West; Migrant; 25-34)**

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# Community engagement and social impact

This theme sought to explore the ways in which recipients' engagement with local or artistic community may have changed since receiving the BIA. Is it the case that they are more or less involved with community projects or is the BIA leading recipients in another direction? This section also sought to understand the ways in which recipients' relationships with fellow artists or their broader community has changed and whether there have been any changes in how they are now perceived by others in their field.

## 4.1 Community engagement

Interestingly, the notion of community was understood by recipients in three primary ways:

- a. Engaging with a wider community
- b. Fellow artists
- c. Engaging with a minority community

In terms of wider community engagement, many recipients describe ways in which they engaged their local communities e.g. sourcing local crew, hosting reading groups, organising fundraising events, and directly connecting with community groups through facilitation or specific events such as Heritage Week or Culture Night.

Hugely, because again you have the resources and the time to actually just do things with them. Like, [] and say 'We're filming, we're doing something here' or when I was casting the film and crewing it, I tried to get as many local people as possible, and I ended up with 90% local cast and crew, and that's partly because I had the time to sort of train them as well.

**(Male; Disability; Film; Mid-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

I've been able to set up a kind of reading group in my local town in [North West], so every second week we meet. Not everybody shows up every week, but within the first month or two, there are 50 people in the group, and I'd say at least 15 people come every second week. And obviously it's a nice social thing but it's also a resource that local artists and also just people interested in literature and who want to read more and who want to develop their critical reading, they come to it. So, that's been amazing, because again, ... it's not a huge strain on my time but it's just another thing I've been able to do and organise and that's free... So, like that's been a really lovely kind of thing I've been able to provide for people or set up for people.

**(Female; Literature; Border; Mortgage; 25-34)**

I have done a couple of performances at charity gigs. So, I've been able to do some performances in these tribute gigs where it's not big, they don't pay the musicians, they raise money for a charity... all proceeds have gone to the Laura Lynn Foundation. I think I did another one for Pieta House... that's again stuff that I never would have had time for. I would

have been like - sorry no I can't learn those songs and play for free because I have to just do paid work. So, that is actually something.

**(Female; Music; Dublin; with parent; 35-44)**

At the same time, many recipients responded that their engagement has remained the same, or that they have been too focused on lining up successive work projects, that it was never really a part of their practice, or audience engagement (which is often a criterion for funding) is not one of their strengths. For artists with disabilities, particularly those who are neurodivergent or autistic, socialising and being around big groups of people can be challenging and instead they may interact sporadically with online groups or platforms, or not at all.

Zero...I'm just like, I'm not that person. I'd like to be – I even said this recently to another person, that a lot of the applications that you have nowadays ask you for your audience engagement, or your engagement with the local community. And it's kind of like when in college they ask you to do group work – like, the shudders just go through you. So, it's the same thing in a way when it comes to the community engagement part of that question – it's like, oh Jesus, do I have to! Do I really have to! So, I'm not great...my work just isn't based, it's not socially active, it's not that kind of practice.

**(Female; Visual arts; South-East; with parents; 34-45)**

The BIA has provided some recipients with more time and financial stability to prioritise the temporality of their art, that is, the longevity in which it remains within a community. This was particularly important for community projects, for facilitators of community groups, and socially engaged artists, as they all aim to build long-lasting robust relationships to bring about social change or develop a particular practice or strategy. Those who receive funding to engage with communities describe the difficulties of the way in which time is structured within funding models, that without continuity of funding the groups that are formed can easily dissipate once the project outcome is achieved.

Oh yeah. No, I love working in the community anyway, so no, I think it might be pretty much the same as before. Because we did projects before with a company, with a women's group through [funding body], so we did that before. And I'd love to restart them again, but it's like, funding is always such an issue in general to do things. Because you can start up wonderful community stuff and community groups then the funding stops because they want new ideas and new kind of groups and projects.

**(Female; Multidisciplinary; Border; Rent; 25-34)**

Below, a socially engaged artist articulates the importance of investing time in building relationships, their future potential, and the way in which the BIA is facilitating that, he says:

A huge part of everything that we're doing it's trying to build and maintain those relationships that we are working with. ...And I do feel like there's other opportunities that will naturally come out of that, because you're just investing more time in people. ... And supports like the BIA it's given me the chance to do that because previously, it's well no, I

have to go and do X, Y and Z with something else, because just economically it wasn't feasible to spend that much time with other people, so it's been really, really beneficial in that sense. I think there's a real lack of understanding of the time it takes, number one, to build relationships and trust, but also then the value of those relationships and trust, and what happens later on down the road. So, all of that has to happen organically and unfortunately, particularly the way projects are set up and focused through all the funding cycles regardless of arts or otherwise, it's very time bound and it's very - at times restrictive in that sense. So, the nice thing about the BIA has been it's been kind of quite a long period of time and it's also, the outcomes will come and the outcomes are coming, it's just that I couldn't have foreseen what they would be before the programme and I think there's something really healthy in that.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; West; with parents; 35-44)**

In addition, many recipients spoke of the importance of connection with fellow artists as an end in itself, of the intrinsic value of human connection; which is particularly relevant post-Covid. For instance, musicians spoke of the joy of being able to play with other musicians, or sharing random conversations or exchanges of ideas in a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary space, enjoying the dynamics of a collective, as well as going to events or locations to have new experiences and support new or emerging art and artists.

There's something about having the safety net that in my day-to-day has allowed me to give space to conversation with other artists of different stages...So, without the basic artist income, I wouldn't prioritise something like that. I wouldn't have been able to give the time... You know, just the negotiation and the stress. So, that's been really important for me, the sense of being able to give back to my community and share what I know and hear from other people. That enriches my day-to-day life because I'm part of a community then. Actively and consciously part of a community."

**(Female; Dance; South-West; Rent; 35-44)**

Lastly, recipients described the importance of being allies to minority communities creating collectives for artists with minority identities, and gaining further training or mentorship to ethically facilitate their interactions with specific groups.

...three of us are transgender artists, so we worked with trans people in Ireland to create events for them and art spaces and stuff like that, so I have done some work with the community before. And I kind of have been missing it, so I was like, OK, I want to get back into working with communities and people. So, OK, how do I get set up to do that in a way that's productive and positive for both me and the community that I'm working with, and in a way that's ethical and not extractive or anything like that. And that everyone is involved from the start, so it's very collaboratively built. So, I'm still at the very start of that mentoring, so ... I'm not sure exactly where it's going to go yet, but I'm excited.

**(Trans M non-binary; Disability; Visual arts; Dublin; Rent; 25-34)**

## 4.2. Relationship with other artists and how they are perceived by other artists

As indicated previously, being in receipt of the BIA has stimulated increased self-belief and confidence for many recipients which is encouraging them to reach out to other artists or their artistic community and participate in events. Recipients, particularly those with established practices, have increased their visibility through a shift in their focus, their work practices and the validation of their identity as an artist. As a result, many now consider themselves professionals.

Well, I guess from the off, it's kind of helped me vindicate myself as an artist. So, I think by helping with my self-identification as an artist, that's a good base for relating yourself to other artists. And yeah, it's just facilitated a lot of new collaborations and connections. And I've been involved in a lot of different projects and shows of all different kinds, like even in [month] I was involved in a kind of almost theatre type show which was something that I never envisioned myself being part of. And that involved working with a bunch of new people as well and it was amazing. So yeah, it's given me a lot of opportunities either work or leisure, to just to meet a lot of other artists and it's made me also not afraid to just get involved with other artists, because my background as a musician from when I was a teenager, it was very much kind of like do everything yourself kind of a situation. And I kind of carried that with me for a long time, and I think maybe the financial stability has made me more emboldened to get involved with other people. Where maybe I was afraid to do that before and maybe that was a financial thing, I'm not entirely sure. But yeah, it's just been a lot of different scenarios that have allowed me to meet and get to know other artists. And I do feel like a sense of community, like a few overlapping communities in being an artist in Ireland right at the moment, yeah.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; Mid-West; Rent; 25-34)**

I think I see myself more as a professional and I'm a bit more visible now I think and people are hearing my own work, so I definitely think that that has to influence how others see me.

**(Male; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

Despite the BIA scheme operating as a lottery, some recipients have received great support from fellow artists while others describe their relationship with those that did not receive the BIA as tense and not something that they openly disclose. While friends and family are delighted for recipients, many do not declare being in receipt of the BIA beyond these closed circles. Some feel *'it undermines your credibility'*, while others have encountered resentment when they have been involved in open discussions about the BIA among peers. As a result, recipients express a feeling of guilt, knowing the level of scarcity, deprivation and desperation that fellow artists operate at. At the same time, the BIA has enabled more open conversations about finances and the value of artistic work, though recipients are still cautious about discussing it too openly.

That's an interesting question. Some of them... or like other people that have gotten it are wonderful about it, but ... it's something I try not to bring up anymore, because it's almost

like a 'Oh you got it? Hmm.' You know what I mean? It's almost created a competitive element that I don't think is healthy, because it's not good competition we're creating, it's competition for basic necessities and survival [laughs], you know what I mean? ... [sighs] there was one situation that arose where I was really excited to work on a project, and so I applied for residency to collaborate with another art company, which was just a couple of people that I had met elsewhere, and I was like 'Oh yeah, we could work on this. We have two sides of a coin, I think it would work nicely.' And ... the application still went through, but it was a really intense 'Well this doesn't actually matter to you, because you don't need it. We need it, so if this application fails, this is going to really impact us.' And it was very sad, because ... from what I understood the perspective was I was just doing this for fun, because I don't need it, and not actually for the artistic enjoyment of it or the process of it or the desire to create. Yeah, I do think ... it's created a weird amount of animosity between other artists. Now that's not universal, some people are like 'Oh yeah, amazing, that's so good for you

**(Female, Disability; Theatre; Dublin; Mortgage; Migrant; 25-34)**

By contrast, those who encountered other artists in receipt of the BIA talk of sharing experiences and monitor the ways in which it is working for each other to share the benefits with others when appropriate. It is also creating synergies and connections among artists through the work that is being created, which is impactful, for example, from a rural context as we hear from a socially engaged artist below:

...the group that we're working with have come back to us to do a little bit more work in a different area as well. So, I do like to think that it's strengthened and I think that it's opened my eyes in particular to this new – because we work a lot in rural communities. So, it's like this new form of rurality of like how - okay you can be in a small little community but you're connected to lots of other likeminded people doing similar work in lots of different areas as well. And I think there's something really interesting and it's only because we've been on the BIA and had those discussions with other artists that you start to see there's so many pockets of these projects all over the country.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; West; Rent; 35-44)**

Interestingly, those who were longer in their career or more established felt more open about sharing they were a recipient of the BIA, and to have broader discussions of its implications.

It has, because again we have that conversation, there is a shared debate going on, a shared discussion about it, because well artists that are outside of it don't know what it's like to be inside, so you're sharing that and saying 'Yeah, this is how it's...' like I'm doing with you now, very similar conversations I've had numerous times with other artists, but the only thing is that sense of... sometimes there's a look of 'I wish I was on it' you know? And then you feel a little guilty about being on it, because you know how dramatically it's improving your creative output, and yet you see people struggling, they're desperate for grants, not getting them, and then a year's work goes down the drain or your plans for work just disappears, so there is that sense of community about it, because it exists, it's a recognition of artists, which is nice, and ... for me there's personal vindication that, yeah, you qualify for being an

artist, but there's a lot of artists out there that don't know whether they do or don't qualify for being an artist, and that's a debate we have quite a lot about what does that mean, to be an artist?

**(Male; Yes; Film; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

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## Reflective and future oriented aspirations

Exploration of this theme was emotive for recipients as they reflected on the impact of the BIA on their lives over the past number of years, particularly poignant following the Covid-19 pandemic. They were asked to consider the most significant change in their lives as well as any unexpected benefits or challenges relating to the BIA. They were also asked to consider their future plans and the way in which the continuation of the BIA would impact those future aspirations.

### 5.1. Personal Reflections

The perceived expansion of time coupled with a greater sense of financial stability has increased recipients' confidence and self-belief. This has encouraged them to invest in their professional growth and development, including investment in materials and equipment. As a result, many recipients talk of feeling empowered, of being in control of the choices within their lives and envisioning a viable career path long-term. Importantly, many artists felt more connected to their artistic community, their local community and of belonging more broadly illustrated in the ways that they feel valued and '*give back*' to their communities. However, the extract below from a dance artist illustrates the fine line that artists navigate in terms of remaining within their chosen field and the impact the BIA has had in stabilising their profession and broader facets of their lives:

Not always feeling I have to leave my career. Yeah. That as soon as there's a gap between jobs that I'm not in the, 'oh god, is this it?' I think that's the biggest. Just able to step away from that deep fear of 'I am responsible for working my way into an unliveable situation if I keep going with this work'. And I've seen it happen to people who are close to me. Who just weren't able to take care of... You know, they were never able to save. They were never able to... There's always that thing of, oh, you could leave, but we're at a place in dance in Ireland now where we have more people dancing professionally than we ever have and there's a huge drop-off at a certain age. And the knowledge is so embodied that it is kind of gone once the people move to other areas. And I feel like that knowledge is really valuable and needs to be cultivated and needs to be seen and experienced. Stability, confidence, long-term planning is possible. Stress levels are way down. ... I can take a more active role in my community, in dance. With care for my family. And actually, I can give back. That's the thing that I was kind of really... But like, it is very important. I'm an independent dance artist, which can get quite individualistic. But dance is inherently very collective and the sense of satisfaction in my life has just changed exponentially because I can give back.

**(Female; Dance; South West; Rent; 35-44)**

Indeed, the significant changes in recipients' lives varied from the professional to the personal. In terms of their profession, the feeling of increased security, particularly financial security was prevalent for most, the reduction in stress, the ability to pay bills, while the confidence and sense of validation it has instilled for others to engage and participate with renewed energy was considered life-changing. This is experienced across all age groups. For young and emerging artists, the continued financial support instilling a sense of security has provided the opportunity to remain in Ireland despite a nationwide housing crisis and

increasing costs of living. A young emerging film director living with her parents in Dublin reflects on the importance of feeling secure to continue to remain in Ireland:

I think my mental health. I think the fact that I don't feel extremely discouraged every morning to get out of bed. I think there is a sense of things getting better slowly. I think in the first half a year it wasn't as felt as it is now. Definitely a sense of security, which is something that is really lacking right, and a sense of 'I am able to maybe survive in Ireland with this.' Yeah, I think definitely a sense of security, I think is the biggest thing, and it's something that most artists will tell you they don't feel right now, and I can say that with a certainty, and that's a very, very important thing. It's like a basic need for a person right now, so... yeah, I think security and just clarity in my head. There's no more of this fog of worry. And just I think also a feeling of I have opportunities, so whenever I want to approach something I don't feel completely discouraged or blocked in on something, I feel like I have the freedom of assessing a situation and actually having opportunities in front of me. Yeah, very big things for sure [laughs].

**(Female; Film; Dublin; with parents; 25-34)**

For those who are mid-career and in relationships, being able to fulfil their personal and social expectations for their shared future has been hugely significant, for example, purchasing a home, or starting a family.

I think it's basically been for me and [Wife], we've been able to get a house and plan a family and I think that definitely comes before my artistic world. It's my personal life, it's such a privilege now to be able to plan things together and we just didn't have the chance. [Participant crying]

**It's really important though, it is, your personal life and being able to plan a future is huge, that's a significant shift and I mean having that opportunity and I mean you would have made it work anyway, I'm sure?**

I'm sure we would have yeah but, it's such a relief in a way and they're big things, planning a family and settling down, for want of a better term and feeling confident that we'll have our own base and we'll be able to both work from there and continue our artistic work, so I'd say, yeah, that is the number one thing, it's helped us both settle down and move on or continue with our lives as we'd hope.

**(Male; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

For those later in their career, the experience of being validated as an artist, that their work and effort up to now has meaning, has significantly empowered them to continue. For others, the chance to reflect on their work practices and realign their creative labour towards more long-term goals without having to heavily supplement with alternative work has increased their confidence to experience their creative practice as a profession and fully acknowledge their identities as professional artists. In this sense, many report feeling grounded, of having purpose and self-belief, of being optimistic of their future and proud of what they have managed to achieve while on the scheme. This is reflected in the quotations below from artists who spoke of the significance of feeling validated and the subsequent transformation of their identities as artists.

Actually, if I give you one answer, at 56 going on 57 for the last couple of years, I believe in myself and I believe in what I do. For the first time in my life ever. So, it's taken me five and a half decades, but I believe in myself.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)**

I think it's that ground, just feeling like I have purpose and I haven't wasted my whole life, that my instincts and my desires were founded on something real and that I can really reassess that and look at it and think about it and begin to over the last two years and hopefully for the next year and beyond, take all the stuff I had learnt about or felt or experienced and start to use it in a way that's productive whereas before I kept thinking, if I get to a certain place I'll be able to do that and I never could get there or I'd get there but it would be so like two weeks, a month and then you'll be back to normal, so that's what I would say.

**(Male; Multidisciplinary; Mid-East; No fixed abode; 45-54)**

I'm a lot more optimistic. I'm a lot more confident. I'm a lot more accepting I think as well of what will be will be. As I mentioned earlier, I don't know what will happen at the end of the three years – but I feel like if this is, thus far I'm really proud of what I've done with it and where I've got with it and what I've built on. ... what I've put myself out for and what's come back, actually that's turned out quite well. So, that gives you confidence as well.

**Absolutely. And that's a lovely shift, to get received.**

Yeah. And I think in a weird way, when you're struggling in one area of your life, for example, because we're talking about this, finances – it has a negative knock-on effect on everything else. You might still put yourself forward for things, but it might be with a half belief that it's even worth your while. Whereas, this is like, I'm just going to keep throwing things out there, and whatever happens, happens. And something will, and it's fine – because there's just a base level of competence that you have to just keep going. You're not scrambling about for the basics of everything to keep them in place. You've got those in place, and now it's okay. What else can we do?

**(Female; Multidisciplinary; Mid-West; Mortgage; 45-54)**

Being able to afford to care for their physical and mental health was significant. The ability to afford critical or preventative health care such as visiting the doctor or dentist, make better lifestyle choices, or focus on investing and supporting their mental health were reported as significant changes.

I think the improvement of my health mostly, yeah. I think I'm eating better and I'm mentally better and I think it really shows also through my capacity to take on work and to create more work or to have time to think about it, and read and inform myself better. So, I think the health really like has been brought up, yeah.

**(Female; Dance; West; Rent; Migrant; 25-34)**

I guess it would have to be the mental health element. The being able to afford therapy which I couldn't really afford or I couldn't justify spending the money or whatever. The mental health aspect is definitely the biggest one I would say. That has changed my life easily.

**(Female; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

A few recipients were unable to disentangle the continuity of events in their lives from receiving the BIA as some became new parents or got married, however, the absence of underlying financial worry was palpable, as a literature participant reflects:

it's all these things that you don't know might have happened anyway but they're happening without the background sense of financial stress, it's just a much freer and more contented way of life, being able to do the thing that you enjoy and have a passion for, and get the book deals and so on, and go to the festivals and all the rest, and work on your follow up novels, and just being able to do it without the financial stress, that is ultimately the most, the largest and most overriding benefit of this whole thing.

**(Male; Literature; Midland; Rent; 45-54)**

## 5.2. Unexpected benefits

Asking recipients to reflect on the unexpected benefits they have encountered while in receipt of the BIA was an additional chance to explore the benefits they have experienced within their lives and to consider unexpected outcomes that they may not have anticipated or discussed within the interview up to that point. In fact, for the majority of recipients it was a chance to reiterate what has been of significance in their lives given their individual social position, set of circumstances, and specific creative practice.

For dance artists, agency and the confidence to speak up and feel valued was unexpected. Film recipients reported as unexpected the ability to afford dental care, to have basic savings, of feeling validated as well as the freedom to connect with other artists and time to learn. For literature recipients, they credited the BIA team in the provision of online sessions on income tax along with the ability to complete and file their own tax returns as a result. They also reported the benefit of financial security and the sense of validation that being in receipt of the BIA brought and had not expected '*how transformative the consistency of time would be*'. Multidisciplinary recipients cited the ability to '*just say no to things*' that they '*didn't even know what that feeling was like to stand your ground and say no to somebody*'. Understanding the tax system because of the online sessions run by the BIA team was again also a beneficial outcome, as well as refocusing on their work practices along with the opportunities to engage with workshops and courses. For musicians, the sense of security and wellbeing enabled them to stand back and reflect on their work practices to consider their personal compositions and take a more long-term view than day-to-day.

Okay. There's definitely a sense of wellbeing and groundedness and focus that I didn't have. There's a security and a sense of confidence and a sense of security that definitely wasn't there financially.

**Unexpected, did that surprise you?**

Yeah, it actually did because I maybe would have viewed myself as ah sure, money comes in and it goes out and blah, blah, blah and whatever and maybe I'll get a mortgage some day or you know but having this sort of sense of security surprised me and it was like, okay, well I can take things a bit seriously or look back, stand back a bit from things and like okay I can actually do this and be an adult, so that actually took me by surprise, definitely I thought I was doing fine but grand day by day.

**(Male; Music; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

For street artists, the regular foundation of income security and sense of being valued that being in receipt of the BIA has provided, means that they *'can say no on certain things, and the ability then to ask for more'*.

Theatre artists reflected on the unexpected benefit of taking time to rest, and the impact that being in receipt of the BIA had on family relationships where parents for instance would have consistently doubted their ability to make ends meet as an actor. Instead of proving to parents that they can *'make acting work'*, being validated as an artist through the BIA removed that doubt from family members. One theatre participant also started a pension in the hope of being able to continue it once, or if, the BIA ends.

There's another thing that I did, I set up a pension.

**Amazing. As a result of the BIA?**

As a result.

**That's brilliant, yeah, that's really important. You're the first one that's spoken about that actually, which is really good.**

I took the opportunity, it's another opportunity, that's the thing because at least the money is going in, it's not going to be the hugest pension in the world.

**No but it's started.**

But it's started and then my aim is after August next year, not to stop it, to find the money, it's another thing to find the money for.

**(Male; Theatre; Dublin; Rent; 35-44)**

Visuals artists articulated their renewed passion and enjoyment from their creative practice from a place of security, and a sense of pride in announcing themselves as 'artists' in social situations. Accessing healthcare, purchasing quality materials, learning to do tax returns and affording to pay someone to complete them, seizing opportunities such as residencies abroad, considering their accessibility needs, the possibility of being in receipt of the BIA over a period of time increasing their credit rating for a mortgage, and being able to gift presents to family members were all outcomes that they had not expected.

Across the artforms, recipients credited the BIA with opening conversations like *'How do we talk about artists and how do we talk about how we support artists and their roles in industry?'* which have moved into *'How are we going to replace this [BIA]?'*. It has also encouraged artists to have conversations and share information about their finances, financial situation, and the rates within their sectors.

### 5.3. Unexpected challenges

Across art forms recipients report concerns about financial stability and sustaining the momentum of their careers after, or if, the basic income scheme ends. They feel *'the challenge is the prospect of it ending'*, that they have become dependent upon the additional income and grapple with *'thinking that I need to make this money when it finishes'*. They worry how they will fill that financial gap, adjust to a new set of circumstances as *'this time has been so rich'*. Many asked during the interview: what is to happen at the end of the scheme?

Some recipients struggle with feelings of unworthiness and guilt about receiving the BIA when others were not so lucky. Older recipients, thinking of their younger selves feel guilt of how more beneficial it would be for younger applicants that had not received it. Recipients who were mid-life thought of those starting families who struggled with the associated costs. Overall, recipients found it difficult that some applicants got it while others did not. As a result, they found it challenging to navigate relationships and conversations with those not in receipt of the BIA.

Importantly, recipients pointed to the challenges of the broader socioeconomic context such as increasing costs of living, especially rent, making it difficult to remain in desired locations. Recipients who moved from social welfare benefits to the basic income found the transition from one system to the other difficult at the start of the scheme citing a lack of knowledge of the BIA scheme from Social Protection, and of welfare benefits being stopped weeks before the first BIA payment resulting in recipients being without support for a number of weeks.

As self-employed artists, many experienced difficulties in tracking their income and budgeting monthly to set aside money for tax due to the irregular and unpredictable nature of their earnings. They also experienced stress and anxiety around navigating general tax obligations, the paperwork as self-employed individuals, and seeking professional accounting support to manage finances properly.

Challenges – so, I would have been very used to being self-employed and dealing with taxes and accountancy, like I just send everything to an accountant and let them worry about it. But this feels bigger – it was always very small numbers, this feels like another level. I'm suddenly in a pay scale where I might have to pay more than just preliminary – stuff like that. Your accountant, your bookkeeper, you're trying to keep records and receipts – that has been... staying on top of that stuff has been really challenging. And staying on top of a personal timetable of how I'm mapping out every day. Days might slip by and you're, oh what did I do that day. So, even though all the tools are there, days slip by.

**(Female; Multidisciplinary; Mid-West; Mortgage; 45-54)**

Lastly, they found the funding application process challenging and maintaining the administrative aspect of their creative practice, particularly among recipients with disabilities.

## 5.4. Continuation of BIA

Recipients were asked how they saw the continuation of the BIA supporting their creative practice. They responded with mixed views - by talking of the benefits that a continuation of the BIA would bring; concerns they have of the BIA scheme ending considering it is a pilot; and their strategies and reflections for the future.

In terms of benefits, recipients spoke of the ability to continue their professional development by taking bigger risks and thinking more ambitiously about projects. The sense of stability that has enabled the majority to focus on their creative practice without excessive worry about their finances or survival and has provided opportunities to build momentum, expand their creative practice and outputs. Others find beneficial the freedom to attend workshops, residencies, and invest in training to improve their skills. A continuation of the scheme could provide the potential for many to build towards sustaining an income as a full-time artist, enable savings towards their future including planning a family, buying a house, or starting a pension. Lastly, the positive impact on mental health and wellbeing is acknowledged if the scheme were to continue.

At the same time and as previously discussed, many have concerns about the BIA scheme ending rather than being continued. They are concerned about the significant loss of support and a curtailing of their creative development, of the *'worry that when I don't have it, I will have to get work outside of practice to be able to do things I want to do...to be able to have a life, which is difficult to say'*. Many worry they will return to precarious work situations which will once more limit their time and energy for their own creative practice. As example, a film producer articulates the mixed views of the scheme ending along with the benefits he has experienced:

A huge cloud hangs over the future.

**Okay, interesting. Yeah, in what sense?**

And that cloud is the termination of this scheme, because to some extent I've become dependent on it. I've built it into my working process. It's not an arbitrary income that comes in and then 'Oh yeah, that's nice to have.' It's actually looked forward to every month and I'm saying 'What am I going to do with that to do the things I want to do? How does that feed into the work?' If it stopped in the morning it would be a disaster for me, ... the problem with a pilot scheme is that it's a scheme and it's a pilot scheme, and you do feel vulnerable to that, even though I said I had a plan for it to work in the period I have, I must say that my dependency on it, which is creative dependency, it's like my muse, ... it's helping me... I know everyone uses the word 'focus', I'm trying not to use the word 'focus' [laughingly]...

**No, it's okay, it's good, yeah.**

But it helped me direct energy towards the projects and realising them as well, so it's not just [...] in the projects 'Oh I'll think about it for a while' but it's actually helped me realise them, and ... I'm on a rhythm now with it, you know? Four films in, I just finished a film last night, you know five films in, and that's huge for me, because I want to keep doing that, and the work is going out there into the world and it's feeding conversation and debate and

whatever, and you know, so the... it's provided a sort of an electricity to my career, the motor is running [laughs].

(Male; Disability; Film; South-East; Mortgage; 55-64)

This experience of gradual development and momentum in their careers was reported across artforms and age groups. For instance, a younger literature participant also reported how the continuation of the scheme would be beneficial to her:

I would be really, really, like wanting it to continue because I think that it would continue to go in the direction that it's going, again it's all about the development. And like I said, it takes time. And yes, I feel like I've developed hugely in the past two years and one more year now, but I suppose it's really tough. I'm 100% aware, even if I'm at a stage where I can get an [Arts Council award], that's [€] and that doesn't actually go that far, especially if you're paying for training or you're paying mentors, that doesn't go that far and I'm really acutely aware of like the point at which you're able to kind of have some sort of consistent income or consistent time dedicated to your practice comes much, much later if it even comes at all. And so yeah, I'd ... feel really strongly about it continuing because I genuinely think ... it's like giving basic living conditions for a practice to grow and exist. And I know I keep saying it, but I genuinely don't know how I would continue on this trajectory without it.

(Female; Literature; Border; Mortgage; 25-34)

For the future, in thinking of the continuation of the scheme they reported how they will use the remaining time to maximise their output, consolidate their learning thus far, and prepare for the future. At the time of interview, there was approx. 1 year left and so some reported how they were trying to maximise the time left to ensure that their professional development would be at a place where they had new ways of working established and as a result new income streams that would replace the BIA income, if necessary. Others had concerns about the scheme suddenly ending without a gradual transition and expressed hope that the scheme could be expanded to support all applicants even if that meant justifying work or potentially face some conditionality.

## 5.5. Future plans and aspirations

When asked about their future aspirations and long-term goals recipients reported a range of priorities specific to what they have managed to achieve thus far on the scheme and their future goals for their creative practice. For example, a young film participant having made short films while on the scheme wants to overcome the difficulty of moving from short films to feature films to *'use it [feature film] as a jumping off point for the rest of my career'*. Many wished to *'do more of what I am doing'* and reach a point where they can maintain themselves as full time as artists with *'a standard of living where I'm not, it's not at the back of my mind that's like, what happens if my car breaks down'*. Whether it was completing short stories or novels, writing more plays, *'engage more with communities'*, having solo exhibitions, saving for a mortgage, writing songs, *'interrogate new things'*, *'support other artists'*; having a studio, or live portraiture, they credited the BIA as *'a safety net that's changed so much'*. Despite feeling encouraged to dedicate more time to developing their creative practice however, recipients also articulated financial hurdles in getting their work

beyond the development stage. For example, a theatre participant spoke of having written several plays and while she received funding to develop those plays there is little to no funding available for the production of those plays. To see those plays performed she will have to reduce the scale of the plays and most likely self-produce them:

Now the problem and I'm going to go into it...but the problem is, is that larger scale plays by lesser-known writers are not getting made. They're not releasing funding. I didn't come up with this, this is a known fact now because the Arts Council have decided to give a lot of their money to development work, which I understand and I've been in receipt of development money in the past and it's extremely helpful to get a project started and get to the rehearsal ready stage. But the money is not available for productions. So, that means if I want to have a play on in the next few years, I'm going to have to self-produce it and it's going to have to be smaller scale because I don't have the kind of money that is required to put on a show.

**(Female; Theatre; South West; Rent; 35-44)**

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## Disability and Basic Income

According to EU SILC (2023) the share of persons with disabilities at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland is 32.7%, compared to 13.6% for those without disabilities. Persons with disabilities are at a higher risk of poverty (18.7%) and material or social deprivation (12.1%) than non-disabled people at 9.1% and 3.5% respectively. Ireland has one of the highest rates of persons with disabilities living in a household with low work intensity at 26.5% and 4.8% for non-disabled, compared to the EU average of 16.6% and 5.7% respectively. In fact, Ireland holds the lowest rate of employment in the EU of persons with disabilities at 32.6% and a disability employment gap of 38.6 percentage points with the gap extending to 45 percentage points for women with disabilities (EDF, 2023). In addition, the cost of disability, that is, 'the extra spending needs that people with a disability face in their day-to-day lives that others in society do not face' is estimated between €8,000-€12,000 annually (Department of Social Protection, 2021).

The rights of persons with disabilities are enshrined in International Treaties, the most significant being the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), ratified by Ireland in 2018, with ratification of the Optional Protocol outstanding. Within this context, three articles within the UNCRPD have particular importance: the equal right to work that is freely chosen (Art. 27); the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection (Art. 28); the equal right to participation in culture (Art. 30). These are supported at EU and National level by individual laws and policies to protect the rights of persons with disabilities to participate, integrate and be independent within the communities that they live (Finn, 2023 p. 5-6).

Finn (2023, p.8) outlines the difficulties experienced by persons with disabilities in the interaction of disability, employment and welfare. He illustrates how artists with disabilities in Ireland experience precarity similar to non-disabled artists including low-pay; additional forms of work to subsidise income, gendered inequalities, and reliance on welfare supports (Finn 2023, p.10). However, he also shows how unlike their non-disabled peers they experience additional barriers including the impact of their disability on their creative practice, inaccessible work environments and tools, limitations on their earning potential due to welfare conditionality as well as additional access and attitudinal barriers more broadly in the arts and culture sector (Finn, 2023 p. 10). Indeed, the research and report of specific communities within the arts and creative sectors by Safe to Create (2024) entitled "AMPLIFY: A Call for Transformative Action" highlights that '56% of disabled respondents were excluded from the workplace due to a lack of care/accommodations/ableist attitudes to their disability' while artists with intellectual disabilities (ID) faced barriers or obstacles to their training and development' (2024, p. 13). The National Disability Authority funded OECD research in Ireland (OECD, 2021) with regard to employer engagement and system wide changes to support people with disabilities in employment. They noted how 'Ireland has an underdeveloped employer engagement structure with respect to information and support for the employment of persons with disabilities' (OECD, 2021 p. 2). The AMPLIFY report also found that '65% of disabled artists are usually the only disabled artist or arts worker in their workplace' with those who 'maintain disability supports as well as their art practice report limiting the amount that they work or earn in order to maintain welfare

supports with 34% reporting that they struggle to manage or are not managing' (2024, p.13). Disability rights advocates in the arts and artists with disabilities reported that disabled artists felt excluded from applying for the Basic Income scheme out of the fear that they would lose part, or all, of their disability support payment<sup>4</sup>, further compounding their difficulties of earning income in the arts sector including success through awards, commissions, grants or bursaries. Interestingly, a key recommendation for public authorities in the EU from the 'Right to Work' report of the European Disability Forum is "to allow persons to retain disability allowances when in gainful employment" (EDF, 2023, p.117).

Finn's (2023, p. 11-13) interim findings on disability and developing work patterns; struggling to get by; and welfare obstacles for artists with disabilities reflect the specific challenges disabled artists experience in navigating their disability and work patterns, creative careers and earnings alongside disability support. Disabled people also experience the additional burden of navigating multiple systems to access their rights to support i.e. welfare systems and health systems.

Within the disability focus group 3 of the 6 recipients received a disability allowance. Recipients reported an initial lack of knowledge within welfare offices of how the BIA would impact support such as their disability allowance. Despite reductions to their disability allowance, all recipients identified *'the validation and the feeling of knowing that you're recognised and that you have intrinsic worth'* that receiving the BIA has brought. Being in receipt of the BIA was considered financially more beneficial than receiving welfare support including greater ability to socialise and travel, purchase materials, create accessible work environments including suitable tools. Below, we hear from a visually impaired artist who made the decision to invest the BIA payment to create an accessible work environment instead of increasing her standard of living:

I was trying to work in a tiny room that was really unsuitable for me, because the lighting was bad, it was too small, it was full of objects that I'd bump into. I was covered in bruises trying to work, and I'm having to bend down to get things and crawl under tables and not judging the distance, banging my head, you know that kind of physical impediment that was making me take much longer to do my work, and in fact sometimes just the thought of having to battle this miserable workspace made me not want to go and do it, so when I got the basic income I channelled that money and said 'Right, I'm not going to live any better. I'm going to take that money and get myself a workspace.' So it's actually financed... it's not a big space and I was fortunate to have land in the garden, but managed to get constructed a studio and poured the money into a work studio that has skylights, that there's room... there's a centre floor, so I can walk around without banging into things, which is so wonderful, and to have stuff in bright colours and I know exactly, and all is within arm's reach and I don't... I'm not awkward, and that is just like so wonderful, so...

**(Female; Disability; Multidisciplinary; Mid-East; 55-64)**

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<sup>4</sup> If a self-employed artist with disability support earns over €165 a week, then 50% of their earnings between €165 and €375 is taken into account in the DA means test, with all earnings over €375 a week being assessed in full. If the person is in a relationship or cohabiting, the income of their spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is also assessed (Citizens Information).

At the same time, recipients described the effort to *'balance and juggle work'* to remain below a threshold to continue to qualify for support like a medical card. Recipients reported accepting vouchers as payment to balance their earnings, difficulties in finding affordable rental accommodation, and struggling to get by. A recipient with long term mental health experience expresses the challenge of working at a *'reasonable pace'* and remaining under the threshold:

I personally find I have to work at a reasonable pace because of my disability, and I had a few personal issues during the time that I was receiving the BIA... and it was quite difficult. It was quite difficult. So I probably wasn't as productive after that issue, but I... you have to kind of achieve a balance where you're not going over the income threshold, and there is one issue that I would feel strongly about – I think anybody with a disability should be entitled to the medical card, and you have got to be very careful not to disqualify yourself from the medical card, and I think when you have the BIA you do disqualify yourself from the medical card, so that's... I feel very strongly about that.

**(Female; Disability; Literature; South-West; 45-54)**

Recipients highlighted the difficulties in identifying as disabled artists as they often feel like a tokenistic presence by institutions or within the workplace, and that their disabled identity and art is often pigeonholed to represent specific experiences. Some recipients acknowledged that although their art is informed by their experience of disability, it is not always the case that it is representative of disability *per se*. While some recipients had applied for funding specifically for disabled artists, others were unaware of such funding, while all recipients did not consider themselves eligible for broader funding opportunities. Recipients that identified as neurodivergent or autistic in the disability focus group and during interviews articulated the challenges they experience in completing written applications and a lack of knowledge about who to approach for support.

..it is true that I stumble my way through every grant application, I've never gotten a grant in my life, I never know what the questions are that they're asking, even though they're on paper and it seems to be black and white, but it's never the... when I've talked to somebody about it afterwards 'Oh no, I think that meant this or that' I have no clue what they're actually asking for it. To me I don't understand what they look for in it information wise...

**(Female; Disability; Theatre; Dublin; 55-64)**

Recipients discussed issues of accessibility alongside inclusion and agreed that while there is a large amount of information and awareness raising undertaken on these issues, fear of disclosure remains as practical changes continue to be required including attitudinal changes, public transport infrastructure (particularly in rural settings), workplace accommodations, accessibility requirements and peer support. All recipients acknowledged the importance of being asked about workplace accommodations or accessibility needs as natural to the process of accepting employment. For instance, a recipient described facilitating art classes in schools that require planning around public transport as she does not qualify for a driver's licence with her visual impairment. Accessibility costs are primarily borne by disabled artists as budgets do not take accessibility into consideration. In this case, the participant credited a simple question of *'Is there anything I can do for you to facilitate*

*this [class]?*'. Instead of bearing the cost of taxis to and from the station to the school or lugging materials on foot, the participant was supported, as we see below:

Like I'm doing this thing with [School Art Project] at the moment, and it's a wonderful art project and I think a whole bunch of kids are really going to get something great out of it, and it almost didn't happen except for the Creative Associate that I'm working with asked this one question, which is 'Is there anything I can do [] for you to facilitate this?' That one question, and I'm like 'Yeah, the school is here, there's no bus to it, the nearest train station is here. I can get that far, but I've got a huge amount of materials and massively heavy suitcases, and I've got a 35 minute walk from here to there, and it's really heavy stuff' you know? And she said 'I can give you a lift from here to there.' But without her asking I would have been too embarrassed to ask, because it would seem unprofessional, because you strive for a very professional persona and you strive to really look like you've got it all together, and if you want to get your work out there, you've got to have a public image and you cannot appear like you're in any way lacking, so you've got to me 'got it together.' So, I would never have asked for that lift. I would have dragged those heavy suitcases and had to restrict the stuff I brought, because it would have... I just couldn't have carried it all, and it wouldn't have been a... you know, she would have been happy to bring me, but I wouldn't have asked, but the fact that she asked me, and I said 'Well actually, yeah' and we sorted it in just a few minutes. So that translating the awareness into actual like practical application did great. You know, so.

**(Female; Disability; Multidisciplinary; Mid-East; 55-64)**

As previously discussed, recipients acknowledge the increased sense of self-worth and confidence that the BIA has instilled enabling recipients to '*now charge what I feel I am worth, including preparatory time*'. They no longer feel an onus to justify their rate but rather empowered to assert themselves to charge according to their value. Recipients also report saying no to work opportunities that they feel undermines their value or is detrimental to their health. Recipients reported the importance of interacting with the artistic community for building ideas and networking for opportunities, however, they highlighted a lack of inclusive peer support groups and accessible and affordable interdisciplinary spaces. Recipients report accessing more training and development courses that they consider improves the quality of their work, paying subscriptions, and the benefit of '*giving back*' to their communities through their art. They also report being more physically active, being able to take a holiday and more broadly being able to have and make choices in their lives:

able to have those choices just to live life with a degree of freedom and kind of dignity, you know, for the first time in my life as an adult anyway

**(Male, Disability; Multidisciplinary; Mid-East; 25-34)**

While encouraging, the stark statistics of employment and unemployment of disabled people in Ireland, and the barriers to employment for disabled people, including artists with disabilities, cannot be understated. A disability allowance enables people to financially support and manage the additional costs that their disability may incur across the lifespan.

From a disability rights perspective, being in receipt of the BIA should not impinge upon a person's right to take on work, one's work practices, nor productivity based on disability. Neither should having a disability create relations of dependency for a disabled person should they be in a relationship that financially exceeds the means test threshold for disability allowance. Lastly, Ireland could explore and heed the recommendation within the 'Right to Work' Report (EDF, 2023) to allow persons to retain their disability allowance when in gainful employment.

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# Appendix 1

## Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

### Basic Income for the Arts — Participant Information Sheet

BIA recipients are invited to be interviewed by Dr. Jenny Dagg, an independent social research consultant who is researching the impact of the BIA.

It is important to note that participation in these research interviews is NOT MANDATORY and DOES NOT affect your place on the scheme or payment. You may register your interest until Monday 15th July 2024.

Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to know why we are doing this research and what we would need from you, if you take part.

This sheet will answer questions you might have, but if anything remains unclear, please feel free to contact us. If you agree to take part, please register your interest through the BIA Portal. If you want to take part but you need the registration form in a different format, please contact us to let us know.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No, participation is entirely voluntary and your receipt of the Basic Income payment is unaffected.

#### **Will I lose the BIA payment if I don't engage in this research?**

No

#### **What is this research about?**

We would like to interview participants to hear more about their experience with the BIA. The information collected may be used in a variety of ways by the research team and may form the basis for future research.

#### **Who is conducting this study?**

Dr. Jenny Dagg, an independent social research consultant, is conducting the interviews on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. She is working in collaboration with the Basic Income for the Arts research team.

#### **Who is invited to participate?**

Anyone who has been in receipt of the BIA payment.

#### **Will everyone be interviewed?**

A selection will be made from those who register their interest in taking part. It is anticipated that this call will be oversubscribed and that not all those who register their interest will be selected to take part.

#### **What is qualitative research?**

Qualitative research is a type of research which aims to gather and analyse primarily non-numerical data. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what and how many" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of people. The goal of this form of research is to gain an understanding of an individuals "social reality and experiences".

### **Why are we doing this research?**

We think that through interviews, we can capture aspects that have not emerged through the surveys.

### **The interview process**

If you decide to participate and are selected, an interview will be arranged and conducted by Dr. Jenny Dagg. The interview will focus on your opinions and experiences of receiving basic income support. Due to the nature of this interview, it is very difficult to state how long it will take because this will depend on how long you would like to talk, however, we anticipate 1-1.5hrs. It will be recorded with your permission and you can ask the interviewer to stop the recording at any time.

### **Confidentiality: How will your privacy be protected?**

The Department is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy and employs appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data from unauthorised access. The Department will not process your personal data for any purpose other than that for which it is collected. Personal data may be exchanged with other Government Departments, local authorities, agencies under the aegis of the Department, or other public bodies, in certain circumstances where this is provided for by law.

All participants remain anonymous for the purpose of this research. The only identifier that will be used is the number allocated to you as a participant.

The information gathered during the interview process will be kept under the strictest confidentiality and the following series of procedures have been established to ensure the security of all data collected:

1. Consent forms will be circulated, through the portal, to those selected to take part.
2. Audio files and transcripts will be labelled with your participant number and not your name or other personal identifiers. Individuals who are named by participants will be given pseudonyms.
3. Identifying information will be removed from the transcript and the audio file will be deleted.
4. Locations and dates will be accurately transcribed, except where this might impact on your identification; we will use broad regional identifiers and broad date ranges in these instances.

### **Where will this research take place?**

The interviews for the project will take place either online or in-person. We want people to be comfortable talking to us and to enable flexibility.

### **What will happen to your data after the interview?**

The Department will only retain personal data relating to this project for as long as it is necessary for the purposes for which it is collected and subsequently processed. When the business need to retain this information has expired, it will be examined with a view to destroying the personal data as soon as possible, and in line with Department policy and Data Protection legislation.

We will mostly use audio recording devices for the interviews that take place in person. The only exception is if you use Irish Sign Language, when we will use video recording. The video will be destroyed upon completion and verification of the final transcript of the interview.

If the interview is taking place online then you will be asked to consent to the interview being audio recorded. The recording will be transcribed for analysis.

Further information on Data Protection can be found on our website [here](#).

### **Research Benefits**

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, there is an indirect benefit, which is to contribute towards a better understanding of the impact of Basic Income support for artists and creative workers in Ireland. It is also your opportunity to tell us beyond the 6-month survey data, how the BIA has impacted you.

### **Research Risks**

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this study except a minimal risk of being identified. However, as noted in detail above, every effort will be made to avoid this as participants are anonymous from the outset.

From the comments section of the 6-month surveys, we can tell that it is possible that you may feel emotional when discussing your experiences. Should you feel uncomfortable in relation to anything that is asked during the course of the interview, you are not obliged to answer. Should you experience distress about any issues that are discussed we can provide you with the details of support services in your area.

### **Results of the research**

This research will be part of an in-depth report. We will be publishing at least one report on the insights from this interview process, and it will inform all of the research work as part of the BIA Pilot Research Scheme.

### **Compensation**

There is no payment or other kind of compensation for participating in this study.

### **Who can I talk to if I need further advice about participating in the study?**

Jenny Dagg can be contacted at 08\* \*\*\*\*\* or at [email address]

Alternatively, email [basicincomeforthearts@tcagsm.gov.ie](mailto:basicincomeforthearts@tcagsm.gov.ie)

### **Taking Part**

If you have read the above information and are happy to take part in the project, please register your interest through the BIA Portal (link in the email). You will then be entered into the selection to take part.

### **Team Member Contact Details**

Jenny Dagg can be contacted at 08\* \*\*\*\*\* or at [email address]

Alternatively, email [basicincomeforthearts@tcagsm.gov.ie](mailto:basicincomeforthearts@tcagsm.gov.ie)

# Participant Consent Sheet

## Consent Form for Participants

### Consent to take part in the qualitative research for Basic Income for the Arts

	Mark Y/N or NA on Mindaclient Form
I understand that by agreeing to do this interview, my name and contact information on Mindaclient will be shared with Dr. Jenny Dagg	
I understand that the interviews are being recorded and will be shared with a third party to be transcribed	
I confirm that I have read and understand the Basic Income for the Arts information sheet explaining the above research project. I will have the opportunity to ask questions about the project before the interview begins.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions posed, I am free to decline.  This includes withdrawal after the interview has been completed and before the materials from the project have been written up. I understand that if I withdraw at this stage, any personal experiences or ideas arising from my participation will not be included in the final materials which will be published at the end of the project.  If I withdraw from the project, I know that the researchers will delete any of the recordings they have of any interviews I took part in.	
I consent to be videoed for interpretation accuracy. (Applicable to Irish Sign Language users only)	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to recordings of the interviews. I understand that my	

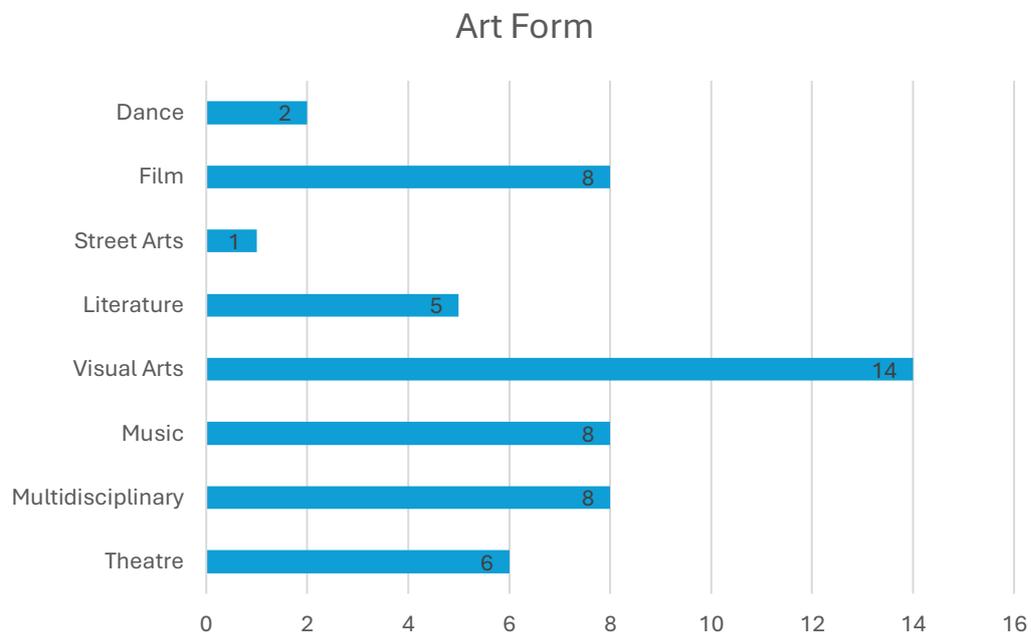
name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the project.  I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.	
I also understand that by taking part in this study I may be asked to recount some potentially sensitive events.  I do not have to answer any question if I do not want to.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	

Once this has been signed and submitted the Form will be able to view on the Mindaclient System from the BIA Admin side and also the Participant Side. The Form will not have a signature but the option to type out their name which we can accept as a signature.

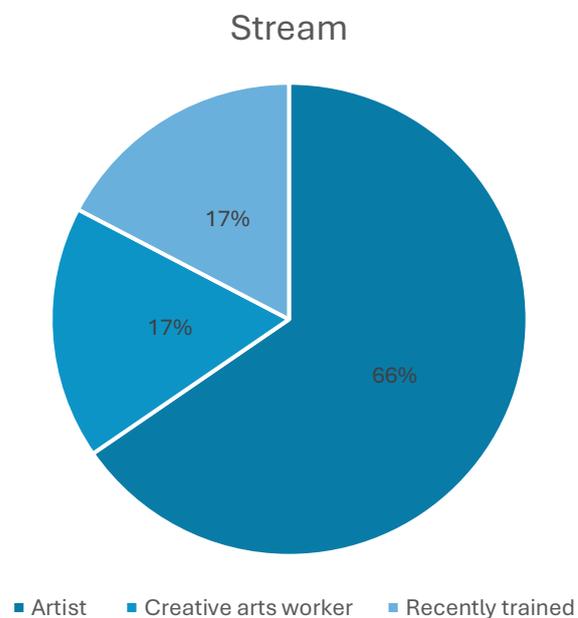
## Appendix 2

### Participant Selection



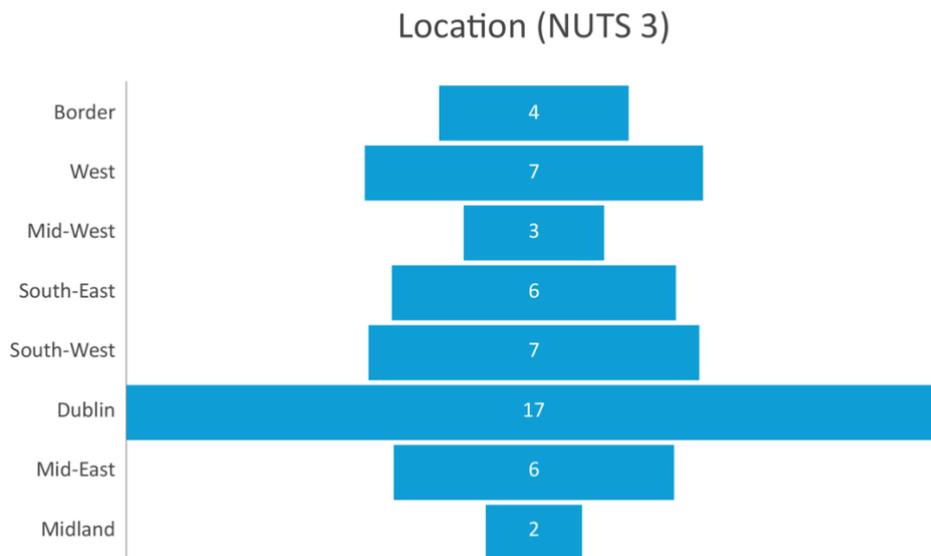
**Table 1.:** Qualitative interview participants by Art Form.

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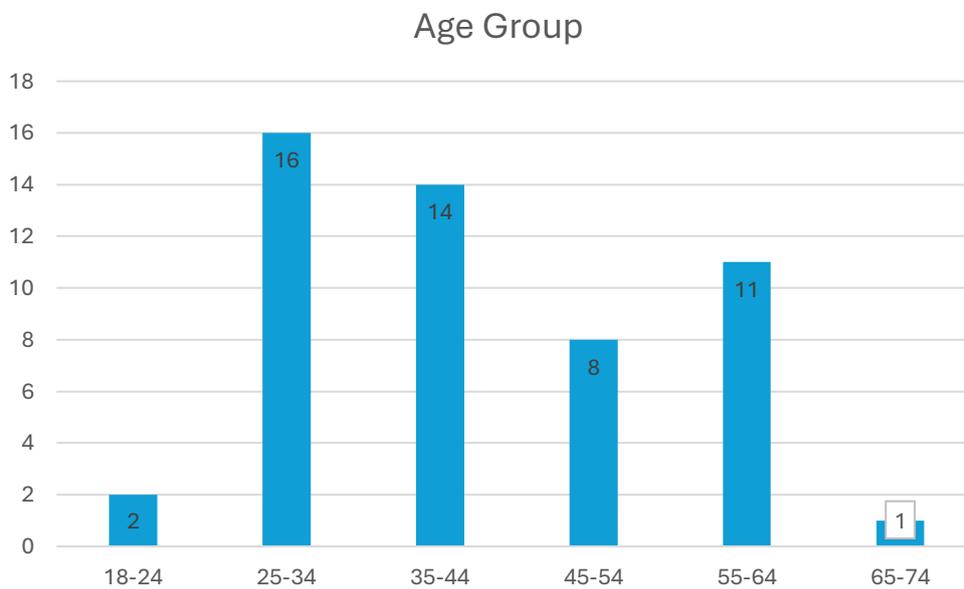


**Table 2.:** Qualitative interview participants by BIA Stream.

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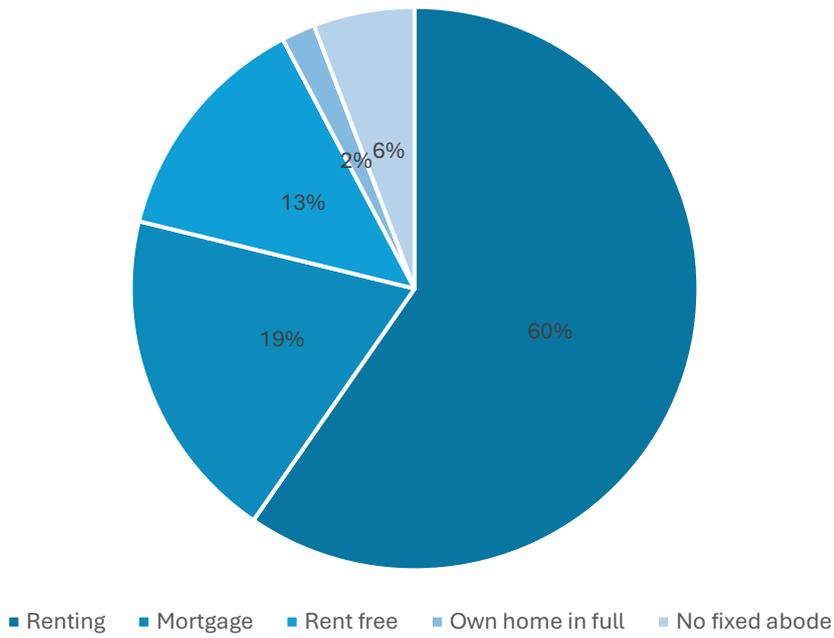


**Table 3.:** Qualitative participants by Location.

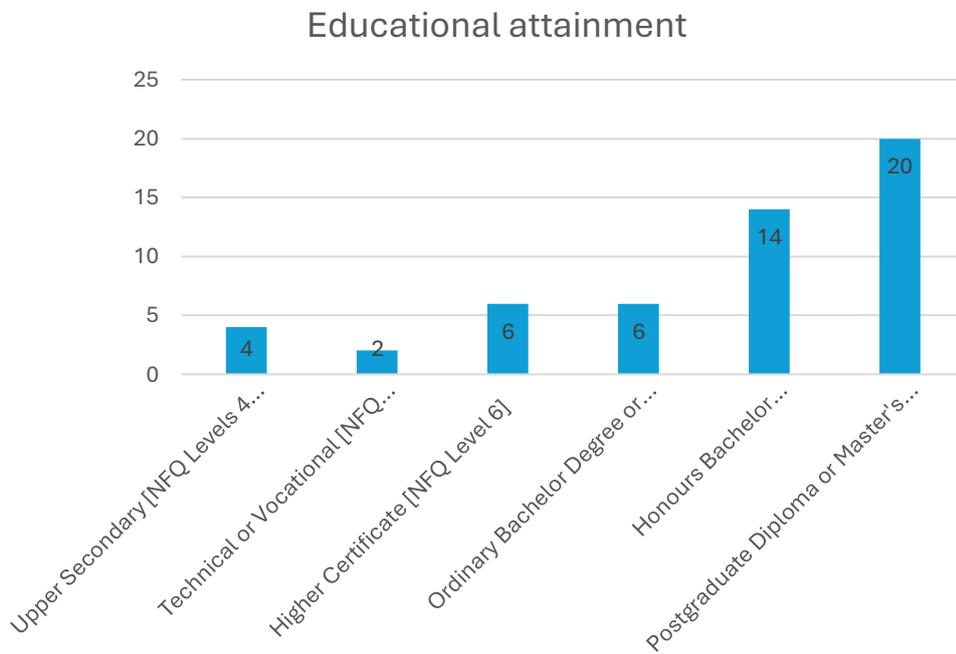


**Table 4.:** Qualitative participants by Age Group.

### Housing Situation

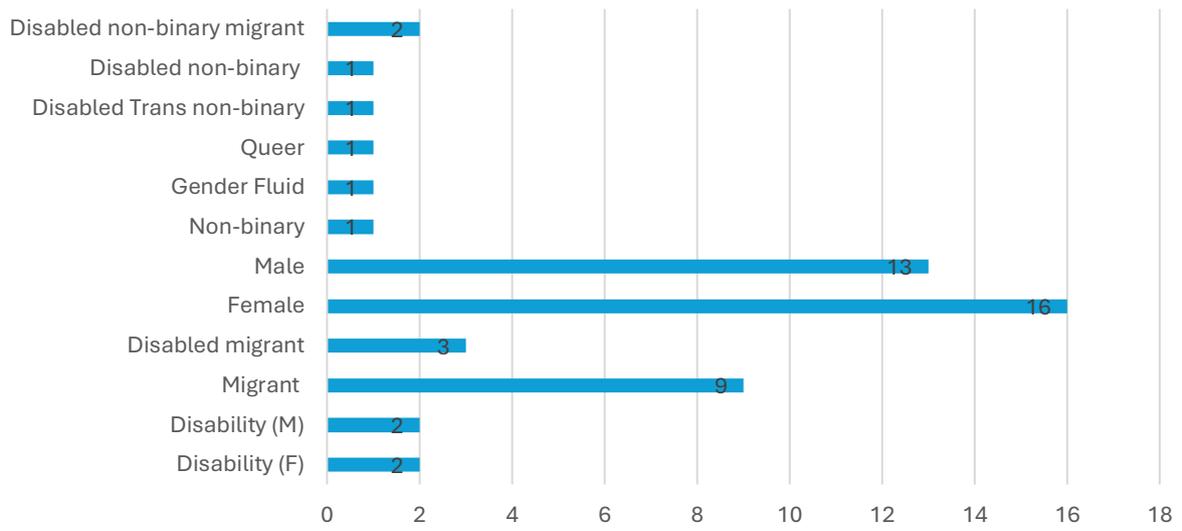


**Table 5.:** Qualitative participants by housing situation.



**Table 6.:** Qualitative participants by educational attainment.

## Intersectionality



**Table 7.:** Qualitative participants by Intersectionality.

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# Appendix 3

## Disability Focus Group

### Basic Income for the Arts — Participant Information Sheet

Disabled BIA recipients are invited to be part of a focus group facilitated by Dr. Jenny Dagg, an independent social research consultant who is researching the impact of the BIA.

It is important to note that participation in this focus group is NOT MANDATORY and DOES NOT affect your place on the scheme or payment. You may register your interest until Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to know why we are doing this research and what we would need from you, if you take part.

This sheet will answer questions you might have, but if anything remains unclear, please feel free to contact us. If you agree to take part, please register your interest through the BIA Portal. If you want to take part but you need the registration form in a different format, please contact us to let us know.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No, participation is entirely voluntary and your receipt of the Basic Income payment is unaffected.

#### **Will I lose the BIA payment if I don't engage in this research?**

No

#### **What is this research about?**

We invite disabled participants to participate in a focus group to hear more about their experience with the BIA. The information collected may be used in a variety of ways by the research team and may form the basis for future research.

#### **Who is conducting this study?**

Dr. Jenny Dagg, an independent social research consultant, is facilitating the focus group on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. She is working in collaboration with the Basic Income for the Arts research team.

#### **Who is invited to participate?**

Any BIA recipient who identifies as disabled and who has been in receipt of the BIA payment. Following the ethos of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we understand 'disability' to include "those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation of society on an equal basis with others" (UN, 2006). We view this statement as an open-ended inclusive approach to the question of 'who counts' as disabled. In recruiting participants for our research, we include people with chronic or long-term illness, people with experience of mental health services, the Deaf community, autistic and neurodivergent people, and those who do not identify with any label or diagnosis but have experienced discrimination because they are perceived by others as disabled.

### Will everyone take part?

A selection of 8-10 participants will be made from those who register their interest in taking part.

### What is a focus group?

A focus group is a group interview that brings together a small group of people to discuss specific issues or experiences.

### Why are we doing this research?

We think that through a focus group, we can capture disability aspects that have not emerged through the surveys or in individual interviews.

### The focus group process

If you decide to participate and are selected, the focus group is scheduled to be held on **Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> September from 2pm – 4pm** and will be conducted by Dr. Jenny Dagg. The focus group will explore your opinions and experiences of receiving basic income support. It will be recorded with your permission and you can ask the facilitator to stop the recording at any time.

### Confidentiality: How will your privacy be protected?

The Department is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy and employs appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data from unauthorised access. The Department will not process your personal data for any purpose other than that for which it is collected. Personal data may be exchanged with other Government Departments, local authorities, agencies under the aegis of the Department, or other public bodies, in certain circumstances where this is provided for by law.

All participants remain anonymous for the purpose of this research. The only identifier that will be used is the number allocated to you as a participant.

The information gathered during the focus group will be kept under the strictest confidentiality and the following series of procedures have been established to ensure the security of all data collected:

5. Consent forms will be circulated, through the portal, to those selected to take part.
6. Audio files and transcripts will be labelled with your participant number and not your name or other personal identifiers. Individuals who are named by participants will be given pseudonyms.
7. Identifying information will be removed from the transcript and the audio file will be deleted.
8. Locations and dates will be accurately transcribed, except where this might impact on your identification; we will use broad regional identifiers and broad date ranges in these instances.

### Where will this research take place?

The focus group will take place in a central location in **Dublin 1**. Once you are selected to participate you will be notified of the exact location and you can let us know then of any access requirements you may have.

### What will happen to your data after the interview?

The Department will only retain personal data relating to this project for as long as it is necessary for the purposes for which it is collected and subsequently processed. When the business need to retain this information has expired, it will be examined with a view to

destroying the personal data as soon as possible, and in line with Department policy and Data Protection legislation.

The researcher will use an audio recording device to record the dialogue of the focus group. The only exception is if you use Irish Sign Language, when we will use video recording. The video will be destroyed upon completion and verification of the final transcript of the interview.

Further information on Data Protection can be found on our website [here](#).

### **Research Benefits**

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, there is an indirect benefit, which is to contribute towards a better understanding of the impact of Basic Income support for disabled artists and disabled creative workers in Ireland. It is also your opportunity to tell us beyond the 6-month survey data, how the BIA has impacted you.

### **Research Risks**

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this study except a minimal risk of being identified. However, as noted in detail above, every effort will be made to avoid this as participants are anonymous from the outset.

From the comments section of the 6-month surveys, we can tell that it is possible that you may feel emotional when discussing your experiences. Should you feel uncomfortable in relation to anything that is asked during the course of the interview, you are not obliged to answer. Should you experience distress about any issues that are discussed we can provide you with the details of support services in your area.

### **Results of the research**

This research will be part of an in-depth report. We will be publishing at least one report on the insights from the interview process and focus group, and it will inform all of the research work as part of the BIA Pilot Research Scheme.

### **Compensation**

There is no payment or other kind of compensation for participating in this study.

### **Who can I talk to if I need further advice about participating in the study?**

Jenny Dagg can be contacted at 08\* \*\*\*\*\* or at [email address]

Alternatively, email [basicincomeforthearts@tcagsm.gov.ie](mailto:basicincomeforthearts@tcagsm.gov.ie)

### **Taking Part**

If you have read the above information and are happy to take part in the focus group, please email Dr. Jenny Dagg at her details below. You will then be entered into the selection process to take part.

### **Team Member Contact Details**

Jenny Dagg can be contacted at 08\* \*\*\*\*\* or at [email address]

Alternatively, email [basicincomeforthearts@tcagsm.gov.ie](mailto:basicincomeforthearts@tcagsm.gov.ie)

# Participant Consent Sheet

## Consent Form for Participants

### **Consent to take part in the focus group for Basic Income for the Arts**

	Mark Y/N or NA on Mindacient Form
I understand that by agreeing to participate in this focus group, my name and contact information on Mindacient will be shared with Dr. Jenny Dagg	
I understand that the focus group is recorded and will be shared with a third party to be transcribed	
I confirm that I have read and understand the Basic Income for the Arts information sheet explaining the above research project. I will have the opportunity to ask questions about the project before the focus group begins.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions posed, I am free to decline.  This includes withdrawal after the focus group has been completed and before the materials from the project have been written up. I understand that if I withdraw at this stage, any personal experiences or ideas arising from my participation will not be included in the final materials which will be published at the end of the project.  If I withdraw from the project, I know that the researchers will delete any of the recordings they have of any discussion I took part in.	
I consent to be videoed for interpretation accuracy. (Applicable to Irish Sign Language users only)	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to recordings of the focus group. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will	

not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the project.  I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.	
I also understand that by taking part in this study I may be asked to recount some potentially sensitive events.  I do not have to answer any question if I do not want to.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	

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