

17 September 2026

Dear Convener,

Clarification of Inspiring Scotland's role in Scottish Government Funding Programmes

I am writing on behalf of Inspiring Scotland regarding evidence given to the Committee on 10 September 2026 concerning public funding, transparency, and freedom of information.

By way of background, Inspiring Scotland is an independent charitable organisation and social impact funder. We annually manage more than £46 million in funding from a range of individuals, trusts, foundations, businesses and public bodies seeking to improve lives across Scotland.

During the session, a witness referred to Inspiring Scotland in relation to public funding decision-making. As recorded in the Official Report (Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, 10 September 2026, Column 7):

“You could get Inspiring Scotland in and see where it gets its information in order to fund organisations, and you could look at where there is overlap and where there are gaps and needs. I think that we sometimes see a little bit of distance from Parliament and Government, when they say that funding is out of their hands and belongs to someone else. That should not be the case; because this is public money; this is our Parliament; and we need to know about any decisions and concerns in that respect”

To assist the Committee, we wish to clarify Inspiring Scotland's role in relation to Scottish Government funding programmes administered under contract, as the comments above may give rise to misunderstanding.

Inspiring Scotland is currently contracted by the Scottish Government to provide fund management services for a number of government programmes, including funding streams within the Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights Directorate.

Under these arrangements, we deliver fund administration in partnership with the Scottish Government, which retains overall management of the funds. The Scottish Government determines the purpose of the funding programmes, including priorities, aims and eligibility criteria. Our responsibilities include functions such as administering grant payments, monitoring expenditure, evaluating programme progress, and providing capacity-building support to funded organisations.

While Inspiring Scotland may undertake administrative and assessment functions as part of the fund management process, Scottish Ministers make the final decisions on which organisations receive funding. The Scottish Government retains overall responsibility for the funds and the funding programmes, with Inspiring Scotland providing the fund management services specified within its contracts.

The witness also stated:

'Perhaps we need a more transparent and open conversation about how things are funded. I would just point out that Inspiring Scotland cannot be subject to a freedom of information request, and that would be something that I would like you to look at'.

We would like to clarify the Freedom of Information arrangements that apply to these funding programmes.

Inspiring Scotland is a registered charity and not designated as a public authority under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. However, our contracts with the Scottish Government require us to provide all assistance and cooperation reasonably necessary to enable the Scottish Government to meet its obligations under the Act. This includes supplying information relevant to Freedom of Information requests relating to the funding programmes we administer, which we do when requested. We are also contractually required to direct any such requests we receive to the Scottish Government for consideration under its statutory responsibilities.

We hope this information is helpful to the Committee and helps ensure an accurate understanding of Inspiring Scotland's role in administering Scottish Government funding programmes. We would be happy to provide any further information through a briefing, if helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Kaylie Allen
Director of Funds
Inspiring Scotland